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INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS IN INDIAN EDUCATION SETTING

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SUMMARY

The objective of this research is to look into the inclusion of children with neurological diseases in Indian education. According to the research, a substantial proportion of children in India have neurological disorders, and they frequently face barriers to education. The study examines the current situation of education for children with neurological problems in India, as well as the policies and laws that regulate their education. The review also looks at the difficulties that these children, their families, and educators have had in implementing inclusive education. Lastly, the report explores interventions and techniques that can help children with neurological disorders be included in Indian education settings with a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved in the education process.

Key words: inclusion, neurological disorders, indian education, policies, strategies

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right and is prevalent in all walks of life (Nair, H. B., & Padmaja, C. 2023). All children, including those with impairments and disabilities, have a fundamental right to an education. In India, the number of children with neurological disorders has been increasing in recent years. According to the Census of India (2011), the current estimated number of disabled children in India is roughly 2.21% or more than 2.2 million children. Autistic disorder, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disability are among the most common disabilities in children in India (Goyal et al., 2019). The inclusion of children with neurological disorders and impairments in Indian educational institutions is a complicated subject that necessitates a multifaceted approach. Despite existing laws and procedures, educating children with neurological problems remains a difficulty. The goal of this review study is to look into how children with neurological diseases are included in Indian school settings. The study examines the current condition of education for children with neurological illnesses in India, the obstacles they encounter, the regulations and legislation that regulate their education, and the techniques and treatments that can help them succeed. The purpose of this review study is to look into how children with neurological diseases are included in Indian school settings. The study examines the current condition of education for children with neurological disorders in India, the obstacles they encounter, the regulations and legislation that regulate their education, and the techniques and treatments that can help them succeed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In India, paediatric neurological diseases are becoming more common. In India, the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is thought to be around 0.9%, which is higher than the global prevalence rate of 0.7%, per a study by Goyal et al. (2019). In India, the prevalence of cerebral palsy, another prevalent neurological condition among children, is 2.2 per 1000 live births (Kumar et al., 2020). India has a high prevalence of intellectual disability, with an estimated 1.3% of the population (Mukherjee et al., 2017). A historic piece of law, the Right to Education Act of 2009, requires free and compulsory education for all children in India. The law allows for the inclusion of kids with impairments in regular classrooms and acknowledges the value of inclusive education. Unfortunately, the act's implementation has been sluggish, and several kids with disabilities continue to be denied access to education (Sharma, 2019). One of the main causes of this is that parents, educators, and legislators are not aware of the needs of kids with neurological problems. India has several difficulties when it comes to the education of kids with neurological conditions. The lack of understanding of these children's needs by educators and legislators is one of the main problems. Many teachers lack the essential expertise and training to meet the requirements of students with neurological problems because they have not received the appropriate training (Singh et al., 2021). Some teachers owing to confirmation bias, will not accept children with neurological disabilities into the folds of the clas-

sroom (B. Nair, H. 2022). Children with neurological problems frequently struggle to learn and get disengaged from their education since the curriculum and teaching strategies in traditional schools are not appropriate for their learning styles. The absence of proper assistive technology and equipment presents another difficulty for kids with neurological illnesses. Many schools lack the infrastructure required to offer students with neurological illnesses with assistive technology, such as visual aids, hearing aids, and specialist software. Their capacity to learn and communicate effectively is so constrained (Sudhakar et al., 2019). Families with kids with neurological impairments encounter several obstacles when trying to get them into school. The resources and services that are available to families are not widely known to many of them. Families are frequently discouraged from seeking support and assistance due to the stigma attached to neurological illnesses, which further restricts their access to healthcare and education (Kumar et al., 2020). In addition to these studies, other research has also highlighted the benefits of inclusive education in India. For example, a study by Chatterjee et al. (2015) found that inclusive education was associated with better academic performance and socialization for students with disabilities in a rural Indian setting. Another study by Arora and Bakhshi (2017) found that inclusive education was associated with greater parental satisfaction and better academic performance for students with disabilities in an urban Indian setting. Furthermore, research has also focused on the challenges of implementing inclusive education in India. For example, a study by Choudhary and Sharma (2018) found that a lack of resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient training for teachers were major challenges in implementing inclusive education in India. Overall, the literature suggests that inclusive education can be an effective approach to improving the educational outcomes of students with disabilities in India. However, there is a need for further research to better understand the challenges of implementing inclusive education and to identify strategies for overcoming these challenges.

CURRENT STATE OF INCLUSION

In India, there has been much controversy and discussion regarding the inclusion of kids with neurological problems in school for a long time. Although the nation has made strides in this regard, much more needs to be done to guarantee that kids with neurological disorders have access to high-quality education. India's current policy on including children with neurological problems in the classroom varies greatly based on the location, the school, and the specific situation. While some instructors and institutions have worked hard to meet these children's needs, others might not have the tools or expertise to do so. The lack of awareness and training among teachers is one of the main obstacles to including children with neurological disorders in schools. Many teachers might not have had enough training on how to support kids with neurological problems, which results in a lack of knowledge about the particular requirements of these kids. Children with neurological problems may be excluded from classes as a result or may only have limited possibilities to engage fully in classroom activities.

There are, however, a lot of encouraging advancements in this field. The Indian government has worked hard in recent years to advance inclusive education by putting into place laws and initiatives that support kids with neurological impairments. For instance, all schools must make appropriate accommodations for pupils with impairments, including neurological disabilities, in accordance with the Rights of People with Disabilities Act of 2016. Additionally, several institutions and groups have developed inclusive learning environments and curricula that cater to the requirements of young people with neurological disorders. These programmes concentrate on offering each kid with individually tailored support, accommodations, and education. The growing use of assistive technology in classrooms is a beneficial development as well. Children with neurological disabilities can benefit from assistive technology, such as communication aids, screen readers, and other tools, to engage in class activities, communicate with their peers and teachers, and gain access to course materials. There are still issues to be resolved despite these encouraging achievements. For instance, inadequate infrastructure, such as accessible buildings, ramps, and restrooms, may make it difficult for kids with physical disabilities to attend school. Children with neurological disorders from low-income households may also have difficulty accessing a high-quality education due to the high expense of special education programmes and a lack of knowledge about available resources. Overall, despite improvements in including children with neurological problems in Indian classrooms, considerable effort needs to be done to guarantee that all kids have access to high-quality education. Addressing the challenges and continuing to build on the positive developments will require collaboration between policymakers, educators, families, and community members to create a supportive environment that promotes inclusive education for all children.

CHALLENGES IN INCLUSION

Many obstacles prevent children with neurological disorders from attending school. There are difficulties in including children with neurological impairments in Indian classrooms. Many obstacles prevent children with neurological impairments from receiving a high-quality education. These issues can be divided into many areas, such as inadequate infrastructure and resources, societal stigma, and a lack of understanding among educators and legislators. Lack of understanding among educators and politicians is one of the main difficulties experienced by kids with neurological illnesses. Many educators, including school administrators, lack the necessary training to identify and meet the needs of students with neurological diseases. As a result, they might not be able to offer the modifications, interventions, or teaching strategies that are specific to the requirements of these kids. Moreover, many educators lack knowledge about the specific neurological disorders, their symptoms, and the appropriate interventions to address them. For instance, teachers may not be familiar with the behaviours and learning characteristics of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or cerebral palsy. This can result in these children being stigmatized, excluded, or

misunderstood in the classroom. Another challenge is the inadequate infrastructure and resources in schools. Many schools in India lack the necessary equipment, facilities, and technology to support children with neurological disorders. For example, many schools may not have the necessary assistive technology, such as hearing aids or communication devices, to support children with hearing impairments or speech delays. Inadequate physical infrastructure, such as ramps, accessible toilets, and doorways, can also limit the accessibility of schools for children with physical disabilities. The societal stigma associated with neurological illnesses is a major obstacle as well. There is a pervasive misperception in Indian society that children with neurological problems are incapable of learning and cannot meaningfully contribute to society. These children and their families are seen negatively as a result of this stereotype, which limits community support and further excludes them from educational chances. Families with kids with neurological disabilities and impairments encounter several obstacles when trying to get them into school. Their access to high-quality education may be hampered by the high expense of special education programmes and a lack of knowledge about the services and resources that are available. In addition, because neurological illnesses are stigmatised in society, many families could experience prejudice and exclusion. In conclusion, it is a complicated issue that calls for a multifaceted strategy to include children with neurological impairments in Indian classrooms. Many obstacles, such as limited infrastructure and resources, societal stigma, and a lack of understanding among educators and legislators, are confronted by these kids. To overcome these obstacles, legislators, educators, families, and community members must work together to establish a welcoming environment that encourages the inclusion of kids with neurological illnesses.

STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION

A multifaceted strategy involving the cooperation of educators, families, legislators, and community members is needed to successfully include students with neurological disorders in the classroom. Numerous tactics can be used in classrooms to encourage the inclusion of these kids, including the use of tailored support, specialised education, assistive technology, and universal design for learning (UDL). One key tactic for encouraging the inclusion of students with neurological problems in the classroom is individualised support. With this method, each child's unique needs are identified, and then specialised help is given to suit those needs. Accommodations like extra time for testing, preferred seating, and the use of visual aids to enhance learning can all be part of individualised support. Another crucial tactic that can be used to facilitate the inclusion of kids with neurological problems in classrooms is specialised education. Using educational strategies and resources that are suited to the particular requirements of each kid is part of this methodology. Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may benefit from frequent breaks and movement breaks, whereas children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) may benefit from the use of visual schedules and social storytelling. A useful tool for supporting

the inclusion of kids with neurological problems in the classroom is assistive technology. Children with neurological disabilities can use assistive technology, which includes tools like communication aids, screen readers, and adapted software, to engage in class activities, communicate with their peers and teachers, and access educational resources. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) methodology entails creating instructional materials and learning environments that are usable by all students, including those who have neurological impairments. UDL makes use of a variety of representational, expressive, and engagement strategies to make sure that all students may access and engage in educational activities. For instance, giving children with neurological disorders verbal and visual instructions, giving them options for how to display learning, and including movement and hands-on activities can all enhance their learning. To encourage the inclusion of students with neurological challenges in the classroom, collaboration and communication are essential tools. To ensure that children receive the assistance and resources they require, strong collaboration with families, healthcare professionals, and community members is required. These organisations can work together and communicate openly to make sure that children with neurological problems receive the right support at home and school. Finally, it should be noted that integrating students with neurological disabilities into the classroom calls for a multifaceted strategy that includes individualised support, specialised instruction, assistive technology, universal design for learning, and cooperation and communication between all parties involved. Educators may establish inclusive learning environments that promote the intellectual, interpersonal, and emotional growth of all students by putting these strategies into practice.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the inclusion of children with neurological disorders in Indian classrooms is a complex issue that requires a collaborative and multi-faceted approach. The literature reviewed in this paper highlights the challenges faced by these children, including social stigma, lack of teacher training and resources, and inadequate support from policymakers and community members. Despite these challenges, several strategies can be implemented to promote the inclusion of children with neurological disabilities in classrooms. Individualized support, as suggested by microgenetic theory (Paçhalska 2019), also specialized instruction, assistive technology, and universal design for learning are all effective strategies for supporting the academic, social, and emotional development of children with neurological disabilities. However, the successful implementation of these strategies requires ongoing collaboration and communication among educators, families, healthcare providers, and community members.

Policymakers need to recognize the need for greater resources and support for children with neurological disabilities in Indian classrooms. This includes providing funding for teacher training and professional development, increasing access to assistive technology, and promoting awareness and understanding of neurological disabilities within communities. In conclusion, the inclusion of chil-

dren with neurological disabilities in Indian classrooms is an important issue that requires attention and action from all stakeholders. By working together and implementing effective strategies, we can create inclusive learning environments that promote the academic, social, and emotional success of all children, regardless of their neurological differences.

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