

Inclusive Education for Visually Impaired Students: Strategies and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine “Inclusive Education for visually impaired students: Strategies and challenges.” The objective of the study were: i) To assess the current practices for visually impaired students in inclusive education, ii) To understand the challenges faced by visually impaired students in inclusive education & iii) To identify effective strategies to support visually impaired students in inclusive education. The current study was quantitative in nature and a cross-sectional survey was used for data collection. The population of the study were one hundred and fifty (150) visually impaired students of Kotli AJ&K. The sample was chosen from the population by the researchers via a universal sampling technique. The researcher used self-developed questionnaire as a research tool for the study. The reliability of instrument was measured through Cronbach’s Alpha and the value was .753. The researchers collected data personally. The response rate was 100%. The data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS). The researchers applied mean score. It is concluded that inclusive education strategies for visually impaired students are generally effective, particularly in ensuring safe classroom environments and providing technological and instructional support. However, improvements are still needed in communication, understanding visual content, and school support services to further enhance learning experiences. It is recommended to the school administration to improve classroom lighting by ensuring proper brightness and reducing glare to support visually impaired students’ learning. Additionally, regular monitoring and maintenance of lighting conditions should be carried out to create a more accessible and comfortable learning environment.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Visually impaired students.*

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, only an elite had access to education. Only priests, aristocrats and rulers had tutors. Others relied exclusively on family members' instruction. These included practical skills such as farming, hunting, or doing housework. Religious institutions – mosques, churches, and temples – began instructing people in reading and writing in time. In the past two centuries, governments have established public schools with the principle of entitlement to education. Now every country has laws mandating free and compulsory education until a certain age. Various international organizations, including UNESCO, have embraced universal literacy. Education is now considered a universal human right, not a privilege (Coulson, 2017).

Education forms the basis for social and economic development both on individual and national level. Education is about employment but it is also about growing into well-rounded individuals with cognitive, emotional and behavioral skills. Quality education is accessible, equal, lifelong,

comprehensive, empowering and compassionate. All stakeholders play an important role in this process. Providing quality education would automatically diminish various other social problems such as poverty, diseases, conflicts etc. Investing into quality education is investing in the future of the society and the country as a whole. Therefore, every country considers education its priority (Grant, 2017).

Many nations continue to experience challenges. Lack of access to education in some nations is because children do not attend school due to poverty; parents require their children to work. In some cases, schools lack qualified teachers, potable water, and sanitation facilities for girls. The quality of education is another challenge. Children pass examinations without being able to read a story. Economic disparity is another challenge in many nations. While private schools have computer laboratories, public schools have broken benches. Violence and conflicts disrupt educational opportunities. When individuals migrate from one nation to another, children miss many years of education. Environmental issues such as climate change are also emerging challenges. Extreme weather causes floods that shut down schools for weeks (Mihai, Țițan & Manea, 2015).

Inclusive education refers to educating all children together in one institution. This process began after 1994 and continues to be a global policy today. What differentiates it from special and integrated education is the modification of the school rather than the disabled child. It requires trained teachers, appropriate material and relevant legislation. Inclusive education benefits both disabled and normal students, their teachers, and even society as a whole. Most importantly, it is a right of every individual child. If we wish to establish an inclusive society, we first need to have inclusive schools. The classroom is where students learn to coexist in society (Florian, 2019).

In some cases, sending a disabled child to the normal classroom may seem like a favor. This is not so, however. Education is one of the basic rights of every human being. This right is explicitly mentioned in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to education. It is further emphasized in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in article 24. Therefore, by providing inclusive education, we are not doing something more; we are simply fulfilling their rights (Anderson, Spain & Clarke, 2022).

The significance of inclusive education includes: It enables children with disabilities to learn and develop self-confidence. It encourages non-disabled children to be compassionate and tolerant. It improves the performance of teachers and increases realism in schools. It assists families and is cost-effective. It enhances the nation, creates peace, and promotes respect for human rights. Neglecting inclusive education means losing out on the potential of several individuals and creating a divided society. By embracing inclusive education, we create a society that is capable of learning, working, and living with each other. This is the reason why all contemporary education systems make inclusive education their priority (Kolbina, et al., 2023).

Inclusion is based on several important principles that are interrelated, which are zero rejection, natural proportionality, equal opportunities and activities, individual approach, flexibility, cooperation, diversity appreciation, and continuous development. Without any one of those aspects, inclusion remains ineffective. With all principles implemented, every child gets access to education. None of the principles requires large investments. They require thoughtfulness, goodwill, and consistent actions. It is possible to implement these ideas gradually starting from simple steps. First of all, it is necessary to accept that every child has the right to get an education and be a part of society. For visually impaired students, there exist certain barriers such as problems with material, movement, learning strategy, socializing, testing, use of technology, and attitude. The barriers arise not because of the impairment. They exist due to the fact that the traditional education system does not accommodate visually impaired learners. When appropriate changes to material, training of a tutor, adaptation of the facility, and changing attitude take place, a lot of barriers disappear. Inclusive education is possible for students with visual impairments. But only if everything is done thoughtfully. In the following section, specific strategies will be discussed (Sharma & Gill, 2024).

It is not difficult to provide strategies for visually impaired learners. The material should be translated into braille, audio, and tactile forms. The environment should be adapted and stabilized. The teacher should be trained in oral speech and the use of actual objects. The examination process should be reasonable with extended time or writer services. The buddy system and games should be used to develop social skills. Simple technologies and a resource teacher should be used where feasible. Planning should involve parents. Such measures eliminate almost all barriers. When these measures are implemented, the visually impaired learner no longer requires a separate institution. He can study, socialize, and showcase his talents among other learners. This is true inclusion (Reynaga-Peña & del Carmen López-Suero, 2020).

According to UNESCO 2009, laws and teacher training are essential. According to Loreman (2011), professionally trained teachers feel more comfortable. In Nepal, according to Lamichhane 2017, one resource teacher makes a difference in the school. Inclusive education leads to more socialization opportunities, although more pressure exists according to Kef & Dekovic 2004. Policy and implementation are two different things in educational settings, according to Singal 2008. The use of smartphones with screen readers plays an indispensable role according to Opie 2018. Hence, inclusive education for blind children is possible. We have understood that some barriers exist which are lack of resources, lack of teacher training, negative attitudes, and lack of technology.

The existing literature gives us a robust basis, but does not cover all aspects regarding the field. Gaps can be found in the area of local context, depth of coverage on subject matter, affordable technology, voices of students, and impact of results over time. Present research needs to bridge these gaps. The justification is evident – to aid the government, to advise teachers, to assist the learners, and to bring new insights. Once we conduct this research, schools from our area will receive an effective blueprint for integrating visually challenged students successfully (Denscombe, 2017).

Objectives

The objectives of the study were

1. To assess the current practices for visually impaired students in inclusive education.
2. To understand the challenges faced by visually impaired students in inclusive education.
3. To identify effective strategies to support visually impaired students in inclusive education.

Research Questions

The research questions were

1. What are the current practices for visually impaired students in inclusive education?
2. What challenges are faced by visually impaired students in inclusive education?
3. What strategies are used to support visually impaired students in inclusive education?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Education

Education is a systematic endeavor aimed at developing someone's abilities, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors. Education does not consist solely of studying and taking examinations. It begins from birth and ends only upon death. When one masters speaking, walking, and sharing, then it also counts as education. Similarly, when one learns how to operate a computer or drive a car, it too counts as

education. Consequently, education takes place in the home environment, schools, workplace, and society at large. The overall objective of education lies in preparing someone for life (Amirkhanova, et al., 2015).

Aims of Education

There are various purposes of education. One such purpose is that of personal development. Through education, an individual gets skills that enable him/her to reason, articulate, and comprehend life. Another purpose is social development where education enables one to get acquainted with the dos and don'ts and other important things concerning life, including living harmoniously with those who differ from oneself. Another purpose is economic development whereby through acquisition of skills, one acquires better employment leading to improvement of the economy since fewer poor people means a developed economy. The other purpose is cultural development as education ensures continuity of language, culture and appreciation of new cultures. The final purpose is moral development as good education instills morals such as honesty, justice, etc. (Patra, 2017).

Modern Changes in Education

Today's education systems are evolving rapidly. Firstly, technologies have been introduced into classrooms. Students study using tablets, interactive whiteboards, and the Internet. Online learning gained popularity post-2020. Secondly, there is an emphasis on practical experience rather than memorization. Students are assigned tasks such as completing assignments, solving problems, working in groups, and acquiring skills collectively referred to as 21st-century skills. Thirdly, education systems are embracing inclusivity. In the past, disabled children were confined to their homes. Today, schools endeavor to integrate them into mainstream classrooms. Fourthly, lifelong learning has become a novel concept. Education does not end with school. People enroll in different courses at the age of 30, 40, or 60 to remain relevant in the workplace (Muttappallymyalil, et al., 2016).

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a model whereby all children learn together in the same classroom regardless of their diversity. The diversity here can range from being physical, intellectual, social or economic. For example, a child who is visually impaired, a child who is wheelchair-bound, a child who has delayed learning capacity, a child coming from poor backgrounds, and a child coming from rich backgrounds learn together in one classroom under the same teacher. The school modifies itself according to the child's requirement. There is no adjustment on part of the child to fit into the school environment. In other words, inclusivity of a school is measured by how much it caters to the needs of the children without making them adapt to the school environment. This is the basic concept of inclusive education which distinguishes it from special or integrated education (Florian, 2019).

Model 1: Social Model of Disability

According to the Social Model of Disability, disability is not due to the child but due to the obstacles in society and in school settings. The model emphasizes removing obstacles so that all children are able to engage in the learning process (Robertson & Jaswal, 2024). It places emphasis on the role of schools, educators, and society in creating an enabling environment.

The Social Model of Disability is based on three basic principles:

Barrier Elimination:

This involves locating and eliminating physical, social, and instructional obstacles, such as inadequate ramps, rigid teaching techniques, and negative attitudes.

Inclusive Environment:

It is the duty of schools to change their environment, instruction, and materials to accommodate all children rather than vice versa.

Equal Participation:

Each child should be allowed equal participation in the classroom and learning processes.

On the basis of this model, flexible teaching methods, use of diverse learning materials, and supportive classroom practices are considered effective tools to promote inclusion. The model emphasizes that when barriers are removed, all children can learn, grow, and succeed together.

Model 2: Rights-Based Model

The Rights-Based Model assumes that every child has an inherent right to education regardless of ability and social background. This model ensures equal treatment of children and fair opportunities to receive quality education. The Rights-Based Model is highly favored and promoted by international guidelines, such as the United Nations conventions (Becker, De Wet & Van Vollenhoven, 2015).

There are three main principles underpinning the Rights-Based Model:

Equality:

Equal rights of all children to access education free from any discrimination.

Participation:

Each child has the right to actively take part in the educational process and voice their opinion.

Dignity and Respect:

Children must be treated respectfully, and their unique characteristics must be recognized.

Under this model, it is the duty of schools to create inclusive policies and provide appropriate support services so that no child will be denied the opportunity to learn.

Needs for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education needs certain factors to become successful. Firstly, policies and laws. It should be clearly stated by the government that all schools have to admit all students. Secondly, the teachers should be properly trained. Most of the teachers were educated for typical students. Hence, they should receive specialized training to teach visually impaired students, auditory impaired students, or autistic children. Thirdly, materials are required. The schools should have textbooks in Braille form, audio books, hearing aids, ramps, and proper lighting. Fourthly, smaller classes. One teacher cannot pay individual attention to 60 students when five of them require special education. Fifthly, parental and community support is crucial. Parents of other children will protest if they feel that the disabled child will hamper the entire class. Therefore, schools should take initiative to involve all parents in this process. Lastly, exams should be changed. If the test is based on writing skills, while a blind student is unable to write, then the test itself becomes discriminatory (Haug, 2017).

Importance of Inclusive Education

It is important to acknowledge that inclusive education has wide ramifications since it affects various aspects of our society. Not only is it beneficial to those with disabilities but also to all learners, educators, parents, and the entire country. With inclusion of all learners in the school settings, the society takes steps towards equality and development (Derzhavina, *et al.*, 2021).

Importance for Children with Disability

First, it provides a learning opportunity for children with disabilities. Previously, most children were kept at home or enrolled in special schools. They acquired some abilities but lacked experience living within the community. Within an inclusive educational environment, they interact with other learners. They observe their communication styles, problem-solving methods, and working relationships. The interaction helps them develop social skills. They acquire the ability to seek assistance, wait for their turn, and cooperate with others. Such skills are crucial in adulthood. Second, inclusive education promotes self-confidence. Children with disabilities feel good about themselves whenever they pass a test that is similar to their peers. Self-assurance helps them gain confidence that they can complete any task. Third, it leads to improved academic performance among many students. Research indicates that many learners with disabilities achieve the same level as other learners if appropriate supports are available. Special schools are likely to have low expectations, while inclusive schools maintain high expectations while providing assistance to attain them (Cologon, 2022).

Importance for Teachers and School System

Education that is inclusive improves teaching skills. The instructor will know how to incorporate braille, sign language, or basic English. The instructor will now see if every student grasps what is being taught. The quality of teaching will be improved within the entire school environment. Secondly, inclusive education helps to make the school more realistic. There are different people from all over the globe, such as in the marketplaces, offices, and public transports. The school will reflect society, where there are no restrictions for any learner. The school will not create an artificial environment for students. Thirdly, it helps save cost for the government. Setting up separate institutions is expensive compared to training a typical school to accommodate all children. It will use the same buildings, offices, and transports (Jokinen, 2018).

Importance for Parents and Families

When parents have a child with disability, they experience less pressure if he can attend the nearby school. They won't have to transport him to another city or spend more money on special education. He will live at home, eat at home, and stay part of the community, making his family stronger. Parents who don't have a child with disability will benefit too. They will realize that the school teaches children important moral lessons. They will appreciate that their child is being taught to be a better person rather than just a good student. Moreover, if anything happens to their child in the future and causes him to have a disability, they can still rest assured that the school will enroll him (Ntinda & Hlanze, 2015).

Importance for Society and Country

The nation gets stronger if all people can contribute economically and participate socially. Excluding persons with disabilities from education means most of them will be unemployed in the future. They will rely on other people. This is an economic burden for the nation. Inclusive education enables them to become employed, pay taxes, and contribute to the economy. Secondly, it promotes social peace. Children who grow up together do not have prejudices against each other. Most social unrests arise because of the notion that someone is different. Inclusive institutions eliminate such barriers at an early age. Thirdly, it is part of global commitments. Nearly all nations in the world have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The article 24 of the convention declares

inclusive education as a right. They have also endorsed the Sustainable Development Goal number 4, which seeks to provide quality education to all by 2030. A country seeking global recognition must demonstrate its commitment to inclusive education (Lamichhane, 2015).

Importance for Human Rights and Justice

Every child comes into the world with an equal right to education. Disability, poverty, language, or gender cannot strip a child of this fundamental right. Inclusive education defends this right. It says to every child, you belong here. This is a powerful message. It prevents discrimination. It sends a signal to society that the ability and character of the individual matter more than his or her body or background. Justice implies giving individuals what they need to achieve the same level of success. Some people need glasses; others need ramps. Others require more time. Inclusive education provides them with all of these things. Thus, it is a vehicle for justice (Rouso, 2015).

Principles of Inclusive Education

Principles are the core values or guidelines that govern any activity. Inclusive education has a set of such principles as well. They guide schools, teachers, and policymakers on planning and actions. If a school adheres to these principles, it can be called genuinely inclusive. Otherwise, it merely uses the name. The major principles of inclusive education are provided below (Dalio, 2018).

Zero Rejection

This is the very first principle. What this principle implies is that no child will be turned away on the grounds of his disability, gender, linguistic abilities, religious beliefs, and economic background. The school shall admit all children within its jurisdictional limits. No school can refuse admission saying that there are no teachers for teaching blind children and thus they should seek their admission somewhere else. If a school lacks certain resources at present, it has to make efforts in order to obtain them. The onus to adapt falls upon schools and not on pupils. Another thing implied by the principle of zero rejection is that once admitted, no child should be expelled due to learning disabilities or behavioral problems.

Natural Proportion

A natural proportion implies that the number of disabled students in the classroom must be proportional to their representation in society. The proportion of disabled individuals in most countries ranges from 10% to 15%. This means that in a classroom of 30 students, three to four require additional assistance. The school cannot assign all disabled students to one classroom. This would mean creating a segregated classroom within an ordinary school setting. This practice will not achieve inclusion. A natural proportion will ensure that the non-disabled students understand that disability is a natural occurrence in society. Furthermore, it ensures that the educator does not have numerous students with high needs at once.

Same Place, Same Activities

Inclusive education says that all children must learn in the same place and join the same activities as much as possible. A blind child should not sit in the library alone while others do science. He should do science with help. A child on a wheelchair should not watch the game from the side. The game should be changed so he can play a role. This principle is called full participation. Sometimes 100 percent participation is hard. For example, a totally blind child cannot see a picture. But the teacher can give him a raised diagram or describe the picture. So the goal is to include, not to separate. Shared time builds friendship and respect.

Individual Support

Every child is different. So the school must give support based on need. This is called individualized support. Some children need large print, some need braille, some need extra time, some need a friend to help in movement. The school makes a simple plan for each child with high need. This plan is often called an Individualized Education Plan or IEP. The plan says what the child will learn this term, what help he will get, and how we will check progress. The plan is made with the teacher, parent, and sometimes the child. Support does not mean low level work for all time. It means the right help so the child can reach the same goals as others, maybe by a different path.

Flexible Teaching and Curriculum

A fixed method does not work for all. So inclusive education needs flexible teaching. The teacher should use many ways to explain one idea. She can speak, show a video, use a model, or do a role play. The curriculum should also be flexible. The aims remain the same for everyone, but the means by which they are attained can vary. For instance, all learners must be taught about plants. While a learner who lacks eyesight can touch actual leaves and study a 3D model rather than sketching, a learner who lacks writing speed may respond verbally. This is what is referred to as curriculum adaptation.

Collaboration and Teamwork

Inclusion cannot be achieved by just one teacher on his/her own. One of the basic principles of inclusion, therefore, is that of cooperation. Cooperation means that the classroom teacher will be working with a special educator, the parents, and even the doctor, if need be, in addition to the head teacher. Similarly, the students should also be encouraged to work as teams. The better performing students should assist the weaker ones. It is known as peer tutoring. Both parties benefit when teaching occurs between students.

Respect for Diversity and Child-Centered Focus

Inclusive education accepts differences as natural and healthy. A classroom full of children with various capabilities, speaking different languages, and having varied physical appearances is diverse. The educator must honor all children and refrain from negative comparisons. The emphasis is not on the curriculum but on the child's learning process. It is not about whether I completed the textbook; rather, it is about whether each child learned anything new today. Listening to the child is also part of this tenet. Even a little one can point out difficulties and facilitators.

Continuous Training and Improvement

The process of inclusion is not something to happen on a single day; the teachers require being trained time and again because new tools and methods arise. The school must evaluate every year whether they have truly included all children or if some of them are still left out. For this purpose, schools must take feedback from both parents and students and develop another strategy accordingly.

Challenge Faced by Visually Impaired Students in Inclusive Education

Inclusion is the integration of all learners into regular classes for learning. The concept is beneficial; however, the process presents numerous difficulties for learners with visual impairment. Visual impairment refers to a condition where an individual lacks full visual ability. They may be blind or visually impaired, meaning they can see only slightly to make them unable to read conventional texts and move freely. Such learners experience additional challenges when enrolled in mainstream schools. By recognizing their difficulties, we can formulate adequate strategies to meet their needs (Belay & Yihun, 2020).

The following are the main challenges

Access to Learning Material

Reading and writing material form the major obstacle for such students. Most textbooks, notebooks, and other forms of study material are printed. This means that blind students cannot be able to access them. Students with poor vision require extra-large prints or bright lighting, but textbooks are usually small. In many cases, special braille textbooks are not provided in some schools. Braille is a kind of language written using raised dots that are felt by touching through fingertips. It requires considerable time and cost to prepare one braille book. Audio books and computer screen reader applications may also be lacking. This means that the student is present in the classroom, yet he or she cannot follow the content presented by the teacher. The student has to rely on friends and teachers for oral explanations and instructions. Graphs, maps, diagrams, and images also pose challenges. A student will be told, "Look at this graph" in class, but this will not work since he or she cannot see it.

Movement and Physical Environment

The second main obstacle for the visually impaired child is the movement within the school premises. The school is designed keeping in mind that the students have normal eyesight. Stairs without railings, furniture placed in the middle of the classroom, and uncovered drainages cause accidents for visually handicapped children. Such a child feels frightened walking around alone. Getting into the bathroom, playing in the play area, and attending other classes becomes tough. At times, other children might not know how to assist the visually handicapped child properly. They tend to grab the blind child by his hands, which is inappropriate. The correct way is to allow the blind child to place his hands on the guide's elbow, which is generally not taught in most schools. Furthermore, the classrooms in schools are usually overcrowded. Bags and furniture are found everywhere. A visually handicapped student requires more illumination and lesser shadows, whereas the classroom environment tends to be darker.

Teacher Training and Teaching Method

Most ordinary school teachers did not have a clue on how to handle a blind pupil. Their teaching method involved the writing of notes on the chalkboard or use of videos. They would say things like "Write this down from the board." It is impossible for a blind learner to comply. When the teacher is untrained in braille and oral instruction techniques, the child gets disadvantaged. The teacher might hold a misconception that a blind child cannot comprehend math and science and will opt to provide him with basic learning materials. This practice is termed low expectation. It denies a blind child bright opportunities in the future. Lastly, teachers have up to 40 or 50 pupils in one classroom setting. It takes time to prepare specialized learning materials for one child.

Social and Emotional Challenges

The objective of inclusive education is to make all children friends. However, in actuality, visually impaired children feel isolated. Others find it difficult to interact. Some might feel afraid to approach him. There could be some teasing and name-calling too. The blind child will have no idea whether anyone is laughing at him or being kind. As such, the blind child is socially isolated. He sits alone during lunch time. Second, there could be a sense of isolation and depression in the child. He requires assistance for small tasks such as turning to a page or moving to the door. When he repeatedly requests help, he starts feeling that I am burdensome. This causes him to become insecure. Some children refrain from asking questions in class for fear of looking foolish. Hence, they lag behind. There is an exam anxiety also in the blind child. Due to poor writing skills on the part of the teacher/reader, even if the student knows the answer, he receives poor grades.

Exam and Assessment Problems

Most examinations conducted in many schools are writing and timed-based. For a visually impaired student, one requires the services of an individual to transcribe what he says. One can also use Braille question papers or even computers with a speech function. Identifying a reliable writer can be tough; this is because the slow pace and errors on his part would mean that the blind pupil ends up losing marks. Besides, additional time may not be given to him. Certain disciplines such as geometry require drawing and mapping. When a blind pupil is asked to draw a circle for example, it will be impossible for him to do so without the required equipment.

Lack of Technology and Support Staff

Technology can eliminate many obstacles. Braille readers, braille displays, audio tape recorders, and applications on mobile phones are very helpful in this process. However, technology is unavailable to many schools, particularly those in underdeveloped areas, since the technology is very expensive, and the teachers lack training for operating it. Further, there is no specialist in such schools. The inclusive schools must have a resource specialist trained in braille. Otherwise, the class teacher will be all alone in teaching the child. Even the parents lack skills to help their children with homework.

Attitude of Others

The final barrier is the mindset of some people. Even today, some teachers or parents or even other pupils feel that the blind child needs to be admitted to a special school for his education. Their rationale is that he will hinder my child's progress. Such an unfriendly approach serves as a major barrier despite the presence of books and ramps.

Strategies for Visually Impaired Students in Inclusive Education

It is possible for visually impaired students to learn effectively in an inclusive school provided the right strategies are used by the school. Strategies refer to the systematic approach adopted to deal with the challenges. The challenges have been identified in point five. In this part, I will look at some practical actions which can be taken in terms of strategies by the teacher, school and peers. Some of the strategies do not necessarily require financial resources. They just require planning, training and compassion.

Change the Learning Material

The first thing is to provide the student with reading materials. If the student can read braille script, then braille books should be provided. In case the books are not available in braille script, an instructor or a volunteer can take down some necessary points in braille. If the student has limited vision, the school can provide large print books. Size 18 and 24 font size would suit well. Black lettering on white or yellow background can be used. Shiny paper should be avoided. Secondly, there is need for the use of audio. The lesson can be recorded or audio books can be provided to the student. This can be listened both at home and in the classroom through earphones. Thirdly, tactile materials can be used. Tactile materials mean things that one can feel by touching. An example would be the creation of map of Pakistan in tactile form. Also, the scientific diagrams like the one of the hearts may be made using thread and cloth material. The student will touch the object and understand. Today many free mobile applications speak out the written text. These can be taught to the student by the instructor.

Make the School Safe and Easy to Move

The visually impaired student must move freely without fear. Thus, the school should conduct an audit of its infrastructure. All obstacles must be removed from the middle of the road. Install a reliable handrail on all flights of stairs. Indicate the presence of the first and last steps using bright coloration or textured surfaces. It is essential to keep the classroom layout constant daily. If we move chairs and

tables frequently, the student will get disoriented. Offer the visually impaired student a permanent place by the entrance and next to the teacher. This will save valuable time. Teach all children how to guide. The guide must walk slightly in front of the blind student, letting him grasp his elbow. Announce the existence of a stairway or doorway before reaching the object. Moreover, orientation classes must be provided. During the first week, the blind child is guided through the school premises by a teacher or senior student. He learns where the toilet, office, and exit gates are located. Having done 2-3 repetitions, he will move independently, using a stick.

Train Teachers and Change Teaching Style

The teachers are important for the implementation of strategies to improve the education of a blind child. The school will provide brief training sessions to all teachers in the school. These training sessions will cover fundamental concepts such as how to communicate effectively, how to describe the board content verbally, and non-writing methods of checking understanding. When teaching, when the teacher writes something on the board, it is recommended to repeat it vocally. Rather than saying, this is the answer, it will be better to say, the answer is 25. I write two five. Working in groups is another strategy that may help in improving the learning experience. Form small groups consisting of 4 students where the blind student can participate actively by listening and answering. Another member can ask questions verbally. In subject areas like Geometry, real objects can be used. A bangle can be used as a real object in explaining a circle, and cardboard objects as angles.

Support in Exams and Assessment

The exams have to be just. Three choices need to be offered to the school. First, the choice of a writer/scribe. The child talks while the scribe types everything said without deviation. The scribe needs to be trained. Second, the choice of using technology. This means that the student will have access to a laptop and will type their work which will be sent through email. Third, the provision of braille paper. This should be made available to those who are knowledgeable about it. In addition to all these, extra time must be allotted to the blind child as well because reading with eyes is much faster. This means an extra 20 minutes every hour. The question can be changed if it's only a visual one. For example, from "Draw a map", to, "Describe a map of Pakistan and name four provinces".

Use Peer Support and Build Friendship

Peers will assist much in this process. The instructor may introduce the buddy system. Each week a new pupil will act as the buddy who will assist the blind student to locate the required page, go to the laboratory or copy notes. Next week another pupil will have his turn. In this case, assistance will be distributed equally among peers, and friendship will be developed. It is recommended to address the class on the first day. In this case, the instructor will explain that Ali cannot see but can hear and speak. We all will assist him and study from him. In this case, teasing will not take place. Let's involve the child in various games such as cricket with an audible ball or rope run.

Use Technology and Resource Teacher

The school should try to procure funds, purchase basic devices. A digital audio recorder is very cheap. The student could make recordings during lectures. Using a smartphone with a free screen reader application such as TalkBack can access information from pdfs and websites. A braille slate and stylus set is very affordable and useful for writing. But the best option would be to have only one resource teacher for 2 or 3 other nearby schools. This resource teacher would know braille, computing and pedagogy. He will visit each of the schools for two days every week.

Involve Parents and Plan Together

Phone the parents and create an Individual Education Program, IEP. Set the goals within three months. For instance, Ali will be trained on using the cane in school, he will read books written in braille language for grade 5, and he will participate in the morning assembly. List down who will be responsible for what activity. All the participants: the teacher, parent, and resource person must sign it. Review the IEP after three months and create another one. Once the parents understand the IEP, they contribute at home.

Related Studies

A number of researches done by various researchers describe the strategies used and the challenges faced in providing inclusive education to visually impaired students. For example, according to a study carried out by Adebisi R. O., (2015), inclusive education poses several challenges to the learning process among visually impaired students since there are no specialized learning materials. According to another study done by Subban P. (2006), teachers' attitudes and appropriate training are key ingredients for successful inclusive education yet the majority of teachers do not have adequate skills for inclusive education. In addition, according to Florian L. (2014), adaptation and inclusive pedagogic approaches can play a very important role in facilitating effective learning. In a study done by Heward W. L. (2013), provision of special learning tools including tactile learning materials, audio books, and Braille are vital factors for enhancing learning among visually impaired students. However, lack of resources, large class size, and lack of supportive services were some of the main challenges identified by Mastropieri M. A., & Scruggs T. E., (2010).

METHODOLOGY

The current study was quantitative in nature and a cross-sectional survey was used for data collection. The population of the study were one hundred and fifty (150) visually impaired students of Kotli AJ&K. The sample was chosen from the population by the researchers via a universal sampling technique. The researcher used self-developed questionnaire as a research tool for the study. The reliability of instrument was measured through Cronbach's Alpha and the value was .753. The researchers collected data personally. The response rate was 100%. Data were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) by applying mean score.

RESULTS

Table 1 Current Practices of Visually Impaired Students

S.No	Statements	Mean
1	I use Braille or audio materials for my learning.	3.88
2	I receive clear verbal explanations from my teachers.	3.67
3	I am given extra time to complete my tasks.	4.00
4	I receive learning materials in accessible formats.	2.81
5	I use tactile (touch-based) materials during lessons.	3.98
6	I participate in regular classroom activities.	4.23
7	I use assistive technology to support my learning.	4.01

8	I receive individual support from my teachers when needed.	4.32
9	I sit in a classroom position that supports my learning.	3.89
10	I work with my classmates during classroom activities.	4.12

The table 1 shows that inclusive education practices for visually impaired students are generally implemented at a moderate to high level, with mean scores ranging from 2.81 to 4.32. The highest rated practice is individual support from teachers ($M = 4.32$), followed by participation in regular classroom activities ($M = 4.23$) and working with classmates ($M = 4.12$), indicating strong classroom inclusion. Other positively rated practices include use of assistive technology ($M = 4.01$), extra time for tasks ($M = 4.00$), tactile materials ($M = 3.98$), proper seating arrangements ($M = 3.89$), and use of Braille or audio materials ($M = 3.88$). However, lower mean scores for clear verbal explanations ($M = 3.67$) and especially accessible learning materials ($M = 2.81$) show that improvements are still needed in instructional communication and resource accessibility. Overall, the findings suggest effective inclusion with some key areas requiring further development.

Table 2 Challenges for Visually Impaired Students

S.No	Statements	Mean
1	I face difficulty reading printed materials.	1.60
2	I face problems due to lack of assistive devices.	4.18
3	I find some classroom materials difficult to access.	4.22
4	I face difficulty moving safely around the school.	4.34
5	I do not receive enough support from trained teachers.	3.78
6	I feel left out during some group activities.	4.02
7	I face problems due to lack of Braille books.	4.33
8	I face difficulty understanding visual content.	4.00
9	Poor classroom lighting affects my learning.	2.00
10	I face difficulty completing tasks on time.	3.93

The table 2 indicates that visually impaired students face significant challenges in inclusive education, with mean scores ranging from 1.60 to 4.34. The most critical issues include difficulty in safe mobility ($M = 4.34$), lack of Braille books ($M = 4.33$), limited access to classroom materials ($M = 4.22$), and insufficient assistive devices ($M = 4.18$). Students also report difficulties in understanding visual content ($M = 4.00$), feeling excluded from group activities ($M = 4.02$), and a lack of support from trained teachers ($M = 3.79$). In contrast, challenges such as reading printed materials ($M = 1.60$) and poor lighting ($M = 2.00$) are less severe. Overall, the findings highlight that the main barriers are related to inadequate resources, accessibility issues, and insufficient support systems.

Table 3 Strategies for Visually Impaired Students in Inclusive Education

S. No	Statements	Mean
1	I learn better when Braille and audio materials are used.	4.12
2	I get benefit from using assistive devices in the classroom.	4.14
3	I learn better when teachers use inclusive teaching methods.	4.18
4	I feel safer when classrooms are arranged for easy movement.	4.76
5	I get benefit from support from my classmates.	4.13
6	I perform better when I am given extra time in tests.	3.99
7	I understand lessons better when teachers describe visual information.	3.67
8	I get benefit from regular support services at school.	3.78
9	I learn better when technology is used in teaching.	4.22
10	I get benefit when my parents and teachers work together.	4.00

The table 3 shows strategies for visually impaired students in inclusive education with generally high mean scores, indicating positive effectiveness. The highest-rated strategy is feeling safe when classrooms are arranged for easy movement (Mean = 4.76), showing that classroom accessibility is most important for students. Learning through technology also scores highly (Mean = 4.22), followed by inclusive teaching methods (Mean = 4.18), assistive devices (Mean = 4.14), Braille and audio materials (Mean = 4.12), and support from classmates (Mean = 4.13), all reflecting strong learning support. Extra time in tests has a moderately high mean (Mean = 3.99). Lower mean scores are seen in understanding lessons when teachers describe visual information (Mean = 3.67) and regular support services at school (Mean = 3.78), indicating these areas need improvement. Overall, the findings suggest that inclusive strategies are effective, but better communication and support services are still needed to enhance learning experiences.

CONCLUSIONS

Following are the main points of findings

1. It can be deduced that inclusive educational policies concerning visually impaired learners are being employed at a relatively moderate or high degree, with notable strengths in terms of classroom interaction and teaching aid, but areas that require improvement pertain to the provision of accessible instructional materials and clear communication.
2. It can be deduced that visually impaired learners are challenged by their inclusive educational experiences because of resource scarcity, issues of access, and lack of assistance; however, reading printed materials and lighting problems do not pose any particular challenge.
3. It can be deduced that inclusion strategies aimed at promoting the education of visually impaired learners prove to be highly successful as far as safety in classrooms and technology support are concerned, but improvements should be made with regards to other aspects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations based on conclusions are following

1. It is advised to the students that they must use available learning resources including Braille, audio, and digital resources in order to enhance their learning process. Also, it is advised to communicate with their teachers regarding their requirements to ensure proper assistance in their learning process. In addition, it is advised to participate actively in classroom activities.
2. Teachers are advised to ensure provision of printed materials in available forms such as Braille, audio, and digital form for assistance of the visually impaired students. In addition, the teachers should use assistive technology devices along with verbal guidance in order to overcome the problem of reading printed material. Feedback of the students should also be considered in this regard.
3. The administration of the school is advised to improve the lighting of the classroom through availability of proper brightness and absence of any kind of glare for helping visually impaired students learn efficiently.

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