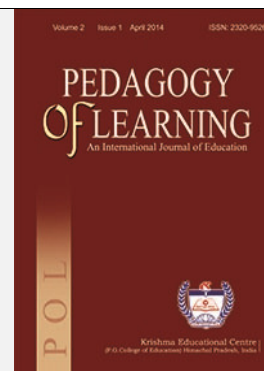


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## **Curriculum Transaction in Special Schools of Himachal Pradesh: An Exploratory Study**

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to study the curriculum transaction procedures as well as the incentives and educational facilities available to students residing in both the special schools of Himachal Pradesh. The survey method of research was used to critically evaluate the curriculum transaction procedures adopted in these schools. The sample was selected from different populations (i.e. heads, teachers, students, parents and ex-students) of special schools of Dhalli and Sundernagar. The investigator used an observation schedule to cross verify the facts as reported by heads, teachers, students, parents & ex-students. With the help of this observation schedule, investigator physically observed all the details related to curriculum transaction etc. The percentage analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed in both the schools normal school curriculum is being taught without any modification. In both the schools timetable was displayed but not followed properly. Teachers in both the schools use different teaching methods like sign language, gestures and total communication for classroom interaction. Both the special schools

are lacking in the facility of teaching-learning material, psychologist and vocational counselor. Computer and vocational education is not being imparted properly and regularly in both the schools. No educational /field tours and outing are organized for the students by their respective institutions.

**Keywords:** Disability, Curriculum, Incentives, Parents, Impairment and Emotional, Development

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## **Introduction**

Every single child has the right to education, as stipulated in the Convention of the Rights of the Child. That universal principal applies to children with disabilities. The Convention of the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities affirms the rights of persons with disabilities to education and specifically outlines that persons with disabilities should not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 advocates' integrated education in general school for loco-motor impaired children and the mildly disabled children and special education to the severely handicapped children. It also recommends orientation and pre-service training for general teachers on disability management and provision of vocational training. The Policy document says that the objective should be to integrate the physically and the mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners to prepare them to face life with courage and confidence. There is, however, no dearth of laws and schemes in the country to promote education of children with special needs. Central and State governments and local authorities are legally bound to provide access to free education to all the disabled children till the age of 18 years and also promote integration of disabled children in normal schools under the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, better known as PWD Act. The Government, as per the Act, should formulate schemes to conduct part-time classes, impart non-formal education, and provide education through open schools and open universities for children with special needs. The Act also envisages a comprehensive education scheme to provide transport facilities, remove architectural barriers, supply free books, uniform and other materials, grant scholarship, restructure curriculum and modify the examination system for the benefit of children with special needs. All children have the right to be educated regardless of their disability or learning difficulty, because education is a human right. Exclusionary policies and practices however, are widely prevalent all over the country. Many premier schools in the country deny admission to disabled children in violation of their right to education. For the protection of the rights of Persons with Disabilities and to ensure their equal participation in the development of the state, the Government of Himachal Pradesh is implementing the Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 legislations. Only two institutions i.e. School/ Home for Speech and Hearing Impaired Children (Boys), Dhalli (Shimla) which is being run by Himachal Pradesh Council for Child Welfare (HPCCW) and Institution for Children with Special Abilities

(Girls), Sundernagar (Mandi) which is being run by Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of Himachal Pradesh were considered in this study.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Keeping in view the importance of review of related literature in any research the investigator made an attempt to explore the existing literature, related to present paper. The investigator has also gone through International Dissertation Abstracts and different online resources. In this context Bala (1985) revealed that deaf, blind and orthopedically handicapped children were less intelligent. Their adjustment was socially, emotionally and educationally less stable. They had poor home and health adjustment. The facilities available in the institution for handicapped children were found quite inadequate as compared with those provided in the schools for normal children. Sharma (1988) observed that teaching aid method was superior to the normal teaching method for the development of concepts among deaf children of standard I and II. Sharma and Pandey (1992) found that the hearing children in general performed better than the hearing impaired children. The performance of hearing impaired on post-test was better than pre-test. It indicated that the adaptation in instructional material alone had raised their performance in science. Singh (2001) found that games, sports, drawing and painting, craft and cultural activities should be the essential part of the curriculum of the handicapped children. Sah (2003) revealed that classroom amplification is very important for a school set up. Telephone devices, T.V listening aids and large area system will help the individual in better communication. Farooq *et al.* (2011) found that content of vocational subjects was not according to the developmental stages of the students. The study recommended that the vocational curriculum of both subjects needs to be upgraded and modernized to make them relevant and meaningful for the hearing impaired students. El-Zraigat and Smadi (2012) observed that educating students who are deaf and hard of hearing was challenging. The challenges included insufficient teachers, unequipped schools and lack of remedial and educational programs along with lack of instructional and assessment tools. Results also indicated that students who are deaf and hard of hearing need modified curricula reflecting their special needs. El-Zraigat (2013) recommended the modification and development of the special curricula, supplying the schools for children with hearing impairment with services needed by hearing impaired students like speech and language therapy, professional educational interpreters, audio logical rehabilitation and providing such students with counselling services in order to obtain their social and psychological adjustment. Confluence (2016) reported that due to implementation of Right to Education Act, 2009, the composition of classrooms is changing. Students with varying levels of abilities cannot be taught in the same manner. Without proper adaptations/modifications, some children in classrooms would never be challenged to perform up to their potential, while others may not be able to ever experience success. It has been found and seen that adaptations if carried out effectively facilitate both academic and social participation in class activities and can be used across various settings to facilitate success. Paul *et al.* (2017) found that development and adoption of coordinated approaches to

measuring disability and social exclusion are important. There is a need for standardized tools for monitoring the implementation of programs and policies at national level. All the stakeholder coordination mechanisms need to be improved.

### **Need of the Study**

Children with disabilities and their families experience barriers to the enjoyment of their basic rights and to their inclusion in society. Their abilities and potentials are over looked, their capacities are underestimated and their needs are given low priority. Yet, the barriers they face are more frequently as a result of the environment in which they live than as a result of their impairment. While the situation for these children is changing for the better, there are still severe gaps. On the positive side, there has been a gathering global momentum over the past two decades, originating with persons with disabilities and increasingly supported by civil society and governments. Disabled children are like non-disabled children except their specific disabilities. They have a strong desire for independent functioning. Special equipment and additional training are necessary for teaching special children. Without special education these children cannot developed to their fullest potentials. After going through the review of related literature it has been found that very few studies have been conducted in this area. The present study was very much needed and is quite justified.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives were framed in this study:

1. To study the curriculum transactional procedure in special schools for speech and hearing impaired children in terms of curriculum, time-table, classroom interaction, educational facilities, teaching method, teaching learning material, computer and vocational education, co-curricular activities and extra-classes.

### **Methodology**

In this paper, survey method under descriptive method of research was used to study and evaluate the curriculum transaction procedures followed in both the schools. The curriculum transaction procedures adopted in these schools and as perceived by heads, students, teachers, parents, ex-students and investigator have been studied in detail. All the heads, teachers, parents, students and ex-students of the schools constituted the population of the study. The sample was selected from - Heads, Teachers, Students, Parents and Ex-students of special schools Dhalli and Sundernagar. An observation schedule was also prepared by the investigator to recheck and verify the facts as reported by heads, teachers, parents, students and ex-students. For the analysis of data, percentage analysis was used.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Data**

The analysis is presented under two main headings:

## **1. Analysis Related to Curriculum Transactional Procedures**

**Heads' Views:** Heads in both the special schools revealed that teachers adopt different techniques of teaching like sign language, lip reading method; total communication system and some of the teachers also use special teaching learning materials like charts, models and flash cards as per the needs of the students. Heads of both the special schools were satisfied with the teaching methods used by the teachers for teaching as well as the academic achievement of the students.

**Teachers' Views:** Teachers in both the special schools revealed that normal school curriculum is being taught to the students. All the compulsory subjects (Hindi, English, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, Drawing, IT and home science) as prescribed by Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education (HPBSE) are being taught to the students. Students of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class have been exempted from studying Mathematics. Majority of the teachers (87.5% in Dhalli and 66.67% in Sundernagar) were of the opinion that curriculum being followed in these institutions is not suitable for the students as it is not according to their needs. Teachers in both the schools make use of the teaching methods like sign language, gestures and total communication. Majority (62.5%) of the teachers at Dhalli use sign language and gestures as teaching methods. All the teachers at Sundernagar use total communication as the major teaching method. A time is available in both the institutions and all the teachers follow it properly. All the teachers informed that facility of speech therapy is available for the students in both the institutions. Majority of the teachers in both the special schools regularly check the proper functioning of hearing aids of the students. Majority of the teachers in both the special schools were satisfied with the academic achievement of the students

**Students' Views:** It was told by majority of the students in both the special schools that a proper time table is available in their respective institutions and is being followed properly. Majority of the students in both the special schools (78% in Dhalli and 68% in Sundernagar) told that teachers make use of use total communication method for day to day classroom interaction. In special school Dhalli a large number of students (56%) was not satisfied with the teaching methods used by the teachers. In case of special school Sundernagar majority of the students (78%) were satisfied towards the teaching methods used by the teachers. The students who were dissatisfied mentioned various reasons like: teachers do not make use of signs, gestures and teaching aids which makes it difficult for the students to understand the content taught in the classroom. All the students in both the special schools told about the provision of speech therapy but majority of them (84% in Dhalli and 58% in Sundernagar) told that it is not being imparted to them.

**Parents' Views:** A good number of parents (58% in Dhalli and 52% in Sundernagar) told that trained teachers are available in these special schools. A considerable number of parents (42% in Dhalli and 48% in Sundernagar) did not respond and were not having any idea about the availability of the trained staff. In special school Dhalli 48% parents were satisfied towards the teaching methods whereas the number of such parents in Sundernagar was 50%. The percentage of

those who were not satisfied was 22% and 14% respectively. A considerable percentage of parents (30% in Dhalli and 36% in Sundernagar) were not having any idea about the teaching method used in the school where their wards were studying. Majority of the parents in both the special schools (52% in Dhalli and 74% in Sundernagar) opined about the suitability of the curriculum to their children. A considerable number of parents (48% in Dhalli and 26% in Sundernagar) also told that the curriculum is not suitable for their wards. It needs modification. A large number of parents (46% in Dhalli and 52% in Sundernagar) were satisfied with the academic achievement of their child. The percentage of those who were not satisfied was 16% and 20% respectively. A considerable percentage of parents (38 % in Dhalli and 28 % in Sundernagar) were not having any idea about the academic achievement of their wards.

**Ex-students' Views:** Majority of the ex-students who were pursuing their higher education told that they are satisfied towards the education they have received from their ex-schools, whereas the ex-students of both the special schools who were serving in various departments told that they are not satisfied with the education they have received from their respective ex-schools.

**Investigator's Observation:** Investigator during her visits observed that, in both the special schools H.P Board of School Education syllabus is being followed. Students of class ninth and tenth are exempted from studying Mathematics and are studying Home Science and Information Technology in place of it. Investigator did not find the syllabus suitable for the speech and hearing impaired children as the curriculum meant for normal school children is being taught to these students without any modification. Investigator felt this syllabus difficult for such children to understand. It should be modified and illustrative examples and slides should be used. Use of TLM (Teaching Learning Material) by teachers in the classroom was also found missing in both the institution as there was scarcity of such material in both the institutions. Total communication method was found to be the method of teaching. Proper speech therapy rooms were not available. Time –table was displayed properly in both the schools but the investigator observed that, it was not being followed properly. Subject-wise teaching faculty was not available in both the institution.

## **2. Analysis Related to Incentives and Educational Facilities**

**Heads' Views:** Head of the institution at Dhalli (Shimla) revealed that the special facilities like Individual hearing aid, speech therapist, audiologist, clinical audiometer and communication aids are available whereas facility of psychologist, vocational counselor, speech recognition software, group hearing aid special curriculum, special teaching material and labs are not available. Head of the institution at Sundernagar revealed that the institution is providing all the facilities except the psychologist, vocational counselor and special curriculum. Head of the institution at Dhalli also revealed that the incentives like books, uniform and stationary are available and are being provided to such students but no merit scholarship is available. All the students are being provided with disability scholarship by the government. Whereas,

all the incentives like books, uniform, stationary and scholarship are fully available and are being provided to the students in special school Sundernagar. No educational tours/entertainment outings are conducted by the institution as revealed by head of the institution at Special school Dhalli. Some organizations and NGO's like Red Cross Society sometimes take the students for field trips and educational movies. Head of the institution at Sundernagar when asked about nature of educational tours /outings for students told that the students go for sports meets and it is a kind of outing for them. So it can be inferred that no educational tours/entertainment outings are conducted by any of these special schools for students.

**Teachers' Views:** During interview teachers revealed that in special school Dhalli lesser number of the special facilities was available whereas most of the facilities were available in special school Sundernagar. Findings indicate that both the special schools are lacking in the facility of psychologist, vocational counsellor and special curriculum in common. In special school Dhalli, Shimla the incentives like scholarship and stationary are not available to the students as revealed by the teachers. Students are being provided with disability scholarship by the government. On the other hand as the supply of free books and uniform by the institution/government is concerned, all the teachers said that they are available to the students. On further discussion with teachers they disclosed that free books and uniforms are being provided to the students by SSA (SarvaShikhshaAbhiyan). In special school Sundernagar all the teachers informed that the incentives like scholarship, uniform, textbooks and stationary are fully available to the students. 100% of the teachers in both the special schools told that they have provision of computer education for students in the school. When asked whether it is being imparted to the students regularly, 62.5% of the teachers in special school Dhalli told that it is being imparted to the students properly whereas 37.5% of the teachers revealed that it is not being imparted properly and regularly. On further discussion teachers revealed that computer education is not being imparted regularly due to non-availability of a regular computer instructor. In special school Sundernagar 100% of the teachers responded that computer education is being imparted properly and regularly to the students. 100% of the teachers in both the special schools told that they have provision of vocational education for students in the school. 50% of the teachers at special school Dhalli informed that vocational education is being imparted to the students; on the contrary 50% responded that it is not being imparted to students. As far as special school Sundernagar is concerned, 33.33% teachers responded that vocational education is being imparted to the students but 66.67% of the teachers revealed that it is not being given to the students regularly. The reason mentioned by teachers in both the special schools for not imparting it regularly was shortage of teaching staff. The findings indicate that there is a need for proper provision of computer as well as vocational education in both the institutions. All the teachers in both the institutions informed that co-curricular activities are being organized in both the institutions for all round development of children. The teachers also informed that students also go to participate in sports meet and take part in

different games like long jump, high jump and football and also participate in various competitions like drawing competitions and cultural programs. All the teachers at both the special schools informed that no educational tours or field trips are organized for students by the institution. On further discussion teachers at special school Dhalli disclosed that students are sometime taken for educational movies and field trips by some NGO'S like Wildflower Hall Kufri and Red Cross Society.

**Students' Views:** In special school Dhalli none of the students is being provided with any type of scholarships and stationary by the institution. All the students are getting free uniforms and text-books under the scheme SSA (SarvaShikshaAbhiyaan). As far as special school Sundernagar is concerned only 34% of the students responded that they are getting merit scholarship by some private agency. On the other hand all of them responded that they are being provided with the incentives like uniforms, text-books and stationary. 100% of the students in both the special schools revealed that there is a provision of computer and vocational education for them in their respective schools. When asked whether it is being imparted to them properly, majority of the students told that they are being imparted computer as well as vocational education. But a considerable percentage of students in both the special schools revealed that computer education and vocational education is not being imparted regularly to them. The percentage of such student was (30% in Dhalli and 28% in Sundernagar) and (40% in Dhalli and 34% in Sundernagar) respectively. All the students in both the special school told that co-curricular activities are being organized in their institutions and a good number of students (56% in Dhalli and 52% in Sundernagar) also participate in those activities. As per the information obtained from the students sports trainer was available in special school Dhalli whereas special school Sundernagar was lacking in this. 100% of the students in both the special schools revealed that no educational /field tours and outing are organized for them by their respective institutions.

**Parents' Views:** All the parents in special schools Dhalli revealed that their wards were being provided with free text-books and uniforms only. Sometimes, these are also not provided timely. No scholarship and stationary was being provided to them. In special school Sundernagar all the incentives were being provided except any kind of merit scholarship. When asked about satisfaction towards computer and vocational education 80% of the parents were not even having any idea about the provision of computer education and almost same was the condition in case of vocational education, a majority of parents (90%) was not able to respond and was not having any idea about it. In special school Sundernagar 60% of the parents when asked about computer education, were satisfied whereas remaining 40% said that they don't know about computer education. 62% of the parents were satisfied about vocational education whereas other 38% said that they were not having any idea whether it is being given to their wards or not. Findings indicate that majority of the parents in both the special schools are not aware of the provisions related to various educational facilities in their ward's respective schools as they never entered



the school gate and observed the provision related to various facilities. In special school Dhalli all the parents told that there was provision of co-curricular activities for their wards in the school. In special school Sundernagar 82% of the parents told that there was provision of co-curricular activities for their wards but 18% of the parents were not having any idea about it.

**Ex-students' Views:** The ex-students who are pursuing their higher studies (category I) informed that the special facilities like facility of hearing aid, speech therapist, audiologist and computer education were available for them when they were studying in their respective institutions. As far as the category II of ex-students (who are employed in different departments) is concerned, all of them responded that they were not being provided with any of the special facilities. All the ex-students informed about availability of all the incentives except for scholarship. All the ex-students who are pursuing their higher education told that their ex-schools used to organize co-curricular activities for them whereas the ex-students who are employed in different departments told that there was no provision of co-curricular activities for them.

**Investigator's Observation:** On the basis of investigators personal visits to both the schools and interaction with different stakeholders it was found that students were being provided with the incentives like free text-books, uniform and stationary; whereas merit scholarships by some private agency were available for a few students in Sundernagar only. Apart from this in both the schools disability scholarship is being provided by the Department of SC's OBC's & Minority Affairs Government of H.P. and it is being deposited directly in the personal bank accounts of the inmates. Both the schools are providing computer education but it is not being provided regularly in special school Dhalli due to lack of a regular computer teacher. There is provision of vocational education in both the schools but is not being imparted properly. Both the schools are lacking in the facility of a vocational counsellor and a psychologist. Investigator observed that co-curricular activities are being organized in special school Dhalli and a good number of students participate in them but special school Sundernagar is lacking in the facility of a playground and does not organize such activities. Students take part in drawing and dance competitions only. Sports trainer is available in special school Dhalli whereas special school Sundernagar is lacking in this. No educational /field tours and outing are organized for the students by their respective institutions.

### **Findings of the Study**

The findings of this paper are as under:

2. In both the schools normal school curriculum is being taught to the students without any modification. Heads, teachers and parents are of the view that these schools should follow the mainstream curriculum but with appropriate adaptations to the curriculum material. In both the schools time table was displayed but was not being followed properly.

3. Teachers in both the schools make use of the teaching methods like sign language, gestures and total communication for day to day classroom interaction. In special school Dhalli a large number of students (56%) was not satisfied with the teaching methods used by the teachers. The students who were dissatisfied mentioned various reasons like: Teachers do not make use of signs, gestures and teaching aids which makes it difficult for the students to understand the content taught in the classroom. A considerable percentage of parents (30% in Dhalli and 36% in Sundernagar) were not having any idea about the teaching method used in the school where their wards were studying.
4. Both the special schools are lacking in the facility of teaching-learning material, psychologist, vocational counsellor and special curriculum in common.
5. In special school Dhalli, Shimla the incentives like books, uniform and stationary are available to students but merit scholarships are not available in the institution. All the students are being provided with disability scholarship by the government. Whereas all the incentives like books, uniform, stationary and scholarship are fully available and are being provided to the students in special school Sundernagar. It was revealed by teachers and students in both the schools that sometime they do not get these incentives well in time.
6. Computer and vocational education is not being imparted properly and regularly in both the schools.
7. Co-curricular activities are being organized in special school Dhalli and a good number of students participate in them but special school Sundernagar is lacking in the facility of a playground and a sports trainer and do not organize such activities.
8. No educational /field tours and outing are organized for the students by their respective institutions.

### **Educational Implications**

It was found that the normal school curriculum is being taught to the students in both the schools. Majority of the teachers were of the opinion that curriculum being followed in these institutions is not suitable for the students as it is not according to their needs and is quite difficult for them. Therefore, it is suggested that these schools should follow mainstream curriculum but with appropriate adaptations. As language deficit is the root cause of their learning difficulties, special emphasis should be placed on the development of language and communication skill in these children with the help of appropriate teaching resources, equipments and developing curriculum material with additional explanatory material like illustrative examples and illustrative slides. Teachers should be provided with the special teaching learning material so that classroom interaction could be made easy and interesting for such students. Content of some topics of different subjects should be available in movie/picture mode with the use of sign language. It is also suggested that the

deserving students should be rewarded with regular merits scholarships/stipends and incentives. Government should strengthen the vocational and computer education by making it more effective and job oriented.

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