

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MIZORAM WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:
STATUS, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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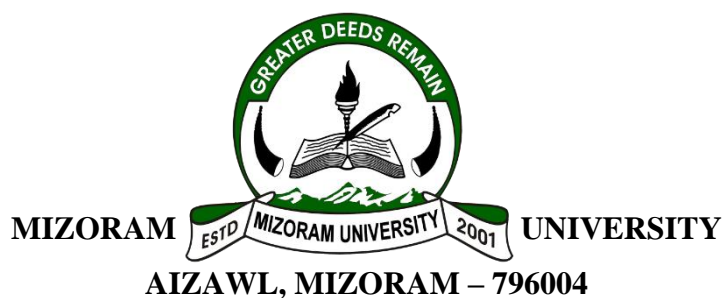
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**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MIZORAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: STATUS, PROBLEMS AND
PROSPECTS**

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**Submitted
In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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I hereby certify that Vanlallawmkimi has complied with all the requirements as laid down by the Ph.D. Regulations of Mizoram University and that the thesis is the original work of the scholar and have not been submitted for any degree to any other University.

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DECLARATION
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MARCH, 2025

I **VANLALLAWMKIMI**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education**.

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Dated: Aizawl

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CWSNs	Children with Special Needs
IE	Inclusive Education
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
IEDC	Integrated Education for Disabled Children
IEDSS	Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage
NEP	National Education Policy
RCI	Rehabilitation Council of India
RTE	Right to Education
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RPwD	Rights of Persons with Disabilities
NPE	National Policy on Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
WHO	World Health Organization
NGOs	Non-governmental Organization
VI	Visual Impairment
HI	Hearing Impairment
SC	Scheduled Caste
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
FDC	Faculty Development Centre
CRE	Continuing Rehabilitation Education
NIEPVD	National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities
ADIP	Assistance to Disabled Persons
ALIMCO	Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India
NILD	National Institute of Locomotor Development
PMDK	Pradhan Mantri Divyasha

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1: Epilogue

Inclusive education is an important concept of education which functions for the promotion of education to all. It works under the principle of ‘Education for all’. It aims to promote education to all the diverse needs, irrespective of class, caste, ability, disability, socio-economic differences, etc. It treats all people equal to provide educational opportunities according to the needs of each student. The concept of inclusion has been practiced with the formal educational system. We can see the importance of education in the concept of ‘inclusive education’ to bring about a progressive change for mankind. Hence, inclusive education is crucial for improving self-esteem, enhancing social status, and gaining confidence for people who are drifted apart from the mainstream society (Datta, 2021; Madhesh, 2023). Education has always been the only key component of human development and liberating force. Thus, education has held the most prestigious position for the upliftment of the diverse needs in every society.

UNICEF defines inclusive education as, “Inclusive education means all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools. It means real learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded – not only children with disabilities, but speakers of minority languages too” (UNICEF, 2024).

UNESCO defines inclusive education as, “*Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve Education for All*” (UNESCO, 2009). UNESCO tries to promote inclusive education system knowing that it is a challenge to every country in the world; and that it can remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners, respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics and that eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment. Inclusion is a broader philosophy and covers different physical, socio-cultural, economic and psychological contexts. Though inclusion can be of different

forms, including the disadvantaged children (SC, ST, Minorities, and Girls etc.) this study deals with the inclusion of children with special needs (CWSN) only for their education due to their disabilities.

Inclusive education for the *Children with Special Needs (CWSNs)* was the main focus of this research work. Inclusive education for CWSNs aimed at the integration of children with special needs and children without special needs in the mainstream schooling. Inclusive education becomes an imperative in the scenario where one in five children globally are not given any access to education (UNESCO, 2023). Opportunities are still dictated and limited by several characteristics, including poverty, location, gender, language, disability, race, religion, migrant status, and status of displacement. It is estimated that 40% of children do not receive instruction in a language they can understand, and children with disabilities are still disproportionately excluded from school (UNESCO, 2023).

A lot of experiments and research have been conducted by experts and educationists to come up with the best way to provide inclusive education. The old systems have been modified and numerous new policies have come up. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 (as modified in 1992) has rightly emphasized the integration of children with disability with other groups for enabling them to socialize and develop in them courage, confidence, security and protect their rights according to the laws and constitutions. Besides, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in its Curriculum Framework for School Education have added:

“Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with disability nor for general learners without disability” (NCERT, 2000).

By the above mentions it can be understood easily that inclusion of CWSN is not only a focus at present whereas it has been the component of national policy in India from around last fifty years. Also continued to the latest National Education Policy, 2020 in which inclusion of CWSN is recommended by inclusion in the mainstream school. NEP 2020 emphasizes that children with disabilities should fully participate in the regular schooling process from pre-primary to higher education (Sarkar, 2020).

1.2: Meaning and Concept of Inclusive Education with special reference to CWSNs

Inclusion in education is an approach to educate students with special educational needs along with the other students in the mainstream school. Under the inclusive educational system, students with special needs spend most or all their time with non-special needs students. It is more effective for students with special needs to have that experience for them to be more successful in life. An inclusive educational setting rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. Schools with inclusive classrooms do not believe in separate classrooms but confine the students into one classroom: providing the necessary educational materials to the CWSNs therein.

Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes. For a long time, children with disabilities were educated in separate classes or in separate schools. People got used to the idea that special education means separate education. But we now know that when children are educated together, positive academic and social outcomes occur for all the children involved (Step by Stones, 2024).

Inclusive education is thus a broader ideology, and its success depends on the levels of implementation of its policies in practice. However, mere confinement of children with and without disabilities together does not necessarily produce positive outcomes. But quality inclusive education occurs when there is ongoing advocacy, planning, support and commitment.

1.3: Children with Special Needs (CWSNs)

Children with special needs are children having a disability or a combination of disabilities which disrupts the activities which they must do. Due to the disability that he/she has, CWSN has a special need to learn or live along with the other children. They require extra help or sometimes exceptional care due to their disability (Era, 2023). Their special needs can be special support, special devices, or special emotional support.

A person with a disability is addressed differently in various cultures. According to Lalit (2021), a few terms frequently used to describe someone with a disability are:

- Differently abled Person
- Disabled Person
- Handicapped Person
- Physically Challenged Person
- *Divyangjan* (in India)
- Person with Special Needs (used mostly for persons with mental, intellectual or developmental disabilities)
- Special Person

According to Lee (2022), disability can be classified into the following four broad types.

1.3.1. Physical disability:

Physical disabilities are disability of the physical body which include conditions like Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Locomotor Disability, etc. In these types of conditions, the CWSN have issues with muscle coordination, movement and balance, muscle weakness and overall loss of muscle mass. They have problems in easy movement from one place to another which require special treatment and even hospitalization and other treatments.

1.3.2. Sensory disability:

Sensory disability is disability in the function of the senses viz. hearing, smell, touch, sight and taste. It includes different types of disabilities like deafness, hard of hearing, low vision and blindness. Out of these disabilities, hearing and vision related disabilities are the most common type. Genetics may play a minor role as a cause, but injury and infection are the most common causes of sensory disability.

1.3.3. Developmental disability:

Developmental disabilities are neurological and other developmental disorder which affects behaviour and communication. Common Developmental Disabilities include Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Fragile X Syndrome. These are genetically caused due to certain reasons which affect a person's physical as well as mental health conditions.

1.3.4. Behavioral/Emotional Disability:

Children with behavioural or emotional disabilities may find it difficult to build or maintain interpersonal relationships, communicate or to learn new things. Common types of these disabilities are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD).

1.4: Characteristics of Inclusive Education (IE)

Inclusive education acknowledges that all children can learn. It works on the principle of providing education to all diverse learners. It acknowledges and respects the differences in children with respect to age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, etc. It also enables the education structures, systems and methodologies to the maximum flexibility to meet the needs of all children. In IE, all students receive education that addresses their individual needs (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). Education plays an effective role for including all people on one platform. As all diverse learners are provided with equity in educational platforms, they can develop according to their own pace and abilities (Prasad, 2024). Inclusive education goes parallel with the policies, acts and frameworks for protecting the people who are away from mainstream society. In inclusive education, all the members or stakeholders of the school, example: administration, staff, students and parents promote collaborative teaching arrangements (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000).

1.5: Principles of Inclusive Education

The following are the principles that guide quality inclusive education:

i. All children belong:

The basic principle of inclusive education is that every child and family have equal value and should have access to the same opportunities and experiences (UNICEF, 2024). Whether a child's impairment is severe, or mild, evident or concealed, inclusive education aims to enable them to participate in daily activities as normally as possible. It is about forming links with people, being involved, and having access to the same chances as everyone else.

Article 21A of the Indian constitution states that “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine.” So, there is no legitimate reason to

separate children for their education. They need to be protected, loved, cared, educated and treated in the same manner amongst themselves.

ii. All children learn in different ways:

The Inclusion is about providing the help children need to learn and participate in meaningful ways (UNESCO, 2023). Sometimes, some help from friends and teachers works best. Other times, technology or specially designed materials can help. The key is to give only as much help as needed.

Every individual is different. Likewise, every child differs from each other in various aspects. The way they learn and understand will also be different due to different abilities, capabilities, attitudes, insights, levels of understanding and acquiring knowledge. The differences should not hamper the lectures and education which they must receive. On the other hand, these differences should be tackled by the teachers and teach them accordingly.

iii. It is the right of every child to be included:

Children with disabilities should be educated along with non-disabled students of their own age; and have access to general education curriculum (Bhatia, 2018). The constitution of India also provides the right to education to all citizens of the country. Article 21A of the Indian Constitution, along with the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, provides a strong legal framework for ensuring the educational rights of children with disabilities. This also means that every child has the right to receive education in an educational institution. This also implies that every child with a disability has the right to receive education in inclusive setting and the authority concerned cannot deprive the child of his right unless there are compelling results to do so.

1.6: Evolution of Inclusive Education in India

Inclusive education in India has undergone a significant transformation over the years, moving from a charity model to a more inclusive approach that emphasizes equal rights and access to education for all children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

1.6.1: Historical Perspective

Inclusive education in India has evolved significantly over the years, marked by various policies, programs, and societal shifts aimed at integrating children with disabilities into mainstream education. The history of inclusive education can be traced down in the late 19th century, Christian missionaries and non-governmental organizations established the first schools for children with visual, hearing, and cognitive impairments, following a charity model (Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007). After India's independence in 1947, the government became more involved in providing educational, rehabilitation, and social services (Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007).

In 1966, the Kothari Commission highlighted the importance of educating children with disabilities in regular schools. In 1974, the Government of India launched the Integrated Education for Handicapped Children (IEDC) programme, which was the first formal step towards inclusion.

Major Programs and Policies like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and National Education Policy 2020 contributed to the promotion of inclusive education. SSA was launched in 2000, the program aimed to ensure universal access to education and included specific provisions for children with special needs. It focused on identifying and assessing children with disabilities and providing necessary resources such as aids and appliances (Sukumar, 2023). The latter policy reiterated the commitment to inclusive education, emphasizing the need for supportive environments that cater to diverse learning needs. It aims to bridge gaps between policy formulation and implementation.

1.6.2. Policies and Legislations

- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 created legal status for inclusive education in India (Ahmed, 2024).
- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisages equitable and inclusive education for all, especially girls and children belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged groups.
- Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) has been a major intervention under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), RTE, and RMSA schemes (Sukumar, 2023).

1.6.3. Way Forward

While India has made significant progress in the evolution of inclusive education, there is still a long way to go to ensure that every child, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, has access to quality education and is welcomed and included in the classroom and community. To overcome these barriers and achieve the goal of inclusive education, it is essential to:

- Promote early detection and identification of children with special needs
- Provide adequate resources and infrastructure
- Train and sensitize teachers
- Involving parents and the community
- Ensure proper implementation of policies and programs (Sukumar, 2023).

The journey from special education to inclusive education for CWSN in India is ongoing, marked by significant legislative support and evolving educational practices. While progress has been made, continued efforts are needed to address existing barriers and ensure that all children, regardless of their abilities, have equitable access to quality education. The commitment to inclusive education is not only a legal obligation but also a moral imperative that reflects the values of a just society.

1.7: Important Schemes, Acts and Policies for Inclusion of CWSNs in India

There are various Schemes, Acts and policy documents framed time to time by different commissions and committees that suggested about the inclusion of CWSN in the mainstream education. They are discussed as follows.

- 1.7.1. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66):** This commission was also known as Kothari commission. It was the first statutory body to suggest the education for the differently abled persons. They give importance to educate Persons with Disabilities knowing their abilities and needs. This commission emphasized the need for a common school system that is open to all children, including those with disabilities. It advocated for integrated educational programs to help disabled children overcome their challenges and become contributing members of society (Peerzada, 2019).

1.7.2. Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC, 1974): This scheme was Initiated under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India. Children were provided financial support for books, stationary, school uniforms, transport, special equipment and learning aids. The state Govt. provided 50% financial assistance to implement the program in regular schools (SCERT, 2017).

1.7.3. National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986-92): This policy gives importance to education of the CWSNs and envisaged that the CWSNs whose needs were not met in normal schools should be enrolled in special schools. This policy reinforced the integration of physically and mentally challenged children into the general educational framework. It aimed to provide equal educational opportunities and emphasized the importance of a supportive environment for all students.

The National policy on Education 1986 states that children with ‘mild’ disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms, whereas children with ‘moderate to severe’ disabilities should be placed in segregated schools. NPE also included a provision regarding teacher training for all mainstream education teachers by including a compulsory special education component in pre-service training of general teachers.

In 1992, Programme of Action was created for the implementation of 1986s National Policy on Education. It says that once children with disabilities acquire basic living skills, which would be learned in resource rooms or special schools, that they should be educated in mainstream schools.

1.7.4. Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992: This was set up as a registered society in 1986 and became a statutory body on 22 June 1993 by the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 passed by the Parliament of India. The mandate given to RCI is to regulate and monitor services given to persons with disability, to standardize syllabi and to maintain a Central Rehabilitation Register of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education. The Act also prescribes punitive action against unqualified persons delivering services to persons with disability.

1.7.5. District Primary Education Program (DPEP, 1994): This was a centrally sponsored scheme which aimed to reduce the overall dropout rates of all students enrolled in Primary classes, to raise achievement levels and to provide primary education to all including the CWSNs. The largest program of the central government in terms of funding.

1.7.6. Persons with Disability Act (PwD Act, 1995): This Act came into enforcement on 7th February 1996. This law is an important landmark and is a significant step in the direction to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities and their full participation in the nation building. The Act provides for both preventive and promotional aspects of rehabilitation like education, employment and vocational training, reservation, research and manpower development, creation of barrier-free environment, rehabilitation of persons with disability, unemployment and establishment of homes for persons with severe disabilities.

The PWD act 1995 has made integration of students with disability a legal responsibility of the Government. The PwD Act 1995 states, among other things: “The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till it attain the age of 18 years.” (Article 26 A); “endeavour to promote the integration of students with disabilities in the normal schools.” (Article 26 B).

1.7.7. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA, 2001): Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a programme for attaining the goal of Universal Elementary Education in the country, was launched in 2001-02. This comprehensive programme of Government of India, launched in partnership with the State Governments, *aims to provide useful and relevant education to all children in the 6-14 age groups by 2010*. Children with disabilities in the age group of 15-18 years were provided free education under Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) Scheme. IEDC was an earlier scheme focused on providing education to children with disabilities, it has been replaced by SSA and IEDSS which provide inclusive education at the elementary and secondary stages, respectively, ensuring

comprehensive coverage of children with special needs in the school education system.

Goal of SSA was consistent with the Constitution (86th Amendment Act, 2002), *making elementary education a fundamental right of every child* and with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of *universalizing primary education by 2015*.

Under SSA, a continuum of educational options, learning aids and tools, mobility assistance, support services etc. were being made available to students with disabilities. This includes education through an open learning system and open schools, alternative schooling, distance education, special schools, wherever necessary home-based education, itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part time classes, Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and vocational education.

The SSA vision was to provide useful and relevant elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010, bridging all social and gender gaps with the active participation of the community in the school affairs. Although the Government of India had made several attempts to integrate disabled into the regular classrooms, it lacked in firm commitment to promote integration.

1.7.8. National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005:

In its policy of inclusion, it stated that a policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout the education system. The participation of all children needs to be ensured in all spheres of their life in and outside the school. School needs to become centres that prepare children for life and ensure that all children, especially the differently abled children from marginalised sections and children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit of this critical area of education.

It further stated that excellence and ability may be singled out for appreciation, but at the same time opportunities need to be given to all children and their specific abilities need to be recognised and appreciated.

1.7.9. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006:

In 2006, the Government of India formulated the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, which aims to create an enabling environment for individuals with disabilities, including Children with Special Needs (CWSN). The policy emphasizes the importance of equal opportunities, protection of rights, and full participation of persons with disabilities in society. The key focus area of the policy are rehabilitation and inclusion; promotion of barrier free environment; awareness and prevention; educational support. Overall, the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006, serves as a comprehensive framework aimed at improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities in India, particularly focusing on CWSN by promoting inclusion, accessibility, and rights protection.

1.7.10. Right To Education (RTE) Act, 2009:

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an Act of the Parliament of India passed on 4 August 2009, which describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when the act came into force on 1 April 2010. This landmark legislation made education a fundamental right for all children aged 6 to 14, ensuring free and compulsory education. It includes provisions specifically addressing the needs of children with disabilities, mandating that they receive appropriate support and resources.

1.7.11. Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS), 2009-2010:

The Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) is a significant initiative taken up by the government of India. It aimed at providing educational opportunities for children with disabilities in the mainstream schools. Launched in the 2009-2010 academic year, this scheme replaced the earlier Integrated Education for Disabled Children

(IEDC). It aimed at providing inclusive education at the secondary stage, i.e. classes IX to XII. IEDSS encompasses a range of student-oriented and institutional support components, including:

- Student-oriented components: These include financial assistance for books, uniforms, transport, and stipends for girls, as well as provision for assistive devices and therapeutic services.
- Institutional support: This involves the appointment of special education teachers, training for general teachers, establishment of resource rooms, and the creation of a barrier-free environment in schools.

1.7.12. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016:

The Lok Sabha passed “The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill-2016” on 14th December 2016 which replaces the existing PwD Act, 1995. This act replaced earlier legislation and expanded the definition of disabilities, ensuring broader protection and rights for individuals with various disabilities. It emphasizes inclusive education and mandates the removal of barriers to access in educational institutions. The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities. The New Act will bring our law in line with the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is a signatory. This will fulfil the obligations on the part of India in terms of UNCRPD. Further, the new law will not only enhance the Rights and Entitlements of Divyangjan (National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) but also provide effective mechanism for ensuring their empowerment and true inclusion into the Society in a satisfactory manner.

Impact of Provisions:

The Indian education system for the disabled individuals has evolved significantly over the years, focusing on inclusive education and the rights of persons with disabilities. The implementation of these provisions has several significant impacts:

- **Increased Enrollment:** There has been a notable increase in the enrollment of CWSN in schools due to the legal mandate for inclusive education. This helps in reducing stigma and promoting social integration (Reddy, 2022).
- **Improved Educational Outcomes:** With the provision of specialized support and resources, CWSN are more likely to achieve better academic results and develop essential life skills. This is particularly evident in environments where teachers are trained to address diverse learning needs (Ashraf, 2016).
- **Awareness and Training:** The focus on CWSN has led to increased awareness among educators and policymakers regarding the challenges faced by these children. Training programs for teachers have been established to equip them with the necessary skills to support CWSN effectively (Kishore, 2020).
- **Challenges Remain:** Despite these positive impacts, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained staff, and societal attitudes towards disabilities persist. Continuous efforts are needed to address these barriers to realize the full potential of inclusive education for CWSN (Ashraf, 2016).

In summary, the legal framework surrounding CWSN in India aims to create an inclusive educational landscape, significantly impacting the lives of these children by promoting their rights and facilitating their access to quality education. However, ongoing challenges necessitate further attention and resources to fully achieve these goals. Thus, the Government of India has formulated all these important policies to include the CWSNs in the mainstream schools to provide equal opportunities. These policy documents will be analyzed and will be used to evaluate the functioning of inclusive education in Mizoram.

1.8: Inclusive Education in India

Schools Acts as the mirror of the society. They played a major role in contributing to the personal and social development of children. Since the 1990's, the movement

towards inclusion has been rigorous. The term inclusion is used in the official correspondence and children with special needs have gained legislative significance (PWD Act, 1995; RCI Act, 1992; National Trust Act, 1999).

Post-independence, the Government of India created several policies in terms of special education. Although the Government of India has attempted to create policies that are inclusive for people with disabilities, their implementation efforts have not resulted in a system of inclusive education, nor they have reached their goal of 'education for all' across the country (Dua & Dua, 2017). The Government needs to bridge the gaps in their educational system to build a strong system of inclusive education in India. Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA) was the Government's millennial umbrella programme for education for all scheme, which aimed to universalized elementary education in India.

The need of inclusion in India is that more than 90% of disabled children are found in the rural areas in India (Das & Kuyini, 2013). The special Schools as well as integrated education programs were only a few in numbers and could not serve all disabled children. Therefore, inclusive education was needed to provide equal educational opportunities to all disabled children in their own locations. Secondly, the extent of disability in each category ranges from mild to severe and profound cases. The mild and moderate cases are more in number as compared to the severe and profound cases and they depend on the general education system (Das & Kuyini, 2013). This calls for the involvement of general education so that children who are currently left out of school or those who are at risk can be served. Therefore, the reality in India focuses the need for inclusive education.

1.9: Functions of SSA towards Inclusion of CWSNs

Under the SSA, one of the aims was to identify CWSNs to include them in normal schools. Earlier, the differently abled children were not regarded to being educated in normal schools and there was a supposition that they were to be kept afar from the formal educational setting. There were no steps to include them in the formal setting and their abilities were not heard.

But, as the emergence of various policies and mission such as SSA, the Government took the initiative to enroll them and be educated in the formal educational setting and manipulate among the normal children in the schools. Even in Mizoram, many CWSNs were identified and were admitted in the nearby schools because of the on-going SSA project. Some special needs children might not show progressive developments as they got admitted to the schools, but it is the right of every child to be educated according to the Constitution of India. Thus, it was mandatory irrespective of their disabilities or late developments, they were included in the mainstream schooling.

1.10: NEP 2020 and Inclusivity of CWSNs

The new National Education Policy was approved by the Union Cabinet on 29th July 2020 to bring about transformational reforms in education systems in India. It highlighted various recommendations which tend to transform the educational system into a new paradigm. The policy also recognizes the importance of providing an inclusive education for the CWSNs with the same opportunity to obtain quality education.

It states that CWSNs will enable full participation in regular mainstream schools from the foundational stage till higher education. NEP laid foundation on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 and approves its recommendation to provide inclusive education regarding school education. As per the RPWD Act 2016, the CWSNs shall have a choice to choose regular or special schools for their education. Special educators effectively use resource centers to provide rehabilitation and educational needs of learners with severe or multiple disabilities and they will assist the parents and guardians to provide quality home-based education.

Home-based education is also a choice for children with severe and profound disabilities who are unable to attend regular schools, and they should be treated as equal to any other child who attends schools in the general system. Guidelines and standard for home-based education should be set and quality should be maintained in line with the RPWD Act, 2016. To educate the CWSNs, technology-based solutions will be used for orientation of parents and guardians along with provision of learning

aids and materials; so that these learning aids and materials will be helpful in their studies even at home.

The new policy gives importance to early identification of disabilities by the teachers in the classroom. It suggested the use of flexible curriculum to meet the needs of the CWSNs so that they will progress and learn at their own pace. To formulate guidelines and recommend appropriate tools for conducting assessment and identification of the CWSNs, the policy proposed the new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, from foundational education to higher education. This will be a great initiative for the government if disabilities are identified at an early stage and treated accordingly. PARAKH stands for Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development. It is a key initiative under India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It was established to address the need for standardized assessment across various school boards in India, aiming to enhance the quality and consistency of student evaluations. This initiative was officially launched as an independent unit of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) on 8 February 2023, in alignment with the goals set out in NEP 2020, particularly in paragraph 4.4.1.

Teacher education programs will also include awareness and knowledge of how to teach children with specific disabilities in their curriculum. This is also going to be a great milestone for promoting inclusive education through the teachers as they provide first-hand experience to the students.

Thus, if the new education policy's recommendations come into action, there will be a great improvement in provision of inclusive education right from the foundational stage till higher education.

1.11: Inclusive Classrooms

An inclusive classroom is a general education classroom where students with and without learning differences learn together. Inclusive classrooms are welcoming and supportive of the diverse academic, social, emotional, and communicational needs of all students (Carnevale, 2023).

Inclusion in educational institutions is not just about providing additional support to children with special educational needs. But it is about creating a learning environment that works for all pupils, whether they have a disability, speak different languages, are a member of a minority community, come from a low-income family – or find it harder to learn and achieve for many other reasons.

Thus, an inclusive classroom aims to provide an environment conducive to all learners, keeping in mind their educational needs, abilities and capacities. Teachers in an inclusive classroom should also be well-trained to provide such an environment for all learners.

1.12: Infrastructure for Inclusive Classroom

Infrastructures are the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g., buildings, roads, power supplies, etc.) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise. For planning an inclusive classroom, the required infrastructure would be a barrier-free building and environment, assistive devices, teaching aids and appliances, etc. so that all students can be fit and be accommodated in the classroom. In an inclusive class, plans must be responsive to students with learning differences, physical challenges, or social/emotional needs. There are three basic needs to promote the required infrastructure for an inclusive classroom, they are: Accommodation, Modification and Assistive Technology.

Accommodation removes learning barriers in the classroom to provide every child with equal access to learning, such as providing visual support and assistive technology. It tries to accommodate all learners in one classroom by providing the required necessities.

Modification is a strategy used to help a student with learning needs achieve the same curriculum as his peers. There are changes to what a child is taught and expected to do in class. Tools, materials, technology, visual aids, physical space, and timing are used to help the student *achieve* the required learning.

Assistive technology is any device that supports the independence of a person with a disability. Assistive technology can be something very simple and low-cost such as

pencil grips or text highlighters, or something more sophisticated, such as a computer station with speech-to-text tools (Reading Rockets, 2024). Assistive technology (AT) refers to a device or software that makes it easier to complete everyday tasks. Common forms of assistive tech for kids with learning and attention issues, like dyslexia or dysgraphia, include text-to-speech or dictation.

Quality infrastructure is crucial for creating inclusive classrooms that accommodate diverse learning needs. Effective educational infrastructure not only enhances accessibility but also fosters an environment conducive to learning for all students, including those with disabilities.

1.12.1. Key Aspects of Inclusive Classroom Infrastructure

Physical Accessibility: Classrooms should be designed to remove physical barriers. This includes wide corridors, accessible bathrooms, and furniture that can be rearranged to accommodate students with mobility challenges. Features such as ramps, handrails, and appropriately designed door handles are essential for students who use wheelchairs or have other physical impairments.

Learning Environment: The classroom environment must be conducive to learning. This includes adequate lighting, ventilation, and noise control. For instance, classrooms with high temperatures can negatively impact learning outcomes. Additionally, minimizing distractions is particularly important for students with conditions such as ADHD or autism spectrum disorders (William, 2017).

Adapted Resources: Schools should provide resources that cater to various learning needs. This includes assistive technology like hearing aids, magnifying glasses, and adapted learning materials such as Braille books and audiobooks. Resource rooms for specialized instruction and therapy can further support students with disabilities (William, 2017).

Community Engagement: Involving the community in the development and maintenance of school infrastructure can enhance inclusivity. Parent-teacher associations and local organizations can contribute resources and support, ensuring that the infrastructure meets the needs of all students.

Cost-Effectiveness: Incorporating accessibility features during the initial construction of school facilities is more cost-effective than retrofitting them later. Studies indicate that planning for inclusivity from the outset adds only a small percentage to total costs, while late modifications can significantly increase expenses (William, 2017).

Health and Safety: Maintaining school infrastructure is vital for health and safety. Poorly maintained facilities can become hazards, with issues like broken windows or inadequate sanitation posing risks to students' well-being. Basic hygiene facilities are essential, particularly for girls, as they can significantly impact attendance and participation.

Transport Accessibility: Effective transport infrastructure is crucial for ensuring that all students can access schools. This includes providing safe routes and transportation options for students with disabilities, as lack of access can lead to higher dropout rates (William, 2017).

Thus, to nurture interest and motivate students in inclusive learning, the schools/institutions must provide adequate and accessible facilities to meet the needs of all students. Efforts to improve the quality of classroom infrastructure and other facilities in the school require continuous effort and commitment from all parties. Teachers need to improve their skills and knowledge in planning, supervising and managing the classroom as well as providing the infrastructure facilities for students with special needs. Investing in inclusive infrastructure is fundamental to achieving equitable education. By addressing physical, cognitive, and emotional needs through thoughtful design and community involvement, schools can create environments where all students can thrive.

1.13: Background of Mizoram with reference to Inclusive Education

Mizoram is one of the seven sisters in the North-Eastern region of India. Aizawl is the state capital city, there are 11 districts namely Aizawl, Lunglei, Kolasib, Champhai, Mamit, Serchhip, Lawngtlai, Siaha; and Saitual, Khawzawl & Hnahthial districts which were functional in the year 2019. There were only eight districts in

Mizoram at the commencement of this study. The ‘Mizos’ were the native inhabitants and ‘Mizo tawng’ is the main language used in the state. The border states are Assam and Manipur by the North, Tripura by the West and Myanmar by the East. According to the 2011 census, the population of Mizoram is 1091,014 lakhs. After Sikkim, it is the least populous state in the country. About 95% of the population are from diverse tribal origin descendants. Mizoram was declared as ‘tribal area’ under the Sixth Schedule of Article 244 (2) of the Indian Constitution.

Mizoram can be said to be a late bloomer in the field of general education. However, it has rapidly improved with time. This can be proved by looking at the literacy rates in 1901, 2001 and 2011, it was 0.9%, 88.80% and 91.33% (Govt. of Mizoram, 2023). There have been initiatives taken up by the government for educating the CWSNs in the mainstream schools. At the initial stage, SCERT Mizoram took up the responsibilities. Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) was implemented in Mizoram in 1985 in the selected 20 schools catering the needs of the disabled children in the schools (Govt. of Mizoram, 2021). Later, after the implementation of SSA in the year 2002, the SCERT and SSA then took up the initiatives; SSA having inclusive education as one of its aims. In 2009, a new scheme called Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) was then introduced. This scheme aims to include CWSNs at the elementary and secondary stages in the mainstream schooling, providing the educational facilities, aids and appliances needed. In the year 2013, the scheme was then subsumed to RMSA, Mizoram (Govt. of Mizoram, 2022). Currently, the inclusive education scheme of elementary and secondary schools comes under Samagra Shiksha, Mizoram.

There are 3158 CWSNs currently enrolled in the Elementary schools of Mizoram (Govt. of Mizoram, 2022). They are provided with learning materials, allowances, aids and appliances required for their education as per their needs. With reference to the RPwD Act 2016, the target groups of disability include 21 types of disabilities. The scheme aims to provide quality education to the CWSNs, and different services are given under this scheme such as-

- identification and assessment,
- promoting barrier free environment such as removal of physical barriers by building ramps, railings, special toilets, etc.,
- removal of attitudinal barrier; and
- giving training to all teachers in the mainstream schools.

1.14: Rationale of the Study

Inclusive education is an essential educational concept for catering the diverse needs of students ensuring equal educational opportunities for all. It is true that the differently abled children require specific education tailored to support their special needs for their optimum development (Rao, 2017). Since education is the *‘right’* of every child as mentioned in the Indian Constitution, the differently abled children are also in the equal platform with the other students where they will be included in a normal classroom. All children have the right to learn together and deserve the best in life (Govt. of India, 2009). They have the right to live in a world where they have hope and opportunity. The right to education and inclusive education are integral concepts in promoting equitable access to learning for all children, particularly those with disabilities. The government has initiated various programs, such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, to address these gaps and promote inclusive practices within the educational system. In India, while the RTE Act aims to facilitate inclusive education, challenges remain in its implementation. Many schools still lack the necessary infrastructure and trained personnel to effectively support students with disabilities (Bhargava, 2018; Sikdar, 2023). And despite the importance of inclusive education, our educational systems still face issues and challenges in the implementation of an inclusive educational environment leading to segregation and unequal distribution of required resources (Fatima & Johri, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the policy and practices of Inclusive Education in the elementary schools of Mizoram with special reference to CWSN and to highlight their status, problems and prospects. A mixed-methods research approach will be used to gather both quantitative data and qualitative insights into the experiences of students, teachers and experts in the field.

The elementary schools in Mizoram have been selected to conduct this study which will help to highlight the major practices of schools in the field of inclusive set up. Previously, the researcher has conducted a critical study on ‘Support Services provided in Special Education Centres in Aizawl’. From this study, it was found out that the special support services provided in Special Education Centres in Aizawl were not sufficient for the CWSN admitted in the Special Schools. So, from the result of that study, there is an inner urge to know more about the reality and the actual practices of Elementary schools of Mizoram with special reference to CWSNs. The review of related literatures also showed the different scenario of inclusive education in and outside India. It revealed that there were a lot of things to find out and to explore in the field of inclusive settings particularly in Mizoram. There are numerous policies and laws enacted by the government to provide equal platform for the CWSNs in the normal schools where they can benefit and develop along with the other students. The question lies whether these laws and policies were practiced in the actual field. Thus, the researcher wanted to know and highlight the reality of Inclusive Education set up in Mizoram. There have been limited research found on the actual implementation of inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram. This study aimed to fill this research gap, and the results of this study were expected to serve as a useful purpose to understand the status of Inclusive Education in Mizoram. The findings of the study will also be helpful in improving the infrastructure, teacher training, parental involvement and overall support for CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram. The study will also contribute to long-term improvements, such as creating more inclusive communities and strengthening the education system to accommodate all types of learners in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

1.15: Research Questions

- i. What are the national policies regarding inclusive education in India?
- ii. To what extent have the policies been implemented in Mizoram?
- iii. What are the contents of textbooks in elementary school curriculum with respect to accommodating CWSN?
- iv. How well are the elementary schools of Mizoram equipped for imparting inclusive education?

- v. How many CWSN are enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- vi. What type of disabilities exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- vii. What is the level of social inclusion of CWSN in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- viii. What are the problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram as perceived by their peers and teachers?
- ix. What are the problems in effective implementation of inclusive education policies in Mizoram?
- x. What are the prospects of inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- xi. What are the suggestions that can be made for future planning and improvement of inclusive education in Mizoram?

1.16: Statement of the Problem

The problem of the research study is stated as:

‘Inclusive Education in Mizoram with Special Reference to Children with Special Needs: Status, Problems and Prospects’.

1.17: Operational Definition of Key Terms

Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is a model where students with special needs are taught in classrooms alongside their peers without special needs. It is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together. In this study, inclusive education is a model of practices meant to provide education to CWSNs at the elementary level adopted by the government of Mizoram.

CWSN: The full form of CWSN is Children with Special Needs. They are children who have a disability or disabilities for which they require special support and needs for their education. Here, the term refers to those disabled students who are admitted to elementary schools and enlisted as CWSN by department of School Education, Government of Mizoram.

Status: Status is general term in descriptive research which meant a situation where one stands at a particular time. In this study, the status of Inclusive education with respect to CWSN was studied.

Problems: Problems are a matter or situation which are regarded as unwelcoming or harmful and needed to be dealt with or overcome by using some means. In this study, the problem faced in the implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram were studied.

Prospects: It is a way of looking ahead and expect good things. In this study the term prospects have been used to describe the future of inclusive education in Mizoram, with reference to education of CWSN.

1.18: Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To analyse the existing Acts and Policies for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in India and highlight the implementation in Mizoram.
- ii. To find out the number of CWSN enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- iii. To find out the type of disabilities that exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram.
- iv. To find out the schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- v. To find out the level of social inclusion of CWSN in elementary schools of Mizoram.
- vi. To analyse the elementary school textbooks for accommodating CWSNs in Mizoram.
- vii. To find out the problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram from the perspective of teachers and peers.
- viii. To find out the problems in effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

- ix. To find out the prospects of inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- x. To formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram

1.19: Delimitations of the Study

- i. Geographically, the present study is delimited to Aizawl and Lunglei districts of Mizoram only.
- ii. Conceptually, the present study is delimited to the inclusion of children with special needs under disability category only.
- iii. This study was confined to the survey of government elementary schools only.
- iv. The present study was delimited to responses from students without disability.

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CHAPTER – II
REVIEW OF RELATED
LITERATURE

CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature is a link between the research proposed and the studies already done. It tells the reader about aspects that have been already established or concluded by other authors and gives a chance to the reader to appreciate the evidence that has already been collected by previous research and thus projects the current research work in the proper perspective. Doing a careful and thorough literature review is essential when writing research at any level.

2.1 Search areas:

The search areas were chosen to fulfil the main objectives of the literature review. The search areas were differentiated into the following distinctive themes.

- Studies related to Status of Inclusive education
- Studies related to Problems and Prospects of Inclusive Education
- Studies related to Attitude of teachers towards Inclusive education
- Studies related to Policy Reviews on Inclusive Education
- Studies related to social inclusion of special needs children

The search areas were presented in the following diagram 2.1.

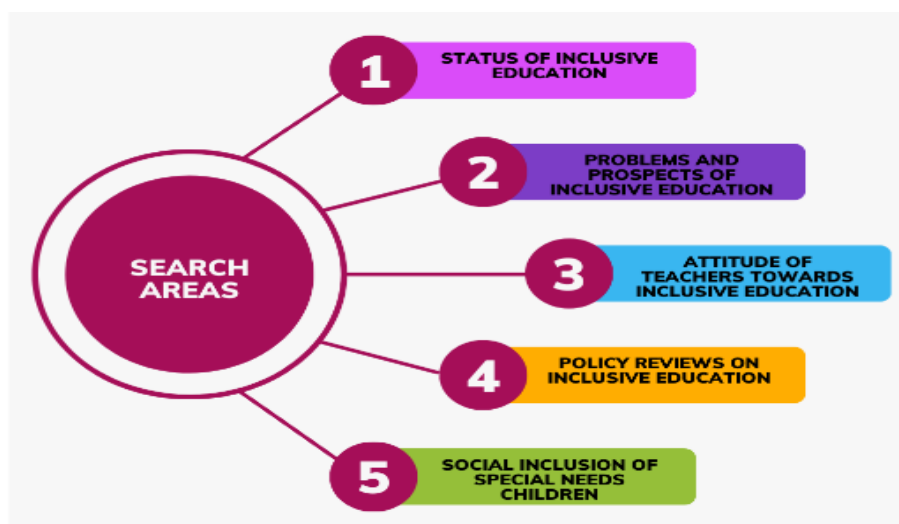


Figure 2.1. Search Areas

The following are the reviews done of the related literature. The different kinds of literature included in this chapter are thesis, dissertations, research papers,

reviewed articles, articles, policy documents and blogs within a year span of 2004 to 2024. This chapter contains a review based on different conceptual themes such as status of inclusive education, problems and prospects, attitudes of teachers, policy reviews and social inclusion.

2.2 Studies related to Status of Inclusive education

2.2.1 Studies conducted in India:

Timmons and Alur (2004) wrote an article on Transformational Learning and how inclusive practices were accepted in India. This article highlighted a program to promote inclusive education in India. It said that it was a challenge to develop inclusive education in India, as it was a country with billions of people living in it who were poverty stricken and the resources too were extremely limited. This article also highlighted the key components of sustainable inclusive practices which were reported as below:

- understanding the concept of inclusive education
- feeling of ownership of the approach and
- having a commitment to the process whilst making use of certain policies.

The process of the transformation and the provision of different services to children with special needs were also described in the article.

Tilak (2007) stressed on a study on the growth of inclusive education during the eleventh five-year plan. The research article was a critical analysis of inclusive education during the eleventh plan under the Government of India. The article highlighted the different stages of growth of IE in India. Regarding IE in the elementary stage, universalization of elementary education was the most important initiative by the government. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched in 2003, it was also highlighted with its goals and aims targeted to be achieved in the future. The paper also highlighted the importance of vocational education in the curriculum. It was suggested that the schools should take up the practices of Kendriya Vidyalaya schools in terms of infrastructure and quality of education provided. There was nothing new in the approach of the planning commission in the eleventh plan and the overall approach seemed to be quite limited. There was no

reference to the free and compulsory education and the implementation was still pending after five years of the constitutional amendment. There was also no reference about inclusive education for disadvantaged sections of the society.

Kumar (2013) conducted a study to find out the Inclusive Education practices for CWSNs at Primary level in the state of Orissa. A descriptive survey method was adopted in the study in which data were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Purposive sampling method was used to select the desired samples for the study. The main findings of the study were:

- i. There was non-availability of trained teachers.
- ii. The range of teacher-student ratio in the Primary schools of Orissa was 1:30 to 1:60.
- iii. Majority of the teachers were not able to present the lesson satisfactorily.
- iv. Majority of the teachers encouraged student participation in learning.
- v. Majority of the teachers were not able to provide corrective feedback to students.

Tiwari and Pallavi (2015) conducted a study to find out the status of CWSN at elementary level. Descriptive survey method was adopted, and data were analysed using qualitative and quantitative methods. 30 inclusive elementary schools in Delhi and another 15 schools from NCR region were selected for this study. The researchers developed observation schedule, checklist, questionnaire, focussed group discussion schedule and personal interview schedule as a tool for gathering necessary data; and document analysis was also done. The study found out the following:

- i. Most of the principals and teachers were not aware about the legal provisions, policies and guidelines for the implementation of Inclusive Education in Schools.
- ii. The teachers were unaware about the methodologies, aids and equipment's, and evaluation procedures to be used for children with special needs (CWSNs).
- iii. Educational, social, psychological and financial barriers were also found in the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Revathi (2015) conducted research to study on the effect of Collaborative Learning in Inclusive Schools. Quasi experimental design was used as the main method of the study. Purposive Sampling technique was used to select schools where CWSNs were admitted in Coimbatore Educational district, Tamil Nadu. The major findings of the study are as follows:

- The strategy of Collaborative Learning strengthens the academic performance of students in different categories such as non-disabled peers, special needs students and Students with Cognitive Impairment.
- The use of collaborative classroom promotes effective learning and is a better alternative to serve students with disabilities in a least restrictive environment.
- To achieve the national goal of inclusive growth and development, it is found out that collaborative learning can contribute to a wider scope.

Aruna, Singh and Lal (2016) conducted a study on Inclusive Education in India. In their research study, they have highlighted how special education has originated in India by tracing back to its history. The government of India began setting up segregated workshops to teach children with disabilities and promote various skills throughout the 1940s. After the independence, many policies and practices were made for inclusion of children in the field of education. These policies were written in the Indian Constitutions under the fundamental rights of all citizens like the Ministry of Social Welfare which come up during the 1960s, Kothari Commission in 1964-66, National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and Program of Action 1992, Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC), Rehabilitation council of India (RCI) Act 1992, Expansion of IEDC to IEDSS for the secondary school children, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment 2006 and Persons with Disability (PwD) Act 1995. All these policies and programs undertaken by the Government of India contributed to the progress and development of Special Education in India. They concluded that each emerging policies and laws favoured the implementation of a more inclusive set up.

Chaudhury, et al. (2016) conducted a case study on inclusiveness of the Education programs by IGNOU. They mentioned that since 1987, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has been working for the promotion of inclusive

education. They try to reach to all groups in the field of education to meet their needs educationally. As a result of their dedicated efforts, at the end of the year 2012, it had reached to 639 districts out of 659 in the country, this means that it had not reach 20 districts only. IGNOU had been successful in imparting education and training to the socially backward, economical underprivileged sections of the society, physically and/or geographically disadvantaged sections, minorities, women and jail inmates as well.

Patra (2017) in his analysis and a review-based article on Inclusive education in India and its present perspective, he summarised and concluded by saying that Inclusive education is a new concept which aimed towards educating children with special needs and learning difficulties along with the normal students under the same roof. In his analysis, 66.84% of those identified CWSNs were enrolled in schools. All the educational schemes of inclusive education tend toward universalization of primary education. Even though Integrated Education programs were being used at different levels, 95% of CWSNs still out of the mainstream schools. Schools where Inclusive Education were in operation also require different forms of infrastructural facilities for effective teaching-learning of all the students. Teachers' capability and degrees does not meet the minimum standards as well as there were no trainings conducted for giving awareness towards Inclusive Education of the teachers. The only satisfied scenario is that the importance of inclusive education has been recognized and the government of India has been working at its best to provide universal education to CWSNs under Inclusive Education.

Kusum and Kapoor (2017) conducted a study on inclusive education at the elementary school stage in Arunachal Pradesh. The researchers have adopted descriptive cum normative survey method to conduct this study and used questionnaires, inclusive education awareness test and attitude scale as tools for gathering data to come up with reliable results. From their findings, the researchers suggested the following:

- i. These type of study needs to be conducted in other parts of the state.

- ii. Comparative study on inclusive education program should be conducted taking some districts of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
- iii. This type of test should be conducted at the higher levels of learning other than elementary stage.
- iv. This kind of study should be conducted to develop curriculum and teaching-materials for the inclusive children.

Parasher, Goswami and Kumar (2017) conducted a study with regard to find out the measures adopted by different schools for implementing Inclusive and special education in Delhi and NCR region. The researcher used a descriptive survey method for conducting the research. To obtain data, the researcher developed the following tool:

Tool-1: - Scale for exploring measures for implementing inclusive and special education; and

Tool-2: -Scale for assessing measures in schools for implementing inclusive and special education.

From their findings, the key measures for implementing IE were governance, students' progression, team effort and coordination, faculty quality and enrichment and infrastructure with innovative resources for the CWSNs. Other findings of the study were that the CWSNs were not satisfied with the administrative aspects of the schools, quality aspect student progression of the schools, faculty quality and enrichment and infrastructure of the schools.

Kapoor and Babla (2017) conducted a study on Inclusive education at the Elementary school stage. In this study, samples were taken from CWSNs, teachers and parents of elementary stages of Arunachal Pradesh. But the researcher delimited the study to four districts of Arunachal Pradesh namely East kameng, Papumpare, Lower Subansiri and East Siang. Random sampling technique was adopted. For collecting data, the researcher developed the following tools:

- i. Questionnaire for teacher in charge to find out the physical, social and quality access of CWSN.
- ii. Inclusive education awareness test for both teachers and parents.
- iii. Attitude scale for both teachers and parents.

- iv. Questionnaire for teacher in-charge to find out the problem for inclusive education programme.

It was found out that the physical access must be made easy by opening new primary school and upgrading the existing ones. Regarding classroom infrastructure, the furniture was found to be available adequately but were in need of repair from time to time, playgrounds were found in some schools but 60% of them needs maintenance and adequate play materials should be provided as per the needs of the CWSNs, drinking water facilities were found but were unhygienic and unhealthy.

Hlondo (2017) conducted a study to find out the status and problems of inclusive education in Mizoram. It was a descriptive study which involved both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The population included all the headmasters, teachers and parents of Government Elementary Schools of Mizoram. Samples were selected using simple random sampling method. Lunglei, Aizawl, Champhai and Kolasib districts of Mizoram were selected for conducting this study. Visual impairment was the most common type of disability followed by intellectual disability. Majority of the schools does not have functional ramp, in most schools, teachers were not trained on inclusive education to teach the CWSNs, students in majority of the school underwent assessment camps for identification of disability; majority of the headmasters were aware of the various support available for the CWSNs; majority of the schools adopted zero rejection policy; majority of the teachers have positive attitude towards inclusive education. However, most parents opined that special schools were better to get education for CWSN, but parents of the CWSNs preferred inclusive setting for by their children. From the findings, it can be said that in both attitudinal barriers still exist among the parents as well as teachers towards inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram. And that infrastructural modifications were still needed to make classrooms barrier free and more inclusive.

Hout (2017) in the article on how to include CWSNs in mainstream education, the benefits of inclusion of CWSNs include creation of meaningful friendship, respect,

appreciation and understanding of everyone's differences and being prepared for adult life. The benefits are mainly social as well as academic benefits too. Their peers also play a vital role in the inclusion of CWSNs. Teachers also play a vital role in their inclusion; they should often interact with them and observe their behavior during their free time. The teachers should tailor their teaching methods to meet their specific needs and modify them accordingly.

In their blog, **National PTA (n.d.)**, they have mentioned the key strategies for including CWSNs in the mainstream school. The first way was to be an advocate for them by having knowledge about various laws and policies so that we can defend them. Secondly, by helping students and families in the transitional stages from each stage of school. Thirdly, to be informed about the school criteria and resources by having a knowledge of them and help them make use of it. Lastly, by creating partnership through community support services and other programs.

Ruppar et al. (2018) conducted a review-based study on collaborative research for systemic change in inclusive education for students with disabilities. The study highlights that Collaborative research is best suited for the improvement of inclusive education. This is because reformation of inclusive education is based in local contexts. They defined collaborative research as, "the partnership that exist between the university and school-based researchers; to examine the local issues and extend knowledge in the field of research". This method would be very fruitful for the promotion of research and find out innovative ideas to promote inclusive education in the schools and other higher institutions. It was also found out that improving inclusive education through collaborative research will be a challenge and will require a paradigm shift in research community.

Bhattacharya and Sarkar (n.d.) conducted a study on implementational aspects of Inclusive Education for physically challenged students in the primary and secondary schools of West Bengal. The researchers used an Analytical Survey Research method to conduct the research. The tools used were a comprehensive questionnaire, an attitude scale to measure the attitude of the parents of the physically challenged students towards inclusive education of both primary and secondary levels of education, an attitude scale to measure the attitude of the

parents of the normal students towards inclusive education of both primary and secondary levels of education and an achievement test. Population of the study includes all the physically challenged students, along with the normal students and parents of both the groups of students of primary and secondary levels of Government and Government aided inclusive schools of West Bengal. Sample of the study comprises of 76 physically challenged students along with 92 normal students, and parents of all these students of primary and secondary levels of government and government aided inclusive schools of Kolkata.

The findings related to the implementational aspects of the physically challenged students in the primary and secondary school students differ in many ways like proper allocation of resource rooms, provision of enough social interaction with the normal students, discriminatory environment in the school premises, social inclusion and recognition in social activities, physically challenged students likeness towards inclusive schools, friendly and cooperative classmates/peers and encouragement received from teachers. This study revealed that the physically challenged students preferred an inclusive environment where they were accepted by all and where provision of their needs were met.

Bhattacharjee (2021) conducted an analytical study on special education and inclusive education in India. The data were gathered from primary sources from students of visual impairment in India who pursue higher education despite of their disability. It was found out that 73% of the respondents were not satisfied due to the lack of access to special educators in their respective institutions. 69% of the respondents felt comfortable communicating with their teachers. 97% of the respondents also agreed that audio-visual aids were not used as an instruction process in the class. Lastly, 61% of the respondents agreed that the regular faculty members were not interested in the position of special educators for teaching the VI students in the mainstream school, which was the primary goal of inclusive education. This is of the evident that inclusive education in India has various drawbacks in terms of practically including the CWSNs in the mainstream school.

Swarup (2020) in a presentation on NEP 2020 and its inclusivity mentioned that National Education Policy of India, 2020 emphasized that every citizen has the opportunity to dream, thrive and contribute to the Nation based on human rights

approach. It aimed at creating an inclusive culture and achieve an inclusive society in the future. However, there are several gaps to effectively implement IE in India such as access, participation and learning outcomes. To remove these gaps, it was recommended that to improve access, removal of infrastructural barriers, attitudinal barriers and learning barriers were required. To increase participation, learning should be made meaningful, relevant, age and level appropriate; and adopting Universal Design of Learning. To improve learning outcomes based on individual capacities, needs and learning preferences, it will be effective by using differentiated instruction and assessment as well as competency based continuous assessment of the CWSNs.

Indumathi (2023) conducted a study on status of IE in India. The study was based on secondary data. The study highlighted various components of IE which are parental involvement, provision of support services, equal opportunities and full participation, barrier free access in schools, aids and appliances and teacher training. According to census 2011, out of the disabled student population 27% had never attended schools. 23.26% of the CWSNs have high academic performance (above 50 marks), 14.35% of the CWSNs have average academic performance and 5.22% have poor academic performance. The study also highlighted challenges in the implementation of IE which are poor policy execution, negative social attitude towards disabled students and parental resistance. Thus, there are many challenges in the implementation of IE in India which needs to be tackled by the concerned authorities.

2.2.2 Studies conducted abroad:

Nizeyimana (2016) conducted a study to find out the impact of Inclusive Education to CWSNs. Educational Survey was the method used in the selected Inclusive Primary Schools of Uganda. The major findings are as follows:

- i. The study revealed that the following facilities were available: Classrooms, toilets, libraries, desks, chairs and tables which were revealed by more than 60% of the respondents.
- ii. The study shows that more than 50% of the CWSNs participate freely in an inclusive classroom.

- iii. It was found out that CWSNs have acquired knowledge and skills by studying in an inclusive class.
- iv. It was reported that some schools lack physical infrastructure for the CWSNs.
- v. It was also found out that negative attitude still exists towards CWSNs.

Biamba et al. (2016) conducted research regarding the Inclusion and Classroom Practices in the schools of Sweden. The main method of the study was qualitative research, and the study was done using observation and interviews at one school in Stockholm. The study highlighted that the local administrators and the school plays an important role in the promotion of inclusive education. They should join hands in collaboration to promote effective learning. The school administrators and teachers should work effortlessly to promote inclusive learning environment for the promotion of inclusive education.

Abbas (2016) conducted a research study on inclusive education. It was a descriptive research, 300 teachers were randomly selected from schools from three districts Gujranwala, Gujrat and Hafizabad in Lahore. Questionnaire was used to collect the required data for the study. The results showed that the level of awareness towards IE decreases with increase in age. The level of awareness also increases as increase with the level of educational qualification of the teachers. Most teachers perceived that their knowledge and skills were limited to effectively taught the CWSNs in the classroom and less than 25% knew the inclusive classroom practices to accommodate all types of learners.

Mahlo (2016) wrote a paper in a book on defining inclusive education, inclusive teaching and inclusive classroom which was a review-based paper on inclusive practices in South Africa. Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model was used to understand the conceptual basis and origins of these three concepts. Among the different policies enacted in South Africa, the most important was the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, act no. 108 of 1996. This act enshrined the values of social justice, democracy and human rights of all citizens to participate fully in a broader inclusive society. This act stated the right to basic education and that public schools must admit all types of learners without any discrimination. Regarding inclusive classroom, one of the strategies used in the implementation of IE in South

Africa was the policy on screening, identification, assessment and support. This policy targeted all learners not only children having disabilities but also for children belonging to economically weaker sections of the community. The provision envisaged providing high quality infrastructure in the classroom and schools. However, different challenges were identified in the classroom teaching such as overcrowded classrooms, negative teacher attitude towards teaching the students with disability and inappropriate language of teaching and learning.

Ackah-Jnr and UDAH (2018) conducted a study on Inclusive Education in Early Childhood settings at Ghana. Qualitative research methods were adopted in this study. Interview was used as a tool for gathering data to teachers and head teachers in a large ECE settings in Ghana. The review of related literature revealed that successful inclusive education in early childhood settings requires comprehensive and integrated resource architecture. To promote quality Inclusive Education along with enhancing the work of teachers, early childhood educational settings and schools need to be resourced adequately and accordingly. Resourcing Inclusive Education settings should be considered as an investment to develop and build the capacity of early childhood educational settings; and to empower the teachers, and overall to enhance the system and promote leadership.

The findings of the study revealed the exclusion practices of the teachers; this resulted resistance to IE that limits learning, social activity engagement and opportunities of the CWSNs. The researchers also found out that effective teacher qualities and professional development enhance the quality of early childhood education.

Efendi et al. (2022) conducted a study on Inclusive Education for CWSNs at Indonesian Public Schools. The researchers collected data from 47 teachers in four cities through questionnaires and interviews. They concluded with a finding that says: implementation of inclusive education in the schools showed a positive approach, especially regarding school administration, provision of student education development records, use of assessment results for modification of curriculum and learning. It was also found out that 76.60% of schools providing inclusive services have modified their curriculum standards which is rarely seen in

India. Regarding school management, 72.34% of schools that provide inclusive services have been recorded and maintained proper data of students.

Tonegawa (2022) conducted a study on inclusive education for CWSNs in Myanmar. This study used case study as the method of conducting the research study, it was a qualitative research study. Sample of the study comprised of two special schools for visually impaired students and two regular schools. This study found out that the education system in Myanmar has created a new inclusive education set up using the resources of the existing special and regular schools. The sampled special schools were found as being able to provide the needs of the visually impaired (V.I.) students by teaching them life skills and practical skills. It was found that the schools were providing a safe environment to learn and the education system in Myanmar could serve as a reference for other countries as well.

Nzuza and Chitiyo (2024) conducted a study to find out cooperative teaching as an approach to implement IE. It was a qualitative study conducted through semi-structured interviews, four schools from South Africa were purposefully selected as samples for data collection. Observations was done during class teaching and documents were also analysed using content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that fundamentally, cooperative learning gave students the opportunity to actively support one another, exchange domestic information, and form relationships. Cooperative learning was found to have a positive impact on the students to implement IE effectively in the schools of South Africa.

Khalifa (2024) conducted a study on reviewing IE for CWSNs in Bahrain Public Schools. The study was an empirical investigation of four schools in Bahrain for case study.

The quality, efficacy and efficiency of Bahrain's special education services and programs were assessed in this study. This will ascertain if the system was fulfilling the requirements of special education children, including their entitlement to a public education that is appropriate and free. It was noted that the case study schools found it difficult to implement this initiative. According to the study's findings, the general cultures, laws, and practices surrounding the advancement of

inclusive education in Bahrain's public schools are among the internal and external obstacles to inclusive education at different levels.

Ipda, et al. (2024) conducted a study to find out the inclusive education based on gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) in the elementary schools of Indonesia. The researchers adopted participatory action research method with the help and assistance of 20 school principals. According to the research findings, the GEDSI-based inclusive education program was a program created in the school workplan by incorporating aspects of social inclusion, gender justice, and disability into the standards of curriculum, graduate competencies, faculty and staff, facilities and infrastructure, management, funding, and evaluation. In 20 elementary schools, inclusive education based on GEDSI was implemented through learning activities, semester programs, and annual programs. Everyone involved in the school, from the principal to the students, were involved in the program's execution.

Soodak and Erwin (n. d.) in their article on Inclusive Education, they mentioned the following benefits of inclusive education:

- i. From an inclusive setting, parent's vision of a particular life for their children can come true.
- ii. In an inclusive setting, children can develop a positive self-concept and of others.
- iii. Friendships develop in an inclusive setting.
- iv. All children learn by being together.

2.3 Studies related to Problems and Prospects of Inclusive Education

2.3.1 Studies conducted in India:

Giffard-Lindsay (2007) in his book about the implementation and Issues of Inclusive Education in India. It was mentioned that the different government programs such as Integrated Education for disabled Children (IEDC), Project on Integrated Education for Disabled (PIED), District Primary Education Programs (DPEP), Janshala and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) were pilot projects for implementing IE in India. It was also mentioned that only 2.5-6% of the population may have a disability, with approximately 98% of children with disabilities were not attending any type of educational institution. It was also highlighted in the book

that the current provision made by program specialist or mainstream, government or NGO was clearly not enough to provide 'Education for All'.

Bhatnagar and Das (2014) conducted a study on Regular School Teachers' concerns and perceived barriers to implement Inclusive education in New Delhi, India. This study was conducted to identify the concerns and find out the barriers about the inclusion of students with disabilities among the regular school teachers in Delhi, India. Respondents were the secondary school teachers working in the schools of Delhi who involved in teaching the children with special needs. There were two focus group interview, and 20 individuals were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. The flexible qualitative analysis program called QRS NVivo was used for data analysis. Three concerns and eleven barrier themes emerged because of the study. The main problems as responded by the teachers were poor infrastructure, financial problems, large number of students in one class, lack of trained teacher and lack of inclusion policy. While some teachers reported satisfaction in the quality they provided in their schools.

Singh and Aggarwal (2015) wrote an article which aimed to find out the problems and prospects of Inclusive Education in India. The study highlighted the important policies of the Government of India like SSA mission, RCI, NPE, etc which aims at protecting the rights and safety of children with special needs. It further highlighted the following areas of problems about the inclusive education schools in India.

- a. Teacher's skills
- b. Attitude towards inclusion and disability among teachers, administrators, parents, peers and policy planners.
- c. Lack of awareness about children with special needs among the general teachers.
- d. Improper curriculum adaptations.
- e. Lack of barrier free School environment.
- f. Lack of Support services for the CWSNs
- g. Lack of Family collaboration.
- h. Insufficient pre-service teacher education.
- i. Negative self-perceptions of CWSN.
- j. ICT unavailability

- k. Improper policy planning and lack of implementation.
- l. High Expenses.

Sarao (2016) conducted a qualitative research study to find out the Obstacles and Challenges in Inclusive Education in India with Special Reference to Teachers Preparation. The Obstacles Faced by Inclusive Education with Special Reference to Teachers Preparation from the findings were as follows:

- Lack of Teacher preparation Institution to disseminate the Inclusion principles
- Lack of Competent Teacher Educator to teach effectively
- Lack of Infrastructure and Resources for IE
- Lack of Proper Curriculum for IE
- Lack of proper strategies to improve practical skill to promote IE
- Lack of time for preparing teachers for inclusion in general classes.
- Lack of workshop, seminar, projects and internship for educating special children.
- Lack of adequate pedagogy to educate children with special needs.

Malakar and Saikia (2017) conducted a study on the Implementation of inclusive education program under SSA in Barpeta District. To undertake this study, the researchers used a descriptive survey method. One of the objectives of the study was to find out the problems of implementation of inclusive education program. It was found out that:

- i. The attitude of the students towards problem related aspect of inclusive education was moderate.
- ii. Both the boys and girls showed moderate attitude on problem related aspect.
- iii. The attitude of the parents on problem related aspect of inclusive education was moderate.
- iv. The attitude of the parents from urban and rural areas was at moderate level.
- v. The attitude of both male and female respondents was moderate.

Suja and Elamaran (2017) in their research article to find out the challenges of inclusive education in India, the researchers highlighted different challenges for implementing IE in India. They also made the following suggestions to tackle the problems therein: It is important to develop teacher's attitudes towards inclusive

education in a way to promote restructuring of the curriculum according to the needs of the children with special needs, providing more support by the teachers, giving more time for preparing the right type of educational activities, decreasing the number of students in a class to avoid overcrowding, creating and developing opportunities for interactive partnerships between the stakeholders, ensuring barrier-free built environment in schools, and lastly removing the attitudinal barriers from “they can’t” to “they can.”

Uddin; Bhat and Ahmad (2017) conducted a study on the issues, challenges and prospects of inclusive education in India. The issues in inclusive education in India from their findings are:

- i. Less student enrolment
- ii. Lack of competencies among teachers
- iii. Large class sizes
- iv. Rigid curriculum
- v. Inadequate pre- service training and professional development
- vi. Negative Attitude of Parents and Teachers
- vii. Inadequate Infrastructure
- viii. Lack of Assistive devices
- ix. More use of Power Point Presentations in the Class which does not cater to the needs of the CWSNs.
- x. Methods of Teaching which is very rigid
- xi. Lack of Community Will and Participation
- xii. Lack of Political Will towards Implementation of Inclusive Education
- xiii. Retention of children with disabilities in schools

The ways to overcome challenges in Inclusive Set-Up as they have suggested are execution of policies, development of positive social attitude towards disability, resistance of parents, increasing skill-based teaching, linking research and practice, and provision of peer coaching.

Regarding the Prospects of Inclusive Education, all the stakeholders of inclusive education must facilitate and support the implementation of inclusive education. They should regard the implementation of IE not only as a program but also as an ideology which can change the whole educational set up. And that this ideology

should be based on the principles of human rights approach, giving importance to the individual and respecting his/her potentiality in the teaching and learning process.

Sharma (2017) wrote a research article on problems of inclusive education in India. The barriers of inclusive education were divided into two parts – internal barriers and external barriers. Internal barriers include attitudinal barrier, inappropriate curriculum, untrained teachers and rigid organization of the educational system. External barrier includes the school location and enrolment, academic barrier, social stigmatization and economical condition of the students. It was also concluded that the implementation of inclusive education in the schools required a lot of dedication from all the stakeholders. It cannot be done alone but an active participation and collaboration of the stakeholders was required to effectively implement it.

Chaudhari (2018) conducted a study to find out the problems and prospects of inclusive education in India. The study was descriptive in nature. It highlighted different problems which hindered the effective implementation of IE in India, these are mainly on the grounds of school reformation, attitudes of teachers and parents, curricular adaptations, capacity building, collaborative learning and developing partnerships with other organizations. Regarding the prospect of IE in India, the situation can get better if the following steps were taken care of community participation, encouraging school readiness and willingness of the CWSNs and various stakeholders, equipped classroom to accommodate all types of learner and availability of special teacher in each classroom.

Subhash and M (2018) conducted a study on inclusive education in India. The study adopted survey method of 150 Primary schools of Kerela. The study revealed that among the disabilities, low vision and mental retardation were the highest having 39.75% and 19.11%. 74% of the schools have ramps and rails and 26% of the school still lack this facility. Majority of the schools did not have disabled friendly toilet, 54% of the teachers did not receive trainings to teach the CWSNs. This showed that majority of the schools in Kerela were not equipped to include the CWSNs in mainstream schools in terms of infrastructure.

Lakshmi (2018) conducted a study on the problems and prospects of inclusive education in India. It was conducted based on secondary sources of data which were collected from various books, journals and articles. It was found out that the following problems: lack of teachers training, lack of infrastructural changes in the schools, discouragement of parents, attitudinal barrier of the community. To tackle the above problems, teachers played a crucial role in disseminating awareness about IE and the abilities that the CWSNs have.

Kumari (2024) conducted a study which aimed to highlight the problems and prospects of inclusive education in India. The study was descriptive in nature. Different problems such as lack of skilled teachers, lack of awareness about IE, fixed and rigid curriculum, lack of infrastructural modification for the CWSNs, attitudinal barrier of parents and teachers, unavailability of ICT resources and improper policy planning and implementation were highlighted in the study. Regarding the prospects of IE in India, it was noted that there has been a long issue whether to include CWSNs in the mainstream school or not. It was highlighted of various policies, schemes and acts to safeguard the rights of disabled people like RCI act, RTE act, IEDC, IEDSS, SSA and PwD act. It was concluded that the concerned authorities must take necessary steps to implement these acts and policies to make schools more inclusive in nature for the future to come.

2.3.2. Studies conducted abroad:

Vural, Piskin and Durmusoglu (2021) conducted a study highlighting the problems and practices experienced by pre-school teachers in inclusive education. This study adopted phenomenology pattern which was one of qualitative research design. A study group was constituted consisting of preschool teachers working in Nurseries and Kindergarten in various provinces of Turkey. The problems faced by the teachers from the findings of the study were as below.

- i. Teaching and learning process: Teachers were not able to meet the needs and the interest of the special needs children.
- ii. Teaching and learning materials: They were found to be inadequate to support learning of the children.

iii. Teachers: It was found out that teachers lack knowledge and experience about inclusive education. They were found to have language problems especially with the refugee children. They could not interact with them properly therefore there could not be any effective teaching.

Hoque (2022) wrote a research article to find out the Challenges of Inclusive Education. The article highlighted various issues and Challenges faced by CWSN in inclusive education. They were listed as below:

- i. Lack of access to mainstream education
- ii. Lack of awareness and attitude towards inclusive education
- iii. Lack of trained teachers for inclusive classroom
- iv. Large class size/over-crowded classroom
- v. Lack of child-centric education and use of irrelevant curriculum
- vi. Lack of proper infrastructure
- vii. Lack of participatory activities
- viii. Non-involvement of parent and community
- ix. Lack of accountability
- x. No partnership between stakeholders
- xi. Lack of collaboration with communities and other NGOs
- xii. Lack of Support
- xiii. Peer Rejection
- xiv. Labelling (feeling of rejection)

Elmira and Netgmatzhan (2022) conducted a study to find out the role of school and family in inclusive education setting. The researchers adopted survey method surveying parents and observation of CWSNs using various methods like analysis, synthesis, generalization, diagnosis and other practical works. The researchers concluded the following:

- i. In inclusive education, having correctional and developmental programs from the specialists had found to be having impacts on the parents as they took more active part in helping their child in learning.
- ii. There needed to be an awareness on parents regarding their role, activities to take part and responsibilities to educate their child.

iii. They had found that parents have positive agreement on their child's abilities to learn more in an inclusive set up.

2.4 Studies related to Attitude of teachers towards Inclusive education

2.4.1. Studies conducted in India:

Das, Ahmed and Ishwar (2013) conducted a research study to find out whether the teachers were prepared or not for implementing inclusive education in India. The sample consisted of 223 primary school teachers and 130 secondary school teachers using survey method. The data were collected using a questionnaire which consist of two parts. Part one of the questionnaire contains background information of the respondents. Part two involved using a Likert scale which required the teachers to indicate their perceived current skill levels on a list of competencies needed to implement inclusion. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and t-tests. The major findings of the study were:

- Nearly 70% of the regular schoolteachers had neither received training in special education nor had any experience in teaching students with disabilities.
- Further, 87% of the teachers did not have access to support services in their classrooms.
- Finally, although both primary and secondary school teachers rated themselves as having limited or low competency for working with the CWSNs, there was no statistically significant difference between their perceived skill levels.

Pingle and Garg (2015) conducted a study to find out the effect of inclusive education awareness programme on pre-service teachers. This research paper studied about the effect of inclusive education awareness programme which was developed to create inclusive education awareness among the pre-service teachers. Quasi-experimental design was the main method used to conduct the research. Pre-test and post-test non-equivalent group was selected along with a factorial design to study the interactive effect of moderator variables on treatment. Questionnaire was used as a tool for gathering data. The questionnaire was prepared on awareness about inclusive education, it comprised of 48 items, and the reliability index was 0.85 by Split-Half method and 0.88 by Cronbach Alpha. Purposive sampling

technique was used as a sampling design and the sample consisted of 77 pre-service teachers in the experimental group; and 53 in the controlled group from two colleges offering D.T.Ed. (Diploma in Teacher Education) course. Inclusive education awareness was given using different interactive teaching methods for 52 hours within five weeks period. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics like t-test, ANNOVA (Two-way), Wolf's test. The findings showed that pre-service teachers from experimental group have gained awareness about inclusive education to a moderate extent. This confirms and indicates that the treatment given to the experimental group was effective in promoting awareness about inclusive education to the teachers.

Lamtore and Gathoo (2017) conducted a study highlighting the self-efficacy of general and resource teachers in Education of CWSNs in India. This study was conducted to compare the self-efficacy of general and resource teachers in educating the children with disabilities in India. Bandura's 'Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale' (TSES, n. d.) was used as a tool for the study. The study was a survey-based descriptive study. Opinion of 60 general and 60 resource teachers from the mainstream schools in Mumbai was collected. The schools where the data were collected were under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) mission. Results of the study indicated that resource teachers were having significantly greater self-efficacy as compared to the general teachers in educating the CWSNs. This was specifically found in the tasks of influencing decision making, use of school resources and enlisting parental and community involvement for the education of children with disabilities.

Priyadarshini and Thangarajithi (2017) conducted a study to find out teachers Attitude towards Inclusive Education. The study aimed to identify the effect of selected variables which were: personal, familial and professional variables on regular schoolteacher's attitude towards inclusive education. The sample consists of 134 regular teachers working in various types of schools in the Mettupalayam town, Tamil Nadu, India. A Likert scale named "Scale of Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusive Classrooms" comprised of 20 items developed by H. Keith Cochran (2000) was used as a tool for data collection. The findings showed that the personal variables like age and gender, familial variables like family income; professional

variables like educational qualification, type of school, teaching experience, teaching experience in the present school, experience in teaching the differently abled children and level of class has more impact on teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

Ramakrishna and Ranganathan (2020) conducted a study to find out the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education in Vishakapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh. Descriptive method was adopted to conduct this research. Major findings of the study are:

- i. Psychological/behavioural perspective: 55.6% of the teachers opined that inclusive education is helpful for developing more self-confidence in special children.
- ii. Social and parent related perspective: 45.9% of the teachers agreed that parents feel at ease for educating their special children in general schools.
- iii. Curricular and co-curricular aspects: 59.2% of the teachers felt essential for them to be sensitive about social, educational and psychological needs of special children in providing inclusive education.
- iv. Administration: 72.2% of the teachers opined that the present school curriculum is not favourable to the needs of the special children.

Chozah et al. (2023) conducted a study on teachers' attitude towards IE which was a descriptive study. The method used was descriptive survey method, Teachers attitude towards IE tool was used which was developed by Dr.Vishal Sood & Dr. Arti Anand. 48.3% of teachers have above average favorable attitude, 5% have below average unfavorable attitude towards IE. Female teachers have more favorable attitude than male teachers towards IE and private school teachers have more favorable attitude than government schoolteachers towards IE. There was a contradictory result found in this study which was that government teachers were expected to receive more training on IE as compared to private school teachers. However, they have less favorable attitude towards IE than private school teachers. Thus, more awareness and training on IE must be conducted among the teachers working in government schools

2.4.2. Studies conducted abroad:

Abbas, Zafar and Naz (2016) conducted a study which aimed to investigate the general education teachers of primary and secondary school level awareness about special education and inclusive education. This study was a descriptive method and used a survey method. Close ended questionnaires were developed by the researcher for collecting data. 300 teachers were selected as samples from primary and secondary schools by using random sampling technique. It was found out that:

- i. Teacher awareness level was unfortunately not satisfactory particularly among the primary school teachers of rural areas.
- ii. The age groups between 25-30 teachers with high qualifications have strong awareness level about special education (90%) and inclusive education (40%).
- iii. Senior age groups between 51-55 have poor knowledge about special education (40%) and inclusive education (2%).

In conclusion, the teachers of Pakistan were not aware about the inclusive education in their country. There was low level of knowledge towards it although it was crucial for them to have knowledge of including the children with special needs. Therefore, disseminating awareness about the needs of including CWSNs was very much needed in their country.

Khan, Hashmi and Khanum (2017) conducted a study to find out teachers perceptions on Inclusive Education in Government Primary Schools. The perceptions of primary school teachers towards inclusive education were studied in mainstream government schools of Islamabad capital territory. In this area, inclusive education was supported by an organization named ‘Sight savers and other international organizations. This study was carried out in such a way that 54 teachers from six primary schools were randomly selected. The sample group comprised of both trained and untrained teachers in inclusive education working in the same school. Purposive sampling method was used to select sample from the population. Structured questionnaire (Likert Scale) and structured interview method were used for collecting data.

The major findings of the study were:

- i. Inclusive education was considered a desirable practice.
- ii. The teachers believed that all learners regardless of their disabilities should be in the mainstream classrooms.
- iii. The teachers showed a more favorable attitude towards children with mild disabilities but were not very optimistic about children with severe disabilities.
- iv. The study recognized teachers capacity as an essential component for disseminating inclusive education.
- v. The study recommended that inclusive education should be a part of pre-service and in-service teacher education.

Tugba and Kemal (2018) conducted a study on ‘Pre-service Turkish Teacher’s view and perceived competence related to Inclusive Education.’ The main aim of this study was to assess the influence of special education courses on pre-service teacher’s views of inclusive education. “Scale for view of inclusive education” was used to 68 pre-service teachers and based on the pre-test and post-test scores, 10 pre-service teachers were selected for identifying their views and perceptions related to inclusive education.

Case study was used as the main method and the collected data were analyzed by using content analysis. The findings indicated that:

- i. Pre-service teachers developed both positive and negative views with related to inclusive education.
- ii. The reason for the negative view of inclusion is that the present inclusive education practices they observed have a negative impact on regular students.
- iii. The results also showed that lack of training and experience caused pre-service teachers to show low level perceived competences with special needs students.
- iv. Teachers having experience with the CWSNs resulted in high level perceived competences.

Yazicioglu (2022) conducted a study on ‘Determining the views of School Principals and guidance teachers on Inclusive Practices at Anatolian High School’. The major findings of the study were as follows:

- i. The guidance teachers and school principals agreed that they regard inclusive education as a legal requirement therefore was a must to employ it in schools. However, teachers faced different problems in its implementation as they lack appropriate educational environment.
- ii. There were serious problems in the process of implementing inclusive education. Some of them were insufficient infrastructure, crowded classrooms, unavailability to implement IEPs.
- iii. Attitudinal problems were also present as a barrier to implement effective inclusivity.

Bas (2022) conducted a study to find out factors influencing teacher's efficacy on IE in Turkey. The researcher adopted predictive research design, and the sample consisted of 292 teachers working in public middle school in the province of Nigde. Teacher demographic information questionnaire and teacher efficacy for inclusive practices scale were used as tools for data collection and multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the data. The results showed that teacher efficacy in inclusive education is highly influenced by characteristics linked to both students and schools. Among the student-related factors, the most significant predictor of teacher efficacy in inclusive education was parental participation. Additionally, class size was the most significant predictor of teacher effectiveness in inclusive education when considering school-related characteristics.

Abed and Shackelford (2023) conducted a study to find out teachers' perspective towards IE in Saudi Public Primary School. They employed qualitative research design to identify status and problems of IE in Saudi Arabia. Semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect necessary data in 24 Public Primary Schools in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The findings showed that Saudi educators, working with their Western counterparts, discovered several obstacles and problems as particularly impeding inclusive education, such as inadequate teacher training, a lack of successful parent-teacher partnerships, and school preparedness.

Jia, et al. (2024) conducted a study on teachers' perspective towards IE in China and Italy and make it a comparison between them based on medical and social

model of disability. The researchers used semi-structured interview schedule as tool for gathering data, there were 45 items in the schedule. According to the findings, Italian teachers viewed IE primarily as a set of principles that represented their social model of disability, including complete access and respect for pupils' individuality and potential. However, because of the Chinese cultural and social conception of handicap, Chinese teachers viewed IE mostly through a medical lens. The study highlighted the cultural impact of two different countries towards their attitude on IE.

Chitiyo, et al. (2024) conducted a study to understand teachers of Ghana, their attitude towards inclusive education. The study was conducted among 125 teachers from three regions of Ghana. The findings indicated that the teachers' understanding of inclusive education procedures and practices was average. Furthermore, there were modest to moderately favourable correlations between the teachers' understanding of IE and their degree of training in the subject. Based on the results, it was suggested that to adequately educate pre-service teachers for success in inclusive environments, special education and general education stakeholders should re-evaluate the curriculum and practicum to emphasize inclusive practices. In light of site-specific demands and obstacles, school leadership must also impact school-based measures to promote inclusionary practices. In order to promote inclusive education in Ghana, other schools should adopt successful approaches.

Lise, et al. (2024) in their study to find out teachers' perspective towards inclusion of CWSNs in France, they measured 440 in-service teachers and 135 pre-service teachers based on three variables – teacher status, educational stage and type of disability. They used Multidimensional Attitude towards Inclusive Education scale between January and April 2021. It was found out that sentiments regarding inclusive education in general were comparable among pre-service and in-service teachers. On the other hand, pre service teachers' opinions of pupils with motor, sensory, and cognitive problems were noticeably more favorable than those of in-service teachers.

2.5 Studies related to Policy Reviews/Analysis on Inclusive Education

2.5.1 Studies conducted in India:

Dowd, Mannan and Veigh (2013) conducted a study on “India’s Disability Policy – Analysis of Core Concepts of Human Rights. The study reviewed the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006. This policy scored 42% for Vulnerable Groups Coverage. The vulnerable group includes mother and child mortality, CWSNs, youth, living away from the services and the disabled persons. The policy scored 67% under core concept coverage. This concept coverage is related to capacity building, quality, accountability, prevention, non-discrimination, access, protection from harm, etc.

Gulyani (2017) conducted a study on Educational Policies in India with special reference to Children with Disabilities. This paper traces the emergence of inclusive education with respect to CWSNs in India in terms of governmental policies that have been suggested as well as implemented. The UNCRPC, which is an international organization, has India as its member which placed importance in making various provisions for providing education to children with disabilities. It has been highlighted that the GOI has come up with various policies for the disabled, like SSA under which all children between 6-18 years are to receive free and compulsory education. This paper also throws light on how far commitment towards education for children with disabilities has been successful in the country.

Kumari and Sharma (2018) conducted a study on “Critical Analysis of Govt. Policies Regarding Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in India”. The study highlighted the different policies for persons with disabilities from the pre-independence era till present. The researchers concluded that the policies during the pre-independence era did not pay attention to the PwDs. And even in the post-independence era, education of PwDs was found that it did not get enough weightage either in the policies nor practices. In late 1960’s, the govt. of India’s policies seemed to incline towards inclusion. However, these Acts and policies related to disability came in the late 1980’s. The year 1992 and 1995 were the significant years as RCI and PWD come up for the betterment of PwDs. However,

it was concluded that all these acts and policies did not achieve their target and aims due to the following reasons:

- lack of implementation due to lack of resources
- poor coordination, and
- few/limited grants.

2.5.2 Studies conducted abroad:

Knight and Crick (2022) conducted a study on Inclusive Education in Wales to know its values and practices using a critical Policy analysis. The main aim of the research study is to provide a detailed analysis of policies based on inclusive education in the context of the system used in Wales, UK. The researchers used a critical Policy analysis as a main method of the study. The analysis showed that despite a foregrounded commitment to inclusion, there were disparity found from both within and between the policy and the guidance documents. It was found that there still were issues and challenges in the implementation of inclusive education in Wales.

Obah (2024) conducted desktop research on analysis of policy reviews on inclusive education. Secondary sources like journals from online sources were used. The findings were based on research review of related literatures. It was found out that there exist conceptual and methodological gap regarding the effectiveness of IE for the students with special needs. Studies has revealed that policies played a significant role in the effective implementation of inclusive education. Despite of the manifold challenges and problems, policy promised to provide an equitable learning environment for all type of learners.

Durand et.al. (2024) conducted a qualitative approached study on analysis of practices and policies of IE to integrate the CWSNs in the mainstream school. The design of the research was hermeneutic-interpretative design and was a review based research. The authors concluded that fostering IE was still a challenging approach in different parts of the world. It needed a collaborative and joint effort of various stakeholders. It was imperative that all children have equal opportunities to

receive education. Policies were important for the attainment of IE goals in practice. Thus, it was important to understand the connections between various govt policies in implementing IE policies into practice.

2.6 Study related to social inclusion of special needs children

Vivo (2013) conducted a study to find out how inclusion could benefit special needs children socially. Inclusion had always been an important issue, but many have not yet understood the true meaning. It was a topic that most parents of special needs children were familiar with. The inclusion of CWSNs in the mainstream classroom might helped them do better academically as well as help in developing better social skills. It was mentioned that children learn by example, CWSNs in the classroom can learn from the other non-disabled students. The behaviours shown in the classroom, the formal and informal contacts and the examples set by them would be observed by the CWSNs daily. Secondly, inclusion helped children adjust themselves to the system. Children who attended regular classes would be better equipped to face the world due to exposure with CWSNs and would show better attitude towards them. Lastly, inclusion would help both the CWSNs and the non-disabled children as it could work in both ways. By attending and doing together different kinds of activities, their friendship and bonds would grow stronger, which will create a feeling of empathy and understanding towards each other. Thus, inclusion would help the CWSNs to be socially included and create a better social skill.

Wadegaonkar (2017) conducted a study on ‘Socialization of Visually impaired (VI) students for inclusion’. One of the objectives of the study was to find out the relationship between socialization and social inclusion by assessing the VI and finding out the correlation between social inclusion of VI and their social skills. The research was carried out using methods like survey, experiment, content analysis and product development. The findings for the above objective were that: there is positive significant relationship between social skills and social inclusion. This indicated that socialization was positively correlated to social inclusion; and when the social skills increase, social inclusion in the VI students also increases.

Surmila (2019) conducted a study on “An analytical study of social inclusion and education”. This study aimed to assess the inclusion of SC and Muslim students in the elementary schools of South Delhi. Regarding findings about inclusive or discriminatory practices in the school it was found out that the SC and Muslim students faced bullying incidents which were discriminative in nature and the students considered it as ‘sad incident’. They also experienced punishments and insulting behaviour, labelling; SC students were the most victim of discrimination.

Marsela (2024) conducted a study on social inclusion and inclusive education in Albania. The question on why inclusion was important had been answered as that- the world is changing, moral principles are being re-examined as stereotypes become more apparent, national and international guidelines promote inclusivity, and, to put it simply, any alternative appears unsatisfactory, if not immoral. Education must adapt to make room for everyone. The ultimate objective of inclusion was to guarantee that every child is treated fairly and participates in school. When everyone feels appreciated, their differences are acknowledged, and their fundamental needs are satisfied so they can live with dignity, that society is said to be socially inclusive. The Albanian National Strategy on Social Inclusion was highlighted. Some of its major accomplishments are greater central government accountability through new initiatives and services; participation of international organizations and civil society; and capacity building at all levels. It was also highlighted that vocational education helped in increasing: (i) economic competitiveness, (ii) increasing social inclusion and cohesion.

2.7 Conclusion:

Regarding reviews on the study of *status of inclusive education*, many steps has been taken to promote inclusive education. However, there are still challenges and problems that arose and these problems needs to be tackled for the promotion of a more inclusive environment. The implementation of IE was a challenge in India, as it was a country with billions of people living in it who were poverty stricken and the resources too were extremely limited (Timmons and Allur, 2004). However, the government of India has been working at its best to provide universal education to CWSNs under Inclusive Education (Patra, 2017). To minimise the problems therein, it was suggested the governmental agencies as well as

mainstream institutions to understand the reality and not rely on the theoretical concept; and that segregation of the CWSNs is morally unjustifiable and is a violation of human rights. And that inclusive schools must address the needs of all children in every community and the central and state governments must train the teachers to manage inclusive classrooms (Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007). Even in other countries, different challenges were identified in the classroom teaching such as overcrowded classrooms, negative teacher attitude towards teaching the students with disability and inappropriate language of teaching and learning (Mahlo, 2016). On the other hand, there were many initiatives taken up for the development of implementing IE, IE has also become a success in many countries as well. This is evident from Myanmar that the schools were providing a safe environment to learn and the education system could serve as a reference for other countries as well (Tonegawa, 2022).

Regarding reviews on the study on *problems* of inclusive education, many researchers highlighted different problems. Some of the common problems highlighted were lack of competencies among teachers, rigid curriculum, inadequate trained teachers, negative attitude of parents and teachers, inadequate infrastructure, methods of teaching which was very rigid and lack of awareness about inclusive education (Uddin, Bhat & Ahmad, 2017; Hoque & Ekramul, 2022; Sarao & Teena, 2016; Singh & Aggarwal, 2015).

The ways to overcome these challenges in Inclusive Set-Up being suggested are Execution of policies, Development of positive Social Attitude towards Disability, Resistance of parents, increasing skill-based teaching, Linking research and practice, and provision of Peer coaching (Uddin, Bhat & Ahmad, 2017).

Regarding reviews on the study of *Prospects* of Inclusive Education, all the stakeholders of inclusive education must promote and contribute towards the implementation of inclusive education not only as a program but also as an ideology or concept. This ideology should be based on the principles of human rights approach giving importance to the individual and respecting his/her potentiality in the teaching learning process. (Uddin, Bhat & Ahmad, 2017; Singh & Aggarwal, 2015).

With regard to reviews on the study of *attitude of teachers* towards inclusive education, it was highlighted in one of the studies that 70% of regular schoolteachers had not received training in special education nor had any experience in teaching the children with special needs. Further, 87% of the teachers did not have access to support services in their classrooms (Das, Kuyin & Desai, 2013). And 72.2% of the teachers opined that the present school curriculum is not favourable to the needs of the special children (Ramakrishna & Ranganathan, 2020). These findings showed that even the teachers were not yet prepared to implement inclusive education majority of them have not received any training regarding inclusive education. However, one of the study results indicate that *resource teachers* were having significantly greater self-efficacy as compared to the general teachers in educating children with disabilities (Lamture & Gathoo, 2017). Resource teachers were the ones who received intensive training on educating the CWSNs. Thus, it can be concluded that proper training should be received by teachers at elementary schools in India to have a positive attitude towards inclusive education.

Regarding studies reviewed on *policy analysis*, the Government of India has taken many steps to promote inclusive education through various policies and legislations. Some of the important policies and legislations were: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), District Primary Education Program (DPEP), PwD Act, 1995; RCI Act, 1992; RPwD Act, 2016; NPE, 1986 and NEP, 2020 etc. all these policies paved the way for CWSNs protecting their rights and provide support to them. However, it can be concluded that all these acts and policies did not achieve their target and aims due to the following reasons:

- lack of implementation due to lack of resources
- poor coordination, and
- few/limited grants (Kumari & Sharma, 2018)
- Regarding reviews on the study of *social inclusion of CWSNs*, in one of the findings, there was a positive significant relationship between social skills and social inclusion which indicated that socialization was positively correlated to social

inclusion and when the social skills increase, social inclusion in the VI students also increases (Wadegaonkar, 2017). On the contrary, it was also found out that CWSNs and disadvantaged sections of the society faced bullying incidents which were discriminative in nature. They also experienced punishments and insulting behaviour like being labelled; SC students were the most victim of discrimination in one of the studies (Surmila, 2019). The ultimate objective of inclusion was to guarantee that every child is treated fairly and participates in school. When everyone feels appreciated, their differences are acknowledged, and their fundamental needs are satisfied so they can live with dignity, that society is said to be socially inclusive (Marsela, 2024).

All the studies conducted reviewed above showed the different scenario of inclusive education in India as well as abroad. It also revealed that there were a lot of things to find out and explore in the field of Inclusive settings in India and particularly in Mizoram. So, it was on this understanding and to fill this research gap, the present study is taken up for further investigation of Inclusive education in Mizoram.

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CHAPTER – III

METHODOLOGY

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METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a structured and scientific approach to collect, analyse and interpret qualitative or quantitative data to answer research questions or test hypothesis (Sreekumar, 2023). It describes the techniques and procedures used to identify and analyse a specific research problem. Research methodology also highlights the population and sample of the study, tools used for gathering data and data collection techniques. An appropriate research method gives research legitimacy and provides scientifically reliable findings. It also provides a detailed plan for the researcher to keep in track, making the process more effective and manageable. The trustworthiness of the research findings depends on the research designs used.

The present chapter describes the methodologies used in this research work. It highlights the type of research design used in this study, locale of the study, population, sample and sampling techniques used, tools and techniques used, collection of data and data analysis which are discussed under different sections as following.

3.1 Research design:

A research design is an overall plan or structure that guides the process of conducting research (Jain, 2023). It is an essential step in the research process and acts as a guide for the procedures and methods to be followed during the study, including data collection and analysis. To ensure that the objectives of the study are fulfilled and that the findings are reliable and accurate, a well-designed research study is necessary.

To achieve the objectives of the study, mixed method research was used. Mixed method research uses both qualitative and quantitative data to answer research questions (George, 2021). Such methods are used when quantitative or qualitative data alone will not sufficiently answer a research question. Employing a mixed techniques approach contributes to providing a more thorough interpretation of the data (Skidmore, 2023). It also gives credibility because when qualitative and

quantitative data converge, it strengthens the validity of research conclusions (George, 2021).

The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches by including both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. The purpose of using mixed research design is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either qualitative or quantitative methods alone (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2019).

Among the mixed research design, *convergent parallel design* was used in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time and were separately analysed. This design was used to provide a comprehensive understanding of research problems by leveraging the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The research design of the present study can be symbolized as a QUAL + quan model which was categorized by Cresswell and Plano Clark (2011). In this model, qualitative data and quantitative data were integrated to produce a more complete picture to come up with comprehensive findings (Bryman, 2012). The upper case 'QUAL' indicates that the qualitative component was the main data-collection approach; lower case 'quan' indicates a more subsidiary role (Bryman, 2012). The symbol '+' simply means that the qualitative and quantitative data were collected more or less concurrently. In this way, the study was intended to find out the most reliable findings by combining both qualitative and quantitative data.

The researcher also applied data triangulation, in which the results obtained in the investigation employing a method associated with one research strategy were cross-checked against the results of using a method associated with the other research strategy (Bryman, 2012).

The methodological layout for the present study is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 - Methodological Layout

Nos.	Objectives	Sample & Sampling Processes	Tools and Techniques
1.	To analyse the existing Acts and Policies for CWSNs in India and highlight the implementation in Mizoram.	Policy documents, Regulations and Acts	Content Analysis
2.	To find out the number of Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram.	Office Records	Analysis of Office records
3.	To find out the type of disabilities that exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram.	Office Records	Analysis of office records
4.	To find out the schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.	100 teachers (selected from 50 Schools where CWSNs were admitted)	Questionnaire
5.	To find out the level of social inclusion of CWSN in elementary schools of Mizoram.	50 students (Peers of CWSNs) and 50 parents of the CWSNs	Interview and observation
6.	To analyse the elementary school textbooks for accommodating CWSNs in Mizoram.	Textbooks of Mizo language published by SCERT, Mizoram	Content Analysis
7.	To find out the problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram from the perspective of teachers	100 teachers and 50 peers	Semi-structured Interview of teachers and Interview of peers

	and peers		
8.	To find out the problems in effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.	100 teachers and Administrative Officers	Semi-structured Interview & Problem tree analysis
9.	To find out the prospects of inclusive education in Mizoram.	Administrative Officers and 100 teachers	Semi-structured Interview
10.	To formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram	50 experts	Semi-structured Interview

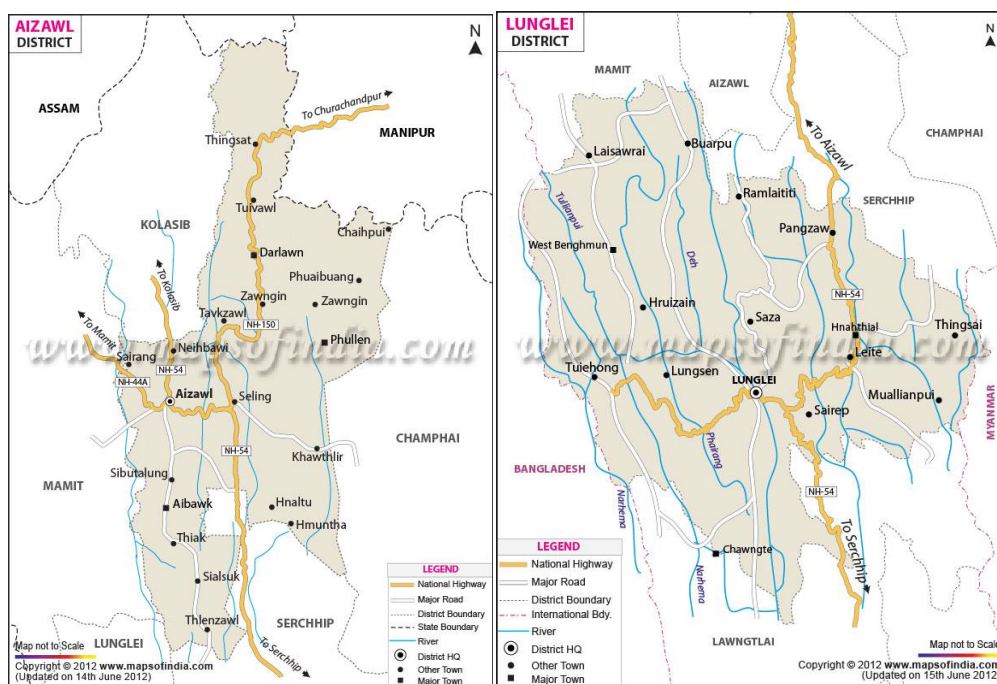
3.2 Locale of the Study

The present study was conducted within two districts in Mizoram, viz. Aizawl and Lunglei districts. The two districts were selected for the study as they were the two largest districts in Mizoram which would be able to better represent the picture of Inclusive Education in Mizoram. According to 2011 census, Lunglei district constitutes 14.68% of the total population and Aizawl district constitutes 36.46% which makes 51.14% of the total population in Mizoram (Govt. of India, 2011).

Secondly, the two districts have the maximum number of CWSNs enrolled according to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), all district CWSN data 2019-2020 Mizoram. In Aizawl, there were 449 CWSNs identified while in Lunglei, 693 CWSNs were identified. Thus, these districts were pertaining to provide actual information on inclusive education in Mizoram. Here, it is not worthy that the district with smaller population in size was having a greater number of CWSNs enrolled in the inclusive schools. This may be because of existence of multiple (6) special schools in Aizawl district.

The following maps showed the locations of the selected districts.

Figure 3.1: Maps showing Lunglei and Aizawl districts of Mizoram



(Source of Maps: www.mapsofindia.com)

3.3 Population & Sample:

3.3.1 Population:

Population in research is the entire group from which conclusions were drawn (Bhandari, 2020). Research population is also known as target population, they possess specific characteristics and are of the interest of the researcher (Thomas, 2023). In the present study, the focus was on different stakeholders like teachers, students (classmates of the CWSNs) & parents of the CWSNs, experts in the field of inclusive education and administrative officers for their suggestions. The population of the study comprised of all the government elementary schools where CWSNs were admitted, teachers, parents & classmates of the CWSNs of these schools, experts in the field of inclusive education and the administrative officers within Aizawl and Lunglei District.

There was a total of 172 schools with CWSNs in Lunglei district and 171 schools with CWSNs in Aizawl district (Govt. of Mizoram, 2020).

In Aizawl district, there were four (4) BRCs: Aizawl East, Aizawl West, Darlawn and Aibawk. In Lunglei district, there were three (3) BRCs, namely: Tlabung Block, Station block and Bunghmun Block. The BRCs were headed by Block Resource Centre Co-ordinator (BRCC).

3.3.2 Sample and Sampling technique:

A sample is a specific group of individual units where data will be collected from (McCombes, 2019). Samples are drawn from the population of the study.

To draw a valid conclusion from the research study, a careful selection of sample should be employed which will be representative of the group (McCombes, 2019). This is called sampling method or technique.

The researcher employed a Purposive sampling technique (Nikolopoulou, 2022; Dovetail, 2023; Singh & Jadhav, 2024) by selecting schools where CWSNs were admitted. Purposive sampling, as outlined by Alan Bryman, is a non-probability sampling technique primarily utilized in qualitative research. This method emphasizes selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research question, thus ensuring that the sample is informative and rich in data (Bryman, 2012).

100 teachers, 50 students, 50 Parents, Administrative Officers from each Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and experts in the field of IE within Aizawl and Lunglei Districts were selected as samples for collecting required data. 50 schools were purposefully selected where CWSNs were admitted. The researcher selected 25 schools each from the district to collect the necessary data.

Table 3.2: Selected sample of the study

Total No. of schools=50					
No. of teachers		No. of students	No. of parents	No. of Administrative Officers	No. of experts in the field of inclusive education
Aizawl District	50	25	25	4	25
Lunglei District	50	25	25	3	25
Total	100	50	50	7	50

Table 3.2 showed the selected sample of the study. 50 elementary schools where CWSNs were admitted were purposefully selected. 2 teachers were selected from each school which makes it a total of 100 teachers. 50 classmates of the CWSNs were selected with the help of the teacher; these students were the benchmark of the CWSNs who had known the CWSNs better than any other classmates. 50 parents of the CWSNs were also selected, some parents were interviewed through phone calls. Seven (7) Administrative officers of each BRCs and 50 experts in the field of inclusive education like Resource teachers who have been working in the field and have rich experiences in teaching the CWSNs were also selected as samples for this study.

3.4. Tools and Techniques

In any research, a well-structured and systematic development of tools is crucial. In this study, several tools and techniques were used to gather information from the respondents. For each objective, different tools and techniques were used to address the stated objectives (Table 3.1). following are the detailed description of the tools and techniques used to achieve the objectives of the study.

3.4.1 Tools for the study:

The following tools were developed by the researcher for gathering data.

- **Questionnaire: *Teachers Questionnaire*** was developed by the researcher to find out the schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram. The questionnaire comprised of three parts-

Part-A: Information of the respondent

Part-B: Information regarding Physical support

Part-C: Information regarding Academic support

- **Interview schedules:** Interview schedules for different type of respondents were developed by the researcher.

- i) Interview Schedule for Parents of CWSNs to find out the Level of Social Inclusion
- ii) Interview Schedule for Peers of CWSNs to find out the Level of Social Inclusion
- iii) Interview Schedule for Peers of CWSNs to find out the problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram
- iv) Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers and Administrative Officers to find out the Problems and Prospects of Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools of Mizoram.
- v) Semi-structured Interview Schedule for Experts in the field of Inclusive Education to formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research technique that combines elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. This approach involves a predetermined set of open-ended questions but allows for flexibility in the order and phrasing of those questions. This flexibility enables the interviewer to explore topics in greater depth based on the participant's responses, fostering a more conversational atmosphere.

- **Observation:** An observation schedule for physical verification of CWSNs and the selected schools were developed by the researcher.

3.4.2 Description of the tools used for the study:

3.4.2.1 Content Analysis:

Content analysis is an analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material through classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes to ascertain its meaning and probable effect (Krippendorff, 2004).

(a) Analysis of Acts and Policies:

This analysis was used to analyse different acts and policies for CWSNs in India. For content analysis, ‘Conceptual analysis’ was adopted. The researcher followed a ‘thematic approach’ to analyse the acts and policies. Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts. The researcher closely examined the data to identify common themes in topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly in a thematic analysis (Claufield, 2019).

The main objectives of this Policy/Act analysis were:

- To find out the provisions related to CWSNs.
- To match those provisions with the practices in the Inclusive schools of Mizoram.

Among the manifold acts and policies for CWSNs in India, the researcher analysed the following due to their importance, relevance and extensiveness.

- i. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992
- ii. Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995
- iii. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016
- iv. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006
- v. Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009
- vi. National Education Policy (NEP), 2020

(b) Textbook Analysis:

The methodical examination of text materials, including their organization, focus, and unique learning aids, is known as textbook analysis (Pearson, 2024). According to Pearson (2024), depending on the goal of the analysis, a textbook can be analyzed in many ways. Different analyzing factors like the text's structure, the author's focus, and the value of the learning aids to aid in instruction can be used. In this study, textbooks were analyzed to find out the inclusive textbooks for accommodating CWSN in the elementary schools of Mizoram using content analysis.

Mizo subject was chosen for analysis because the books were purely developed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram. The subject was selected as it would show the cultural aspect of Mizo community towards disability or CWSNs which were reflected in the Mizo textbook. From the elementary stages, Class I, Class IV, Class V and Class VIII textbooks were selected for analysis. The classes were selected in such a way that it includes the lowest and highest class in both primary section and middle section of the elementary school stages.

A textbook wise analysis was done, first presenting the basic information about the books, teacher's note, pedagogical processes, learning objectives, evaluation techniques, publication and different topics of the unit. Thereafter, the books had been assessed on the fixed parameters given in the table 3.3. A textbook wise analysis was done, the section has been concluded with parameter-based analysis of all the four textbooks. A discussion on the results and analysis of all the textbooks were also presented.

Parameters used for textbook analysis:

After intensive review on textbook analysis, five (5) parameters were developed for assessing the textbooks. These parameters were namely (i) Physical Aspect (PA); (ii) Content Sensitivity (CS); (iii) Objective cited in the Book (OB); (iv) Exercises and Activities (EA); and (v) Digital Content (DC). These parameters were used for assessing the textbooks to find out the inclusivity for CWSNs in the

elementary schools of Mizoram. The descriptions for each parameter were presented along with the codes in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Parameters used for assessing Textbooks

Sl. No	Parameters	Descriptions	Code
1.	Physical Aspect	Physical aspects of the book such as fonts, picture quality and print quality for accommodating CWSNs	PA
2.	Content Sensitivity	Appropriateness of the content of the chapters and language used about CWSNs	CS
3.	Objective cited in the Book	Matching of content with objectives cited directly or indirectly in the book for accommodating CWSNs	OB
4.	Exercises and Activities	Appropriateness and flexibility of exercises and activities to be used by CWSNs prescribed in the textbooks, to be accomplished in the classroom or at home.	EA
5.	Digital Content	Availability of digital content for easy access of textbooks for the special needs children	DC

Validity of Parameters:

After getting the opinion from four (4) experts in the field of Education, the parameters were finalized. All the experts approved the five parameters given by the researcher. As per the comments and suggestions of the experts, descriptions of each parameter were reframed. The experts also gave suggestions on how to analyse the textbook based on the context of the textbook makers like SCERT. Content validity

of the tool was then established as per the review and suggestions from the four experts.

3.4.2.2 Analysis of Office Records:

To find out the number of Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) enrolled and the type of disabilities that exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram, office records were analysed. The office of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) which was now subsumed under Samagra Shiksha Mizoram was visited by the researcher and secondary data were collected from the concerned personnel. The overall data and district wise data were gathered.

3.4.2.3 Questionnaire for teachers:

Questionnaire is a list of items or questions which is used to gather information of the respondents about their opinion, attitude or experience. It can be used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data (Bhandari, 2021). To find out the schools that were equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram, a questionnaire was developed for teachers. This was done after an analysis of certain review of literature, reviewing the works done by various research scholars regarding formulation of questionnaires. The questionnaire comprised of three parts which were Part-A: Information of the respondent, Part-B: Information regarding physical support and Part-C: Information regarding academic support.

Part A contained questions on general information about the respondent. Part B contained set of questions to know the physical infrastructure support services provided by the school for different kinds of disabilities. The questions were both closed ended and open ended. Closed ended question restricts the respondents to one of a limited set of answer like 'Yes/No'; while open ended questions allow respondents to give answer in a free form text (Rosala, 2024). Part C contained 12 questions regarding academic support given by the teachers. Five-point Likert scale has been decided as the format of the tool. The researcher developed five options to answer each item of the scale. These five options were (i) Always (A); (ii) Usually

(U); (iii) Sometimes (S); (iv) Seldom (SD); and (v) Never (N). each of these answers were correct and one must choose option that suits him/her best.

Reliability:

After formulation of the items, the first draft of the tools was sent to five experts from the field of education having expertise in research and particularly in Inclusive Education. From the comments and opinions provided by the experts, 3 items were found unrelated to the objective of the study and such items were modified accordingly. The second draft was presented to the experts and as suggested by the experts; 3 overlapping items were removed. 4 of the items were found to be a little vague in carrying its meaning therefore, those items were reframed. The experts also added some questions which could bring out a more meaningful result. The third and final draft was then presented in which one item was deleted as it was found to be having vague in carrying its meaning. After this exercise, the tools were finalized. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was given in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of items
.709	.757	12

Table 3.4. revealed the value of Cronbach's Alpha which was .709. Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient that measures internal consistency, indicating how closely related a set of items are as a group. A commonly accepted threshold for reliability is an alpha value of 0.70 or higher (Frost, 2024). Thus, the test scale can be claimed to be reliable.

Pilot Testing:

The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small population of 20 respondents to a selected population of Elementary school teachers in Aizawl district through online mode. The pilot study was conducted to enable the researcher to:

- (i) ascertain whether the questionnaire's items would yield information from which conclusions could be made to address research issues.
- (ii) provide data that could be used for improving the questionnaire and ensure the respondents would accept it in its entirety.

These pilot group were asked to critically examine the questionnaire on different grounds such as:

- i. Were the directions of the questions to the respondents clear? If not, how could they be improved?
- ii. Were the wordings of the questions ambiguous? If not, how could it be improved?
- iii. What additions, corrections or modifications needs to be made?

Both written and verbal feedback were provided by the pilot group. Suggestions made by the pilot group were considered and necessary changes were made in the questionnaire. 5 items were reframed so that it can be more meaningful and logical for the respondents. After making necessary modifications, the tools were finalised. In this way, the validity of the questionnaire was maintained.

3.4.2.4 Interview schedule:

Interview is a face to face or a one-to-one situation in which the interviewer gathers necessary information about the interviewee (Kashyap, n.d.). Interview schedule is a list containing a set of structured questions, that have been prepared to serve as a guide for the researcher in collecting a required information about a specific topic or issue (Luenendonk, 2019). It is one of the most common tools used by researchers for collecting qualitative data.

The researcher developed three structured interview schedules and two unstructured interview schedules for collecting data of the respondents. The researcher conducted a thorough review of literature on the statements or items for the interview schedule for parents and peers of the CWSNs.

A semi-structured interview schedule is a kind of interview schedule wherein few questions are pre-determined while the researcher has an option to ask additional questions (George, 2023). The researcher formulated semi-structured interview schedules for teachers, administrative officers and experts in the field of IE. It contained six (6) open ended questions. Every item of the tools was focused to gather true responses of the respondents.

These tools were sent to five experts from the field of education having expertise in research and particularly in inclusive education. From the comments and opinions provided by the experts, items of the tools were modified accordingly. After a few exercises like removal, reframing and addition of questions as suggested by the experts, the tools were finalized.

3.4.2.5 Problem Tree Analysis:

This technique is used to draw the main problems, along with their causes and effects to identify clear and manageable goals and strategies of how to achieve them (Dillon, 2020). A problem tree analysis is also called ‘Situational Analysis’ or ‘Problem Analysis’, it helped to find out solutions by highlighting the cause and effect of an issue in a more structured way.

This analytical tool facilitates a deeper understanding of complex issues, helping the researcher come out to the problems with its causes and impacts or effects. The key Components of problem tree analysis in this study are:

- **Trunk:** Represents the **core problem** or focal issue.
- **Roots:** Illustrate the **causes** of the core problem.
- **Branches:** Depict the **effects** or **impacts** stemming from the core problem.

In the first phase of this analysis, the researcher identified the core problem from the responses of various stakeholders. In the second phase, the researcher was engaged with the teachers and administrative officers in identifying the root causes of the core

problem which were composed in negative terms. In the third phase, the effects or impacts were discussed and listed from the consequences that arise from the core problem which were organized in a logical manner. In the fourth phase, a problem tree diagram was created using charts, placing the core problem in the centre, with causes below and effects/impacts above. In the fifth stage, the researcher review and validate the diagram by ensuring that all identified causes and effects logically connect to the core problem. In the last and final phase, a solution tree was developed using an image of a tree.

By following all these steps, the negative statements were transformed into positive objectives to create a solution to the problems, which outlined potential interventions needed to address the core problem. This structured approach helped in clarifying the situation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

3.5 Collection of Data:

After the approval of the State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Mizoram, the researcher collected secondary data from Samagra Shiksha, Mizoram. The collected data contained a list of schools under the Department of Education, Govt. of Mizoram where CWSNs were admitted, the lists of CWSNs and the types of disabilities. After listing out the schools, the researchers then select schools to be visited within Aizawl and Lunglei Districts.

After taking consent from the headmaster of each school, one classmate of the CWSNs were interviewed; they were selected with the help of the teachers who were their closest, best friend and seatmate who would be knowing them best. Two teachers from each school were also interviewed to find out the underlying problems. Parents of the CWSNs were interviewed through phone calls, in which the contact numbers were given out by the teachers. The researcher also had a semi-structured interview with experts in the field of Inclusive education. Experts include resource teachers both from the visited schools & BRCs and administrative officers in the office of Samagra Shiksha Mizoram; Co-ordinators (BRCC) of the 7 Block Resource Centres of Aizawl and Lunglei districts were also interviewed using semi-structured interview schedule.

The researcher also adopted observation of the schools; and the relationship between teachers and students as well as student-student relation for performing systematic observation of social inclusion.

3.6 Data Analysis:

The major data obtained were analysed using qualitative data analysis techniques. This involved the act of arranging, evaluating, and interpreting non-numeric, conceptual data, and user feedback for the purpose of identifying themes and patterns and responding to research questions. Part of the data which was quantitative was analyzed with Microsoft Excel and presented in frequency and percentages.

For qualitative data, the researcher employed content analysis and problem tree analysis for analysing the responses. The findings were also analysed by listing and coding of the responses with an intention of finding reliable and valid results.

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CHAPTER – IV
ANALYSIS AND
INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER – IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected to fulfil the objectives of the study. Data analysis helps researchers in categorizing and summarizing data to answer critical questions. Data interpretation is the process of reviewing data and come up with relevant conclusions using different analytical research methods (Villegas, 2024). The data collected for the study were analysed, interpreted and presented here in accordance with the objectives of the study.

4.1. Analysis of Objective No.1

To analyse the existing acts and policies for CWSNs in India and to highlight the implementation in Mizoram

To analyse the existing acts and policies for CWSNs in India, the researcher adopted a content analysis technique to achieve this objective. To highlight the implementation of the acts and policies, secondary data were collected by the researcher. There were various Acts and policy documents framed by various policy makers and committees which were having implementation and implication for inclusion of CWSNs.

Among the manifold acts and policies for CWSNs in India, the researcher analysed the following due to their importance, relevance and extensiveness.

- i. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992
- ii. Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995; and Right of Person with Disability Act, 2016
- iii. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006
- iv. Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009
- v. National Education Policy (NEP), 2020

4.1.1. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was set up as a registered society in the year 1986. It became a statutory body on 22nd June 1993 by an act of the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 passed by the Parliament of India. The Act was amended by the Parliament in 2000 to make it broader. The Act aimed at

promoting the rehabilitation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in India. It plays a crucial role in regulating and standardizing training programs for rehabilitation professionals, thereby ensuring quality services for individuals with disabilities.

Main target of the Act:

The main function given to RCI was to regulate and monitor services given to the persons with disability (PwDs), to standardise the syllabus and maintain a ‘Central Rehabilitation Register’ of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of rehabilitation and special education. The key objectives and functions of the Act are as follows:

- i. Regulation of Training: The RCI is responsible for regulating and monitoring the training of rehabilitation professionals, ensuring that they meet established standards. This includes recognizing institutions that provide training and maintaining a Central Rehabilitation Register of qualified professionals.
- ii. Promotion of Inclusive Education: The RCI actively advocates for inclusive education, which allows students with disabilities to learn alongside their peers in mainstream classrooms. This approach fosters equity and aims to eliminate barriers to education.
- iii. Research and Development: The council promotes research in rehabilitation and special education, which is essential for developing effective strategies and practices to support persons with disabilities. This includes curriculum development and capacity-building initiatives for educators and rehabilitation professionals.
- iv. Amendments and Enhancements: The Act was amended in the year 2000 to broaden its scope, incorporating aspects such as early intervention and rehabilitation alongside rehabilitation. These amendments aimed to enhance the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities and ensure that the training of professionals was comprehensive and up to date (Nayan, 2021).
- v. Community Involvement: The RCI emphasizes the importance of involving persons with disabilities and their families in decision-making

processes related to rehabilitation services. This is reflected in the establishment of regional and state chapters of the RCI, which include representatives from various stakeholder groups.

Implementation in Mizoram:

Knowing the needs of qualified special professionals and to develop more professionals in the field of special education, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram was given permission by RCI to run teacher training programmes in special education after a thorough and careful inspection. The programmes were Bachelor of Education- Special Education in Hearing Impairment (B.Ed. Spl. Ed. H. I.) and Bachelor of Education- Special Education in Visual Impairment (B.Ed. Spl. Ed. H. I.) from the academic session 2018-2020. The intake capacity for the 2 courses were 30 each. In each academic session, the seats were fully occupied (Directorate of SCERT, 2019). The institution was affiliated under Mizoram University, and it stood as the only institution in its category in the Northeastern India selected to conduct such programmes so that more professionals can be developed.

These programmes aimed to develop professionals in the field of special education to break barriers in special education by promoting inclusive education. The program also aimed to prepare individuals to acquire knowledge and develop skills and competencies to impart education and training to deal children with disabilities. As per the RCI rules, the candidates of B.Ed. Special Education shall be able to obtain ‘Registered Professional Certificate’ from RCI to work as a Special teacher in the field of Special Education (SCERT Mizoram, 2019). RCI not only recognise such professional training programmes but also monitor the quality through its established units. As such one (B. Ed. Spl. Ed. V.I.) of the two programmes offered by SCERT Mizoram has been discontinued from the session 2024.

Recently, Dept. of Clinical Psychology under Mizoram University has been approved by RCI to start a two-year regular Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) in Clinical Psychology programme with ten seats with effect from 2023 academic session (Mizoram University, 2024).

Implications for the Inclusion of CWSNs:

According to the information booklet made by RCI, by the year 2021, there were 1,712 professionals registered under the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) in Mizoram (Govt. of India, 2021). This includes various categories of specialists such as:

- i. Audiologists and Speech Therapists
- ii. Clinical Psychologists
- iii. Hearing and Ear Mould Technicians
- iv. Rehabilitation Engineers and Technicians
- v. Special Teachers for Educating and Training Persons with Disabilities
- vi. Vocational Counsellors, Employment Officers, and Placement Officers
- vii. Multi-purpose Rehabilitation Therapists and Technicians
- viii. Speech Pathologists
- ix. Rehabilitation Psychologists
- x. Rehabilitation Social Workers
- xi. Rehabilitation Practitioners in Mental Retardation
- xii. Orientation and Mobility Specialists
- xiii. Community-Based Rehabilitation Professionals
- xiv. Rehabilitation Counsellors and Administrators
- xv. Prosthetists and Orthotists
- xvi. Rehabilitation Workshop Managers

In Mizoram, several departments have organized Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programs to enhance the skills of professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education. Notable departments include:

1. Department of Clinical Psychology, Mizoram University (MZU):

- The department had conducted CRE programs focusing on topics such as early detection and intervention of psychological disorders and mental health workshops (Mizoram University, 2024).

2. State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Mizoram:

- SCERT had implemented CRE programs aimed at training professionals in special education, particularly for disabilities like hearing and visual impairments (Govt. of Mizoram, 2024)

3. Department of Social Work, Mizoram University (MZU):

- This department also engaged in organizing CRE programs that focus on various aspects of social work and rehabilitation (Mizoram University, 2024).

These departments were recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) and are involved in providing ongoing training to ensure that professionals are well-equipped to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Each department conducts programs based on RCI guidelines, contributing to the professional development of practitioners in the region. Besides Faculty Development Centre (FDC), Department of Education, Mizoram University in collaboration with National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD), Dehradun also organized a few CRE programs (3) for in-service special educators in Mizoram and other stakeholders.

The Govt. of Mizoram had recently hired 50 special educators to enhance the educational support for children with disabilities. This recruitment was part of ongoing efforts to fill vacant teaching positions and improve the availability of qualified professionals in the state's educational system. The hiring process was currently underway and was expected to be completed shortly, addressing the need for more specialized educators in schools across Mizoram (Govt. of India, 2023).

Thus, it was evident from the above-mentioned ground realities that RCI has contributed towards the promotion of inclusive education. Through these initiatives, RCI aims to create a more inclusive educational environment in Mizoram, ensuring that children with disabilities receive quality education and support services.

4.1.2. Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Act, 1995

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PwD Act 1995) is a significant piece of legislation in India aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and rights for individuals with

disabilities. The Act came into force on February 7, 1996. It was often compared to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), an important Act for the disabilities in the United State. PwD Act covered a wide range of topics related to disability like education, employment, infrastructural design, prevention and early detection of disabilities. It is an act to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwD). This legislation marked a significant step toward ensuring equal opportunities and full participation for PwD in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and social integration.

Focus of the Act:

The focus of the act was towards the rights and education of persons with disabilities. The act tries to provide prevention and early detection of disabilities; provide education and paves the way for their employment. The Act states that,

“Children with disabilities have the right to access education in a free and appropriate environment up to 18 years of age promoting integration into normal schools” (Government of India, 2016; Hazra, 2022).

It promotes *inclusive education* by ensuring that schools provide necessary accommodations, such as transportation and modifications in examination systems, to facilitate the learning of children with disabilities. This act required all parts of the country, both urban and rural areas to be equipped with facilities that can accommodate the CWSNs and ensured that they were in school accessible to them. The PwD Act functioned as a catalyst for several other development projects for including the CWSNs.

Implementation and implication in Mizoram:

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment executed the Scheme for Implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 (SIPDA) (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023). The scheme offers financial aid for different initiatives mentioned in the PwD Act, 1995. These initiatives primarily focussed on providing rehabilitation and ensuring barrier free access for the persons with disabilities.

As per the news from the Telegraph dated 15th February 2024, the Govt. of Mizoram was in the process of implementing the PwD Act, 1995 with a reservation of 3% of Govt. jobs for the person with disability. The officials from the Govt. also

mentioned that they constitute a committee to investigate the matter regarding provision of Govt. jobs for the persons with disabilities (The Telegraph, 2006).

The Govt. of Mizoram offered different schemes for disability which can be grouped into two: Schemes which were funded under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), Schemes funded by the Ministry of Rural Development and schemes funded under the Govt. of Mizoram.

Schemes funded by MSJE:

- **Accessible India Campaign** is a project that restored 27 government-owned buildings so that PwDs could use them. Furthermore, ten more buildings were still being made accessible as part of the Campaign's Phase I. The State's ICT Department had made 203 government websites accessible, allowing those with visual impairments to use assistive technologies like screen readers to access the websites (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).
- The Tribal Art Centre at Tanhril has set up a Braille Press under the *Braille Press Scheme*. State Braille Press, Tanhril, had printed Braille books for MBSE, SCERT, Equal Opportunity Cell (Pachhunga University College), and private persons (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).
- The Ministry introduced *Unique Disability Identity* in 2017 with the aim of building a nationwide database for individuals with disabilities. In accordance with this program, PwDs receive new disability ID cards via online application following a recommendation from the medical authority. All PwDs must register and receive identity cards, through the web portal www.swavlambancard.gov.in. The former method of issuing ID cards had been superseded by this new mechanism, and holders of ID cards previously issued by the State Government must now apply for this new ID card. This duty had been given to each District Medical Superintendent Office, which was furnished with IT resources. As of May 7, 2023, 4488 IDs had been issued. (Government of Mizoram, 2023).
- Under the **Deen Dayal Rehabilitation Scheme** (DDRS), the Spastic Society of Mizoram operates Special Schools for Hearing Impaired and Intellectually Disabled. Samaritan Society for the Blind oversees the Special School for

Visually Impaired, which was operated under the same scheme. Through the MSJE's DDRS umbrella program, NGOs and Voluntary Organizations (VOs) can apply for grants in help from the Ministry. (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

Schemes funded by the Govt. of Mizoram

- **Rehabilitation Home for Persons Cured of Mental Illness**

All states and Union territories are required to establish rehabilitation homes for individuals who have been cured of mental illness, many of whom are currently long-term patients in mental hospitals without family members or relatives claiming them, as per the directive issued by the honourable Supreme Court. The Mizoram government had allocated funds for the operation of this kind of facility in the state. The Home was established at the former State Senior Citizens Home building at Govt. Complex Veng (recently changed into Ainawn Veng), Aizawl with the sanction of the relevant authority. It had been outsourced to 'Beiseitu', a registered society under the Directorate of SW&TA (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

- **Training Centers for Persons with Special Abilities**

There were three such training facilities in the state: one residential facility in Aizawl for both male and female trainees, and one non-residential facility at Lunglei. A year-long vocational program for female trainees, tailoring was offered, and for male students, tailoring and shoemaking were offered. Throughout their program, the trainees received a monthly stipend of Rs 250. After the course, they received a hand sewing machine, a treadle sewing machine, and cobbler's tools (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

- **Disability Pension**

Disability Pension was given to 200 persons with disabilities who are totally blind and bedridden at the rate of Rs. 350/- per month (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

- **Handicapped Students Stipend (Fund Source - Govt. of Mizoram):**

Handicapped students who were enrolled in the Government and Private

schools were given a stipend for books, uniforms, etc. under this scheme. The rates are shown below.

Up to Class-IV	:	Rs. 30/- p.m. per student (360/- p.a.)
Class V – Class VII	:	Rs. 40/- p.m. per student (480/- p.a.)
Class VIII – Class XII	:	Rs. 85/- p.m. per student (1020/- p.a.)

(Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

- **Stipend to Educated Unemployed Persons with Disabilities**

Stipend of Rs. 650/-per month was granted to educated disabled people who had been enrolled in any employment exchange for more than three years and have not been placed in a meaningful occupation. (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

- **State Economic Rehabilitation Scheme**

A one-time monetary grant-in-aid of Rs. 4,000 was provided to disabled people for the purpose of piggery and poultry. Tools for cobblers and sewing machines were donated in kind (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

- **Scribe Allowance**

On presentation of the admission card, Unique Disability ID (UDID), and student ID card, scribe allowance at the rate of Rs 500 per paper attempted by a disabled person (often visually impaired) in the school board examination or university examination was given. (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

Schemes funded by the Ministry of Rural Development

- **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme**

730 recipients of the National Social Assistance Program received the Rs 400 monthly Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension (Rs 300 in Central Contribution + Rs 100 in State Contribution) (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

Apart from all these schemes, the Govt. of Mizoram took initiative on *Assessment and Certification Camps for PwDs*. To cover PwDs who might not otherwise be certified owing to inaccessibility posed by remoteness of location, etc., assessment and certification camps were held throughout the

State. The Department actively collaborated with the Department of Health and Family Welfare and the Regional Centre of the National Institute for Locomotor Disabilities to organize the Camps. At these camps, NILD provides certain PwDs with appliances and equipment like crutches, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc. (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023).

Implementation and Implications for Inclusion of CWSNs:

Despite its progressive provisions, ongoing challenges remained in the effective implementation of the Act and the realization of its objectives. The allowances and stipends given to disabled students were insufficient to cover their basic needs and educational needs. The current stipend amounts might not keep pace with rising living costs and inflation, limiting their effectiveness. Thus, the stipends must be regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living and the specific needs of disabled individuals.

Continued advocacy and policy reforms are necessary to address these challenges and ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are fully protected and promoted in the society.

4.1.3. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, was enacted in the year 2016 by the Indian Parliament to enhance the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities across various domains of life, including education, employment, and social participation. It became operational on 15th June 2017. The Bill replaced the existing PwD Act 1995, which was enacted 21 years back. This new bill has enlarged the categories of disability from *seven to 21* types. The importance of this act for the CWSN is that the Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education. This provision will pave the way for the CWSNs in order to get the education they require.

This inclusion policy will also help more people with disabilities to have access to the government schemes and facilities intended for the welfare of disabled people in India. Furthermore, this new law not only enhanced the Rights and Entitlements of Divyangjan (National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) but

also provided effective mechanism for ensuring their empowerment and true inclusion into the society in a satisfactory manner.

The RPWD Act 2016 also provided for creating institutional infrastructure to support the needs of persons with disabilities. For children with disabilities aged between 6 and 18 years, education will be free. To eliminate discrimination, punishment by imprisonment has been mandated for those who intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate a person with a disability in any place within public view.

The following is a table of how the RPwD Act 2016 and the PwD Act, 1995 differ:

Table 4.1: Differences between PwD Act 1995 and RPwD Act 2016

	PwD Act 1995	RPwD Act 2016
Scope of disabilities covered	7 types of disabilities recognized	21 types of disabilities recognized
Rights and Protections	Provided basic rights and protections but lacked comprehensive mechanisms for enforcement. Primarily focused on equal opportunities and protection against discrimination.	Emphasizes the right to equality, life with dignity, and respect for integrity. It mandates that persons with disabilities enjoy these rights equally with others.
Employment Provisions	Section 47 offered limited guarantees regarding employment, such as protection against demotion or termination due to disability.	Section 20 significantly strengthens employment rights by prohibiting discrimination in all employment matters and requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodations.
Job reservation	3% reservation in government jobs for persons with disabilities, specifically allocated as 1% each for three categories: blindness, hearing impairment, and locomotor disabilities. Applicable for Group C and Group D posts.	4% reservation which applies to all groups of posts-Group A, B, C, and D in government and public sector undertakings. It includes a more detailed breakdown: 1% each for blindness, hearing impairment, and locomotor disability, 1% for autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disabilities, and mental illness, 1% for multiple

		disabilities.
Seat reservation for School Admission	3% reservation in educational institutions, which was primarily applicable to government and government-aided institutions.	5% reservation for persons with benchmark disabilities in all government and government-aided higher educational institutions

Table 4.1 clearly highlight the transition from the PwD Act, 1995 to the RPwD Act, 2016. It marks a significant enhancement in the approach towards the scope of disabilities covered. The RPwD Act establishes a comprehensive framework that not only promotes inclusion in existing vocational programs but also emphasizes specialized training, financial support, and market linkages. This shift reflects a commitment to empowering persons with disabilities through skill development and self-employment opportunities, aligning with international standards set by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Implementation in Mizoram:

The government of Mizoram has also adopted the changes made under the RPwD Act, 2016. It made a notification that the government that with the commencement of the RPwD Act, 2016, i.e. 19th April, 2017 (the date from which the RPwD Act, 2016 came into force), the reservation of identified posts within the direct recruitment quota for Persons with Disabilities shall be as per the Act [Govt. of Mizoram Notification No. A. 12027/1/2011-P&AR(GSW), 2018]. The rules to be followed under this act were translated in Mizo language (Government of Mizoram, 2016), the rules were made as per the RPwD Act, 2016 and were followed accordingly.

The rules were mainly concerned within the field of education, jobs where 4% seats of government jobs were reserved for PwDs; accessibility in terms of transportation, physical environment, information & communication; and issue of disability certificate.

The Act states that all educational institutions funded or recognized by the government must provide inclusive education. This includes:

- Non-discriminatory admission policies for children with disabilities.
- Accessibility in school buildings and facilities.

- Provision of reasonable accommodation tailored to individual needs.
- Support for sports and recreational activities

Implementation in Mizoram Implications for Inclusion of CWSNs:

The RPwD Act represents a shift towards a more inclusive society, recognizing the rights and potential of individuals with disabilities. By mandating inclusive education, employment opportunities, and community support, the Act aims to remove barriers that had historically marginalized this population. However, despite these advancements, challenges remained in the effective implementation of the Act across different regions. Issues such as societal attitudes, lack of awareness, and inadequate resources continue to hinder full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in various aspects of life (Barman, 2023). From the findings of the study, there were different problems found which impacted the effective implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools of Mizoram. Problems such as untrained teachers, lack of awareness about inclusive education, impracticability, lack of school infrastructure to accommodate the CWSNs and attitudinal barriers were found. Regarding physical infrastructure, majority (68%) of the schools did not have functional ramps, majority (84%) did not provide structural building changes for the CWSNs, most of the schools (68%) did not provide special toilets and most (96%) of the schools did not provide special desks and benches for the CWSNs. Thus, even in the state of Mizoram, there are many challenges which need to be tackled to promote an inclusive environment in the schools. Thus, measures must be taken by the concerned authorities to put policies and acts into practice and provide an inclusive environment for all.

4.1.4. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006

The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was formulated by the Government of India in the year 2006 to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society. The objectives of the policy were mainly on recognition of the rights of PwDs and empowerment through education and rehabilitation.

Focus of the Act:

This policy stressed on provision of **barrier free environment** in schools and public places for easy access for persons with disabilities. It also includes provisions for

social security to protect against exploitation and ensure dignity for PwDs and encouraging research on disability issues to inform policies and improve services.

The focus of the policy can be discussed below:

- i. **Prevention of disabilities:** Since large number of cases of disability is preventable, this policy laid strong emphasis on prevention of disabilities. This was done through raising awareness with regard to measures to be taken during pregnancy.
- ii. **Rehabilitation:** Provision of physical rehabilitation for the persons with disabilities, this includes early detection of disabilities, medical intervention, counselling and provision of assistive devices for enhancing independence; secondly, promotion of inclusive education by enhancing educational rehabilitation so that the CWSNs will learn alongside their peers in the mainstream schools; thirdly, facilitating access to employment opportunities and skill development programs for the persons with disabilities.
- iii. **Barrier free environment:** This policy aimed to create barrier free access to public places, institutions and create a wide opportunity for the PwDs.

Implementation and Implication for the inclusion of CWSNs in Mizoram:

The implementation of this policy aimed to involve collaboration among various stakeholders, including state governments, NGOs, and local institutions. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment serves as the nodal ministry responsible for overseeing its execution. The government of Mizoram has taken certain steps to implement the recommendations of this policy. Community based awareness programs were held in various communities and in schools of different stages. Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programs were also utilised in such a manner that professionals in the field of special education were trained. Workshops, conferences and seminars were also conducted by SCERT, Department of Social Work and Clinical Psychology in Mizoram University. These centres worked for the prevention of disabilities and provide rehabilitation for PwDs by collaborating with community and other NGOs.

Under the National Institute of Locomotor Development (NILD), aids and appliances like hearing aids, crutches, walking sticks, spectacles, prosthetics like limbs were disseminated to PwDs having disability certificate free of cost. In collaboration with Social Welfare Department, NILD also hosted free health camps in certain communities and schools for diagnosing and this also aided in the early identification of disabilities.

Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) was established way back in the year 1976 by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, government of India. It was a Central Public sector undertaking. ALIMCO functioned under the Assistance to Disabled Persons (ADIP) scheme that provides grants to help persons with disabilities to purchase and use assistive devices. The main aim of ADIP scheme is to improve their physical and psychosocial well-being, reduces the effect of their disabilities and improve their independent functioning. ALIMCO has set up an apex centre named Pradhan Mantri Divyasha (PMDK) Aizawl; this centre started running in July 2023 under Zoram Medical College. PMDK-Aizawl started disseminating aids and appliances for persons with disabilities from April 2024. It had made services available for PwDs by producing different aids and appliances like wheelchairs, rollator, walking stick, tripod, tetrapod, spinal support, knee brace, braille kit, blind stick, smartphone for the blind, hearing aid and crutch. The individuals in need can apply for assistive devices they required from the portal named 'Arjun Portal.' There have been 1000 beneficiaries under the PMDK-Aizawl, 2372 items have been disseminated till now as per the report of the nodal officer of PMDK-Aizawl.

With regard to barrier free access to public places and institutions, only a few arrangements have been made in Mizoram. This study also highlighted the major issues faced by the CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram. From this light, it can be said that there were still many things to be done to make the public places and schools accessible for the persons with disabilities.

4.1.5. Right To Education (RTE) Act 2009:

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4th August

2009. It describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 to 14 years of age in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. India became one of the 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when the Act came into force on 1st April 2010. The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 to 14 including those with disabilities, and aims to promote inclusive education. Section 35(1) mandates that:

“The appropriate government and local authorities must ensure that children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups, including those with disabilities, are not discriminated against in accessing education. “

This section emphasizes the need for a non-discriminatory environment in schools. Clauses (c) of Sections 8 and 9 specifically require schools to take measures to safeguard the interests of CWSNs and eliminate any form of discrimination or harassment against them. Schools were instructed to promote equality and ensure that CWSNs could pursue their education without facing barriers. These provisions collectively aimed to create an inclusive educational environment that recognizes and addresses the unique needs of children with disabilities, ensuring their right to free and compulsory education.

Focus of the Act:

The main aim or focus of the act is towards the provision of **free and compulsory education** for all children between the age of **6 and 14 years**. The act is based on Article 21A of the Indian Constitution which states that,

“The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine”. Free and compulsory education implies no children should be excluded to receive education irrespective of caste, colour, sex, socio-economic condition, *disability or ability*, or any other kind of differences a person has. All children are to be accepted and included in the educational setting and receive the right type of education according to their needs. Thus, this act stands firm towards the promotion of inclusive education for all children between the age of 6 to 14 years.

The Act emphasizes the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education. It aligns with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which promotes a zero-rejection policy, meaning no child with special needs should be denied education based on their disability (Bhargava, 2018). On the contrary, the RTE Act does not explicitly define "inclusive education," leading to inconsistencies in its application across different states and schools (Bhargava, 2018; Rao & Shrivastava, 2020). It also had identification and assessment issue that there was a lack of standardized methodologies for identifying children with disabilities, which affects the support they receive (Rao & Shrivastava, 2020). To address these issues, it was recommended to include updating the RTE Act to align with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016s (RPWD) and enhancing training for educators on inclusive practices. This would help create a more coherent framework for the education of children with disabilities in India, ensuring that all children can benefit from an inclusive educational environment.

Implementation and Implication for the inclusion of CWSNs in Mizoram:

The Government of Mizoram, Education Department made a notification on the 13th of September 2010 with reference to the notification, the governor of Mizoram constituted the Right to Education Protection Authority (REPA) as per sub section 2, section 27 under RTE Act 2009. The Govt. then make rules for the implementation of the Act in 2011.

The Government of Mizoram adopted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and based on it had enacted its own Mizoram Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011. The rules demand compulsory schooling for children aged between 6 and 14 years, special training for children in need of special development, provision of free textbooks and writing materials, and free uniforms for Below Poverty Line (BPL) children. Some key points about the Mizoram RTE Rules 2011 are as follows:

- The rules apply to conferment of rights on children to free and compulsory education, subject to the provisions of articles 29 and 30 of the Constitution

- They define "child with special needs" to include children with disabilities and children living with or affected by HIV/AIDS (Section 3(2) & Section 35)
- The rules reserve 25% of seats for economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups which also include children with disabilities for admission in schools within this framework [Section 12(1C)]

According to Census 2011, Mizoram had the lowest percentage of disability in India which was 1.38%. Looking into the statistics, the number of seats reserved were adequate to include the CWSNs in the mainstream school in Mizoram. The Mizoram RTE Rules 2011 aims to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the state in accordance with the National RTE Act 2009. Under Part-III, Duties of State Government, Local Authorities, it was stated that for children with disabilities if their disabilities prevent them from accessing the schools, the Govt./local authority shall make appropriate and safe transportation arrangements for them to attend school and finish elementary education (Clause No. 4(7)). A child with disabilities shall also be provided with free special learning and support material, which is given under inclusive education in schools (Clause No. 5(1)).

In conclusion, the Mizoram RTE Rules followed a "zero rejection policy", ensuring that no child with special needs was deprived of the right to education. The focus was on inclusion and mainstreaming CWSNs into regular schools with adequate resource support.

4.1.6. National Education Policy, 2020

The new National Education Policy 2020 is built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. This policy aims to transform India into a vibrant education society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and higher education more holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary. It places significant emphasis on inclusive education, particularly for Children with Special Needs (CWSN). This policy aims to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have access to quality education and the necessary support to thrive in a learning environment.

Focus of the Policy:

To promote inclusion, the policy aimed towards ensuring **universal access to school education at all levels**, i.e. from pre-school to secondary education. The key Provisions for inclusion of CWSNs in NEP 2020 are highlighted in **Chapter 6**, titled "**Equitable and Inclusive Education.**" This chapter outlines the framework and strategies for ensuring that all children, including those with disabilities, have access to quality education. NEP 2020 aligns with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016, promoting an inclusive education system where students with and without disabilities learn together. The policy emphasizes adapting teaching methods to meet the diverse learning needs of all students, including those with disabilities (Hussain, 2023).

The policy also advocates for early identification of learning disabilities and the provision of continuous support. It suggests that the earlier support is provided, the better the outcomes for children with special needs. This includes the use of technology and flexible curricula to cater to individual strengths (Kishore, 2020).

The need for schools to be equipped with resources, including special educators trained in cross-disability approaches, and the establishment of resource centres to support children with severe or multiple disabilities were also highlighted in the policy. Additionally, assistive devices and accessible teaching materials, such as Braille and large print textbooks, will be made available (NCERT, n.d.).

The policy also mandates that schools ensure barrier-free access for all children with disabilities, facilitating their full participation in educational activities. This includes physical access to school facilities and the integration of children with disabilities into all aspects of school life, including sports and arts (Kishore, 2020).

For children with profound disabilities who cannot attend school, NEP 2020 allows for home-based education, ensuring that these children receive quality education tailored to their needs. This approach maintains their inclusion within the broader educational framework (Kishore, 2020; Hussain, 2023).

The policy also emphasizes the importance of training teachers to recognize and support children with special needs. This includes creating awareness about the

unique capabilities of each student and fostering an inclusive classroom environment (Hussain, 2023).

Another target of this policy towards inclusion is reforming the school curriculum. To bring about inclusion, the school curricula and pedagogy will aim for holistic/ all-round development of all learners. Students will have increased flexibility and choice of subjects than before. There will be no rigid separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and co-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams. Multidisciplinary subjects that can be opted by the students will be offered. Thus, result in students being able to gather knowledge from various spheres of discipline.

In conclusion, the NEP 2020 represents a transformative approach to education in India, particularly concerning the inclusion of CWSN. By establishing a comprehensive framework that prioritizes accessibility, resource allocation, and teacher training, the policy aims to create an educational landscape where all children can learn and grow together, thus promoting equity and social justice in education.

Implications and implementation in Mizoram:

- The state government of Mizoram has taken different steps towards the implementation of NEP 2020. It was reported that almost 25% task has been completed in the implementation of this new policy.
- As of now, there are only few steps taken towards the promotion and development of a more inclusive educational environment especially for the CWSNs.
- As reported by the SCERT, Mizoram, 2673 teachers have been given trainings under the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (Diksha) which is a digital platform for teachers, students, and parents in India that provides access to educational resources. This portal will be made useful for the teachers to improve their digital skills which will be helpful in teaching the CWSNs by using certain audio-visual aids to foster effective learning.
- It was also reported that Braille book was constructed which have been made available for the blind students. However, this has not been

released till now. This Braille construction was not developed based on the school textbooks but will serve as a guide for gaining information and knowledge for the blind students.

- Large print textbooks of elementary section (classes I to VIII) were also made available for low vision students (Government of Mizoram, 2024).

4.2. Analysis of Objective No. – 2

To find out the number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

To find out this objective, the researcher did a document analysis of secondary data as per the record of the office of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Mizoram which was now subsumed under Samagra Shiksha Mizoram. It was found that the total number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools (Class I-VIII) of Mizoram during the academic year 2021-2022 (UDISE) was 2609. And as per the report of Government of India, Press Information Bureau 2021-2022, the total number of CWSNs enrolled in the schools (Class 1-XII) of Mizoram was 3976 which was 1.43%.

As the study was delimited to the selected two largest districts of Mizoram, viz. Aizawl and Lunglei, so relevant information were collected from schools from two district only. As per the records of SSA, Mizoram during the academic year 2019-2019, there were 449 (0.76%) CWSNs in Aizawl district; and 693 (2.38%) CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools in Lunglei district. This data showed that there are more CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools in Lunglei district as compared to Aizawl district.

There were 115 CWSNs enrolled in the 50 sampled schools within the two districts. There were 67 CWSNs in Lunglei district and 48 CWSNs in Aizawl district. The following table 4 showed the school wise admission of CWSNs and their type of disabilities.

Table 4.2: School wise distribution of CWSN and the sampled Elementary Schools and type of their disability.

Sl. No	Name of School	District	Number of CWSN	Type of Disability
1.	Govt. Middle School, Salem	Lunglei	3	VI, HI, Specific Learning Disabilities
2.	Govt. Primary School, Salem	Lunglei	1	VI
3.	Govt. Primary School, Sethlun	Lunglei	1	ID
4.	Govt. Primary School-I, Pukpui	Lunglei	8	VI, ID, Specific Learning Disabilities
5.	Govt. Primary School-II, Pukpui	Lunglei	1	Locomotor Disability
6.	Govt. Middle School-I, Pukpui	Lunglei	2	VI, Specific Learning Disabilities
7.	Govt. Middle School, Zotlang	Lunglei	2	VI, Specific Learning Disabilities
8.	Govt. LCM Middle School, Farm Veng	Lunglei	1	Specific Learning Disabilities
9.	Mt. Hermon Govt Middle School, Ramthar	Lunglei	3	VI, HI, Locomotor Disability
10.	Govt. Primary School, Ramthar	Lunglei	5	ID
11.	Govt. Primary School-I, Chanmari	Lunglei	1	Locomotor Disability
12.	JNM Model Middle School, Electric Veng	Lunglei	2	Specific Learning Disabilities, ID
13.	Govt. Model Primary School, Electric Veng	Lunglei	3	ID, HI, Speech & Language Impairment
14.	Govt. Primary School-II, Electric Veng	Lunglei	5	ID, Locomotor Disability
15.	Govt. Primary School, Luangmual	Lunglei	2	Mental illness
16.	Govt. Darphawka Memorial, Theiriat	Lunglei	2	Multiple disability, Dwarfism
17.	Govt. Primary School-III, Haulawng	Lunglei	2	Low vision, Multiple disability
18.	Govt. Primary School, Mausen	Lunglei	2	ID
19.	Govt. Primary School-II, Mualthuam 'N'	Lunglei	1	Locomotor Disability

20.	Govt. Middle School, Kanghmun 'S'	Lunglei	2	ID, Muscular Dystrophy
21.	Govt. Middle School-II, Zobawk	Lunglei	2	ID
22.	Govt. Primary School-III, Zobawk	Lunglei	4	HI, Locomotor disability, Multiple disability
23.	Govt. Primary School-I, Zohnuai	Lunglei	4	Locomotor disabilities
24.	Govt. Primary School-II, Zotlang	Lunglei	3	Locomotor disability, ID, Muscular Dystrophy
25.	Govt. Primary School, Bazar	Lunglei	5	Low vision, HI, Multiple disability, ID
26.	Govt. Primary School-II, Dinthar	Aizawl	1	ID
27.	Govt. Middle School, Laipuitlang	Aizawl	3	Specific Learning Disabilities, ID, Locomotor Disability
28.	Govt. Primary School, Laipuitlang	Aizawl	2	ID
29.	Govt. Middle School-II, Dinthar	Aizawl	4	VI
30.	Govt. Middle School, Ramthar	Aizawl	1	HI
31.	Govt. Middle School, Tuikual South	Aizawl	2	Speech & Language Impairment, Locomotor Disability
32.	Govt. Endala Middle School, Ramhlun North	Aizawl	2	ID, HI
33.	Govt. Model English Medium Primary School, Ramhlun North	Aizawl	1	ID
34.	Govt. Model Middle School, Chanmari	Aizawl	1	Low vision
35.	Govt. Middle School-I, Dinthar	Aizawl	4	VI
36.	Govt. Primary School, Kanan	Aizawl	2	ID, Specific Learning Disabilities
37.	Govt. Primary School, Chawnpui	Aizawl	1	ID
38.	Govt. Middle School, Zotlang	Aizawl	1	Locomotor Disability
39.	Govt. Nepali Primary School, Zotlang	Aizawl	1	Low vision
40.	Govt. Primary	Aizawl	1	Specific Learning

	School, Falkawn			Disabilities
41.	Govt. Middle School, Tachhip	Aizawl	1	Specific Learning Disabilities
42.	Govt. Middle School, Aibawk	Aizawl	1	Locomotor Disability
43.	Govt. Middle School, Thiak	Aizawl	2	VI
44.	Govt. Primary School, Ramhlun North	Aizawl	2	ID
45.	Govt. Primary School-I, Ramthar	Aizawl	1	Multiple disability
46.	Govt. Primary School, Chaltlang Lily Veng	Aizawl	4	Low vision, Locomotor Disabilities
47.	Govt. Middle School, ITI	Aizawl	2	Specific Learning disabilities, ID
48.	Govt. Middle School, Seling	Aizawl	2	ID
49.	Govt. Primary School – II, Durtlang	Aizawl	5	HI, Speech and language impairment, Autism Spectrum disorder, Multiple disability
50.	Govt. Middle School – II, Durtlang	Aizawl	1	Locomotor disability
Total no. of CWSNs			115	

Looking into Table 4, Govt. Primary School-I, Pukpui in Lunglei district has the highest number of CWSN. There were 8 students with special needs and the types of disabilities found were VI, ID and Specific Learning Disabilities. Comparing between the two districts, Lunglei has a greater number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools than Aizawl. As far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned, there were roughly one special school in Lunglei district, while there were approximately seven (7) special schools in Aizawl district. This showed that more CWSNs were enrolled in the mainstream school in Lunglei while the CWSNs have more options to be enrolled in either special school or mainstream school. Therefore, more CWSNs were found in Lunglei district and a smaller number of CWSNs were found in Aizawl district.

4.3. Analysis of Objective No. – 3

To find out the type of disabilities that exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram.

The different types of disabilities that existed among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram as per the records of Samagra Shiksha Mizoram are as follows:

- i. Visual Impairment
- ii. Low Vision
- iii. Hearing Impaired
- iv. Speech & Language Impairment
- v. Locomotor Disability
- vi. Intellectual Disability
- vii. Mental illness
- viii. Cerebral Palsy
- ix. Multiple Disability
- x. Autism Spectrum Disorder
- xi. Specific learning Disabilities
- xii. Acid attack victim
- xiii. Dwarfism
- xiv. Muscular Dystrophy

Out of the 50 schools visited, the researcher found out twelve (12) types of disabilities from the schools visited. Looking into the types of disabilities from the office records of Samagra Shiksha, Mizoram, cerebral palsy and acid attack victim were not found in the visited schools. The different types of disabilities found in the elementary schools of Mizoram were presented in Table 5.

Table 4.3: Types of disability and the number found in the sampled Elementary Schools of Mizoram

I. No	Disability types	Number	Percentage
1.	Visual Impairment (VI)	17	14.78%
2.	Low Vision	6	5.21%
3.	Hearing Impairment (HI)	9	7.82%
4.	Specific Learning Disabilities	15	13.04%
5.	Locomotor Disability	23	20%
6.	Speech & Language Impairment	6	5.21%
7.	Mental illness	3	2.60%
8.	Intellectual disability	27	23.47%
9.	Multiple Disabilities	5	4.34%
10.	Dwarfism	1	0.86%
11.	Muscular Dystrophy	2	1.73%
12.	Autism Spectrum Disorder	1	0.86%
Total		115	

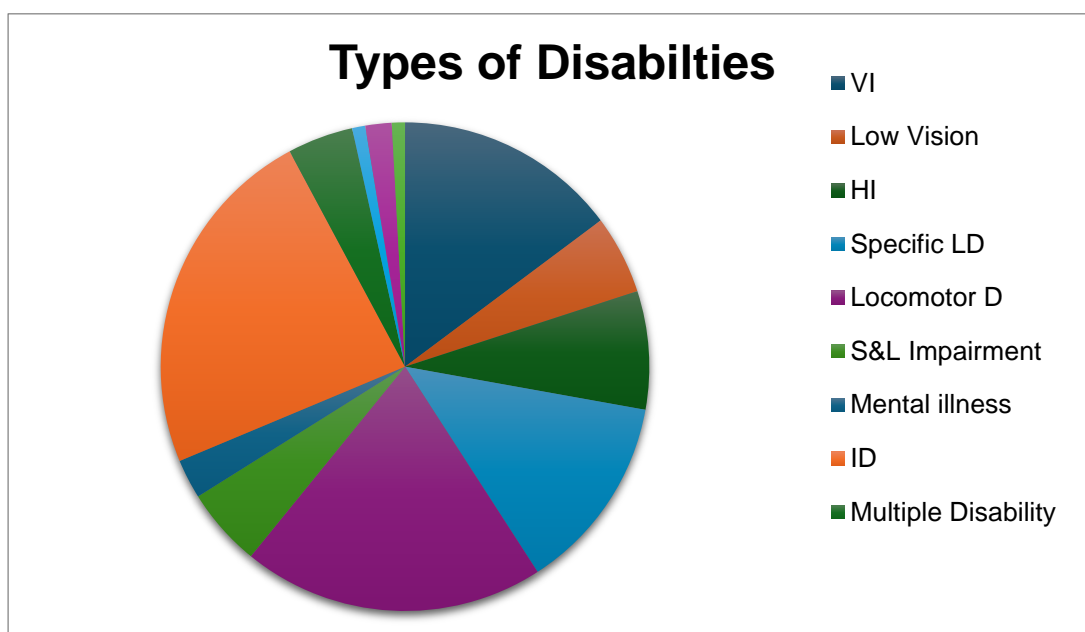


Figure 4.1: Pie-Chart depicting types of disabilities found in the elementary schools of Mizoram

The most common type of disability found out from the study was Intellectual Disability (ID) which was 23.47% (table 5 & figure 1). Dwarfism and autism being the least common type of disability detected with 0.86% each. As per the report of

respondents, the mode of assessment used were functional assessment. In functional assessment, the schools were made to report any signs of disability of their students. The suspected students were carefully analysed at the times of doctor visit to the school. The doctors then underwent several tests after which the type of disabilities was diagnosed and declared. Some students were also referred to other private doctors for screening and identification of their disability.

As mentioned earlier, the largest number of CWSN falls under the category of Intellectual Disability as per the findings of this study. In Mizoram, there was only one institution where B.Ed. special education was imparted, i.e. SCERT, Mizoram. The institution offered two programs, B. Ed. Special education (HI); and B. Ed. Special education (VI) only till 2024. From the session 2024 SCERT, Mizoram offered B.Ed. Spl. Ed. H. I. only. Whereas the number of students with visual disability was the second largest group after intellectual disability which needs teacher with specific competencies. There was no program offered for B. Ed. Special education (I.D.), rather it was the most needed program looking into the types of disabilities found in the elementary schools. Thus, it was highly needed and recommended to open and offer more programs for B. Ed. Special education (ID) so that students having intellectual disability will benefit as they occupy the largest number of disability types in the schools.

4.4. Analysis of Objective No. – 4

To find out the schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

For schools to be ready for including the CWSNs, it is important to have accessibility and barrier free environment, curriculum and pedagogical adaptations, teachers' proficiency and support services. To find out the schools that were equipped for imparting Inclusive education, analysis was done under two broad heads - Physical support and Academic support provided by the schools.

4.4.1. Physical support:

Physical support here referred to the infrastructural facilities like the design of the school building, provision of ramps, railings, special toilets, bench and desks, potable water, wheelchairs, etc. for the CWSNs. The special needs children required

infrastructural modifications to enhance accessibility within and around the classroom and the school campus.

The overall data on physical support provided in the elementary schools of Mizoram was presented in Table No. 8.

Table 4.4: Physical support provided by Elementary schools in Mizoram

Sl.No.	Facilities	No. of Schools: 50	
		Yes	No
1.	Ramps (for wheelchair users)	16 (32%)	34 (68%)
2.	Structural building changes for easy movement	4 (8%)	46 (92%)
3.	Railings for stairs	8 (16%)	42 (84%)
4.	Special toilet for the disabled	16 (32%)	34 (68%)
5.	Bench and desks specially made for CWSNs	2 (4%)	48 (96%)
6.	Availability of potable water	50 (100%)	0 (0%)

Looking into the overall data on physical support provided by the schools in Mizoram as depicted in Table 8, majority (68%) of the schools did not provide ramps for wheel-chair users. Majority of the schools (92%) did not make any structural changes for the easy movement of the CWSNs in and around the schools. Majority (84%) of the school did not provide railings at the stairs. Majority (68%) of the schools did not have separate toilet for the CWSNs. Majority (96%) of the schools did not have bench nor desk specially made for the CWSNs.

Many schools did not have ramps for wheelchair users, majority of the schools did not make any structural changes for easy accessibility of the special needs children. Majority of the schools did not provide railings on the stairs and did not have special desk nor bench for the CWSNs.

A great achievement to highlight among the teachers of Lunglei district was that Pi Vanlalthangi, Teacher of Primary School-II, Electric Veng Lunglei was a State Awardee in 2021 & Best Resource Teacher 2003 by the Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Mizoram. She was interested and highly motivated to teach the CWSNs in the school. During the time of visit, there were five CWSNs admitted in

the school (Refer Table 4). With the help of the teachers in their school, they developed teaching aids and appliances like charts, picture cards, educational toys, blocks and shapes for the students.

4.4.2. Academic support:

Academic support is the support services given by the teachers in and outside the classroom to children with disability. Table 9 showed the responses made by the teachers regarding academic support given to CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram. Each statement was interpreted according to the responses of the teachers and were analysed using qualitative method. An item wise analysis was presented as below.

Table 4.5: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 1.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
1.	Every Child with Special Need (CWSN) who seeks admission in my school is admitted	96 (96%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	0	0

Looking into the responses of the first item in table 10, majority (96%) of the respondents agreed that they always give permission in admitting the CWSNs who seeks admission in their school; 3% responded that they usually gave permission and 1% responded that they sometimes gave admission to the CWSNs.

Majority of the teachers agreed that all the CWSNs who seek admission in their schools were admitted. However, a zero-rejection policy initiated by the SSA indicated that no children should be rejected if they apply for admission in the schools. Thus, all schools should follow a zero-rejection policy admitting all kinds of students who seek admission in their school.

Table 4.6: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 2.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
2.	When I prepare my lesson plans, I consider the needs of CWSNs	83 (83%)	7 (7%)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)

Looking into the responses in table 11, majority (83%) of the respondents always consider the needs of the CWSNs when they prepare their lesson plans, 7% usually consider their needs, 6% sometimes consider the needs, 3% as seldomly/rarely consider the needs & 1% never consider the needs of the CWSNs. Majority of the teachers consider the needs of the CWSNs while preparing their lesson plan for teaching in the class. However, since inclusive education calls for including all kinds of students, teachers should prepare themselves to include the CWSNs in their class so that they will be able to understand what have been taught in their class. Thus, teachers must make more time and effort to include them in the effective teaching-learning process in the class.

Table 4.7: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 3.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
3.	I always try to create opportunities for the CWSNs to make them learn with the other students in my class	83 (83%)	9 (9%)	5 (5%)	3 (3%)	0

Looking into table 12, majority (83%) of the respondents always create opportunities for the CWSNs to make them learn with the other students, 9% usually create opportunities, 5% create opportunities sometimes and 3% as seldomly create opportunities.

Majority of the teachers always tried to create opportunities for the CWSNs to make them learn with the other students in their class. However, there were teachers who rarely and never make opportunities for the CWSNs to learn in their class. This signified that teacher should be more aware of the needs and abilities of the special needs children; they should be made aware through formal training undertaken at

different levels. Training and sensitization programmes in inclusive education for in-service teachers should be part of annual schedules of in-service teacher education institutions at different levels viz. DIETs, BRCs, CRCs etc.

Table 4.8: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 4.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
4.	I provide learning materials specially made for the CWSNs who need extra academical support	50 (50%)	17 (17%)	10 (10%)	9 (9%)	14 (14%)

Looking into table 13, half (50%) of the respondents always provide materials for the CWSNs, 17% usually provide materials, 10% provide materials sometimes, 9% seldomly provide and 14% never provide materials. There were teachers who does not provide any learning materials for the CWSNs. Teaching learning materials served a useful purpose for students, especially for CWSNs as they require special support in learning. Thus, teachers must devote their time in providing learning materials specially made for the CWSNs who are in need of extra support academically; so that they will be able to learn along with the other students.

Table 4.9: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 5.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
5.	I devoted more time in tutorials for CWSNs	56 (56%)	22 (22%)	13 (13%)	2 (2%)	7 (7%)

Looking into table 14, 56% of the respondents always devoted their time in tutorials for the CWSNs, 22% usually devote their time, 13% devoted their time sometimes, 2% seldomly devoted their time and 7% never devoted their time.

There are many teachers who devoted their time in tutorials for the CWSNs. Since teachers in inclusive schools dealt with different types of children, they must devote more time in tutorials of the students. They must provide extra care and support to the needy besides their normal classes.

Table 4.10: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 6.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
6.	I try to adapt the content of teaching to accommodate the CWSNs for easy understanding	75 (75%)	17 (17%)	5 (5%)	3 (3%)	0

Looking into table 15, majority (75%) of the respondents always tried to accommodate the CWSNs, 17% usually tried to accommodate, 5% tried to accommodate sometimes and 3% seldomly tried to accommodate the CWSNs. This indicated that majority of the teachers tried to adapt to the content of their teaching to accommodate the CWSNs for easy understanding. However, there are number of teachers who does not try to do so. For teachers in an inclusive classroom, they must be flexible in adapting to the needs and abilities of the learners. Thus, they must try in adaptation of content to accommodate the CWSNs in their teaching for easy understanding.

Table 4.11: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 7.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
7.	I encourage cooperative learning to make all students support each other in their learning	75 (75%)	13 (13%)	7 (7%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)

Looking into table 16, most (75%) of the teachers always encourage the students to learn together, 13% usually encourage, 7% encourage sometimes, 3% seldomly encourage and 2% never encourage the students to learn together. Majority of the teachers encouraged cooperative learning to make all students support each other in their learning. However, there were several teachers who does not encourage students to learn together. Cooperation was one of the most aspect in making a classroom inclusive. Thus, teachers should foster cooperative learning so that all students benefit the classroom teaching and learn from their peers.

Table 4.12: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 8.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
8.	I use audio-visual aids in the class to foster learning	32 (32%)	19 (19%)	14 (14%)	9 (9%)	26 (26%)

Looking into table 17, 32% of the respondents always use audio-visual aids, 19% usually use, 14% use audio-visual aids sometimes, 9% seldomly use and 26% never utilise audio-visual aids to foster learning. This indicated that most of the teachers does not use audio-visual aids regularly in their teaching. The use of audio-visual aid played a crucial role in enhancing teaching-learning effectiveness for CWSNs. The positive impacts of using audio-visual aids included enhancing comprehension and retention, catering diverse learning styles, motivation and engagement (Ashikuzzaman, 2015). Thus, to promote effective learning environment for all learners, teachers must utilize various audio-visual aids in the classroom.

Table 4.13: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 9.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
9.	I receive adequate support from the school administrators to deal with/teach CWSN	75 (75%)	11 (11%)	6 (6%)	4 (4%)	4 (4%)

Looking into table 18, majority (75%) of the teachers always received support, 11% usually received support, 6% received support sometimes, 4% seldomly receive and 4% never receive support. There was a clear indication that majority of the respondents received adequate support from the school administrators to deal with/ teach CWSNs. Inclusion is a collaborative work of all the stakeholders of the school. A teacher alone cannot make the class-room inclusive, but the overall work of all the stakeholders. However, there are schools where the school administrators were not providing support to teach the CWSNs. Knowing the importance of cooperation in teaching the CWSNs, school administrators should

therefore be mindful to promote collaborative approach by supporting the teachers who directly deal with the CWSNs.

Table 4.14: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 10.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
10.	In my class, CWSNs are supported by their peers in their learning and activities	57 (57%)	28 (28%)	6 (6%)	6 (6%)	3 (3%)

Looking into table 19, 57% of the respondents responded that the CWSNs were always supported by their peers in their learning and other activities, 28% responded ‘usually’ against this statement, 6% responded ‘sometimes’ against this statement, 6% responded as ‘seldom’ and 3% responded as ‘never’ against this statement. This indicated that in majority of the teacher’s class, CWSNs were supported by their peers in their learning and other activities. Peer support served a useful purpose as a tool for supporting CWSNs. It developed confidence, social inclusion and a sense of belongingness in the school and the campus (Kushwaha, 2023). Peer support plays a crucial role in the overall well-being and development of the CWSNs. By creating opportunities for social interaction, confidence building, and a sense of belongingness, we can empower the special needs children to reach their full potential and actively participate in their communities.

Table 4.15: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 11.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
11.	I give differentiated assignments in my class according to the ability of my students	75 (75%)	10 (10%)	9 (9%)	2 (2%)	4 (4%)

Looking into table 20, majority (75%) of the teachers always gave differentiated assignments, 10% usually gave differentiated assignments, 9% gave differentiated assignments sometimes, 2% seldomly gave differentiated assignments and 4% never gave differentiated assignments in their class. This indicated that

majority of the respondents gave differentiated assignments in their class according to the ability of the students. Provision of differentiated assignments for CWSNs is important for accommodating diverse learning needs within inclusive classrooms. They should be given differentiated assignments according to their own capacities and abilities to ensure inclusivity and effective learning environment.

Table 4.16: Responses of Teachers regarding Academic Support for Item 12.

Item No.	Item Statements	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
12.	I support the rights of the special needs children to learn in the regular classes with other students	91 (91%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)

Looking into table 21, most (91%) of the respondents always supported the rights of the CWSNs to learn in an inclusive school, 5% responded as ‘usually’ against this statement, 2% responded as ‘sometimes’, 1% responded as ‘seldomly’ and 1% responded as ‘never’ against this statement. This indicated that majority of the teachers support the rights of the special needs children to learn in the regular classes with other students. The rights of CWSNs to learn in mainstream schools are protected and promoted through a comprehensive legal framework and various government initiatives. The focus on inclusive education not only benefits CWSNs but also enriched the learning environment for all students, fostering a culture of acceptance and diversity in educational settings.

To conclude, it can be said that *Elementary schools in Mizoram were not equipped for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to physical infrastructure provided in the schools; and Elementary schools in Mizoram were equipped/ready for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to academic support provided by the teachers.*

4.5. Analysis of Objective No. 5

To find out the level of social inclusion of CWSN in elementary schools of Mizoram.

To find out this objective, the researcher employed interview as a tool for gathering responses from 50 peers and 50 parents of the CWSNs. The interview schedule contained questions regarding social inclusion of the special needs children. The researcher also used observation technique by observing the behaviour and the environment in the school and classrooms to understand and support the responses.

Data triangulation: For verification and validation of the results to be obtained, triangulation method from different perspectives were undertaken. The aim of data triangulation was to provide a valid and reliable result from different observers to reduce subjectivity and biases. Data were collected using both Interview and Observation method. The respondents were including parents, peers as well as the researcher's observation to obtain the most reliable result.

The levels of social inclusion were assessed under four broad categories which are: physical environment, social environment, academic environment and co-curricular activities.

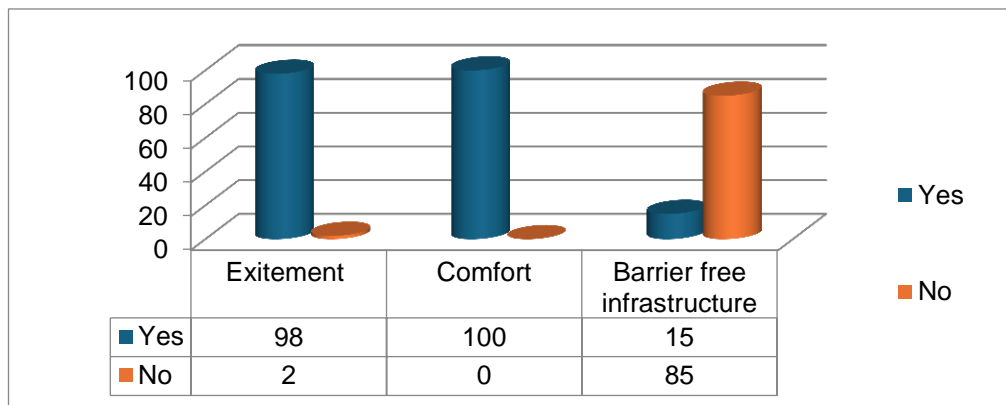
4.5.1. Physical access:

To find out this objective, peers of the CWSNs and parents of the CWSNs were interviewed by the researcher.

Table 4.17: Physical access to show level of social inclusion of CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram

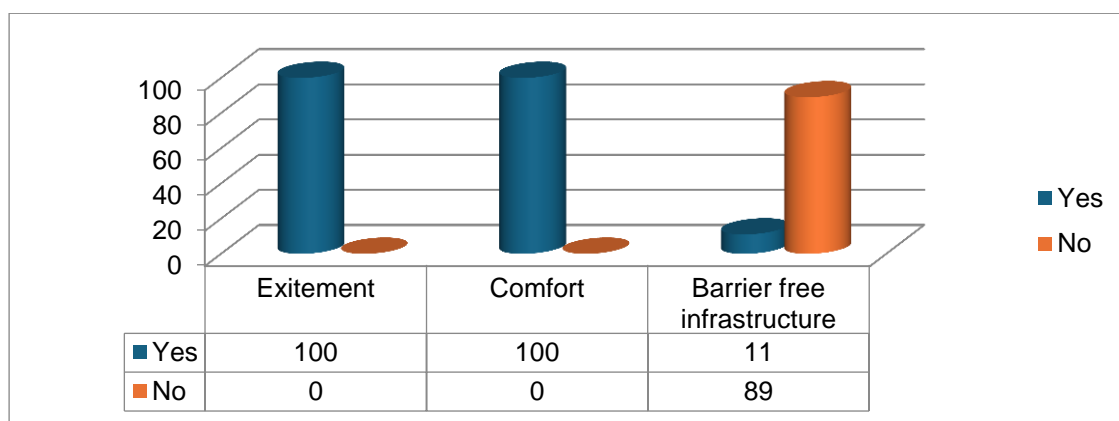
Sl. No.	Statement	Peers		Parents	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Excitement to go to school with CWSNs	49 (98%)	1 (2%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
2.	Comfortable with the CWSNs in School	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
3.	Availability of barrier free infrastructure	7 (14%)	43 (86%)	5 (10%)	45 (90%)

Figure 4.2: Graphical representation of peers' responses to show levels of social inclusion and problems through physical environment



Looking into table No.10 and graph, majority of the students (98%) were excited to go to school with the CWSNs, only 2% were not. This was because from the interview of the students, they reported that some CWSNs often intended to irritate them in the class. However, this issue was rare and only a few numbers of students reported it. All the students felt comfortable along with the CWSNs in the school. 86% reported that there was no barrier free access in the school.

Figure 4.3: Graphical representation of parent's responses to show levels of social inclusion through physical environment



In the above table 10 and graph of parent's responses, all the respondents agreed that students were excited and were comfortable to get along with the CWSNs in the school. Among the respondents, 10% agreed that there was no barrier free infrastructure which as mentioned earlier led to problems and difficulties in accessing the school and classroom.

Observation on physical access:

The researcher observed the excitement of the students to learn and play together in the school campus. At the times of observation, no such behaviour was seen where CWSNs were socially excluded. The researcher observed that the non-disabled students were easily getting along with the CWSNs during their free periods. They played together and learn together in the class. They also helped them in times when they did not understand with their assignments and lectures of the teachers. They were always available and were found to be open to help them in any problems they had.

However, the schools visited were not having barrier free access as reported by both the respondents which caused some problems to the CWSNs especially for children with physical disabilities.

Other physical support like ramps, special toilets, railings were hardly seen, and which were visible, they were also in poor condition. They were temporarily made which did not seem to be made useful by the CWSNs. Thus, the schools were not properly equipped with physical infrastructure required for the CWSNs. The fact was surprising in the social context of Mizoram. In Mizoram if school head approach to local community or non-governmental organisation like Young Mizo Association (YMA) which have their existence in every village, situation could be improved through community participation and mobilization.

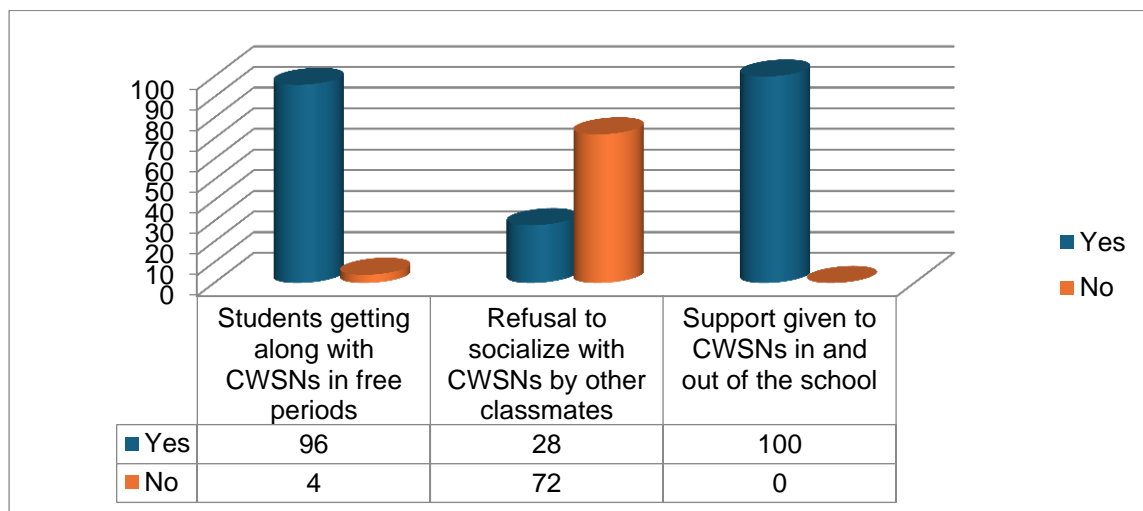
4.5.2. Social participation:

The social participation referred to the physical and the social setting developed in the school. To find out the level of social inclusion, peers and parents were interviewed. There were four statements to understand the social context of the elementary schools in Mizoram.

Table No. 4.18: Social environment to show level of social inclusion faced by CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram

Sl. No.	Statement	Peers		Parents	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Students getting along with CWSNs during free periods/breaks	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
2.	Refusal to socialise with CWSNs by other classmates	14 (28%)	36 (72%)	6 (12%)	44 (88%)
3.	Support given to CWSNs in and out of the school	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
4.	Types of assistance given to CWSNs	Reading, explaining, carrying bag, helping with home assignment, defend them against bullying.		Reading, explaining (online and through phone calls as well), carrying bag, helping with home assignment, defend them against bullying.	

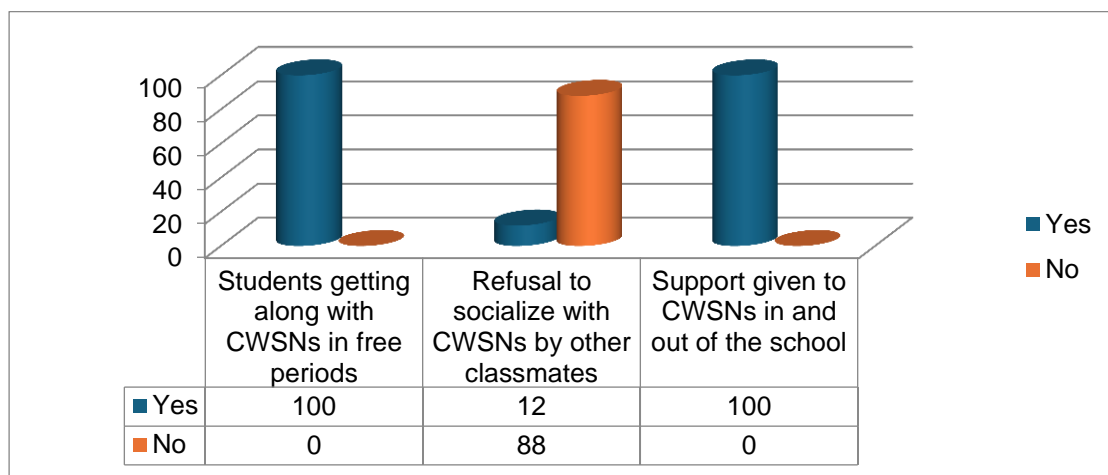
Figure 4.4: Graphical representation of social inclusion through social environment for peers' responses



From the above graphical representation, majority (96%) of the peers can easily get along with the CWSNs during their free period like short break and tiffin break. Majority (88%) of the parents responded that the classmates of their children did not refuse to socialize with them. All the respondents agreed that support was given to their children with disability within and out of the school. Reading,

explaining, carrying their bags, helping them with home assignments and defending them against bullying were the kind of support and protection provided to their CWSN classmates.

Figure 4.5: Graphical representation of social inclusion through social environment from parent's responses



From the above table and graph, all the respondents agreed that their child can easily get along with his/her classmates during free period like short break and tiffin break. Majority, 72% of the peers responded that their classmates does not refuse to socialize with the CWSNs in their class. All the respondents agreed that support was given to their CWSN classmates in and out of the school. Reading, explaining their notes through online and phone calls, carrying bag, helping with home assignment, defending them against bullying were the support given to their classmates as reported by the parents.

Observation on social environment:

To observe the social environment, the researcher spend time with the students and teachers during the school hours; interact with them during their free periods and observe the class teachings as well. Based on these observations, the researcher gathered information from various sources/respondents. It was observed that in majority of the cases, students get along with the CWSNs in their class and refusal to play or get along with them was hardly seen. Among the reports from the students being interviewed, there were minor cases that some of their classmates refused to get along with the CWSNs. The reason is that they find it hard to get along with them because the students with disabilities often lack skills, comprehension,

communication and social skills which make it hard to easily be friended with everyone. This led to various acts like refusal to make friends with them or having unhealthy relationship with them. However, these cases were hardly observed but only a matter of report received from the students. Thus, as far as the observation is concerned, there are satisfactory social environment prevailing in all the schools visited.

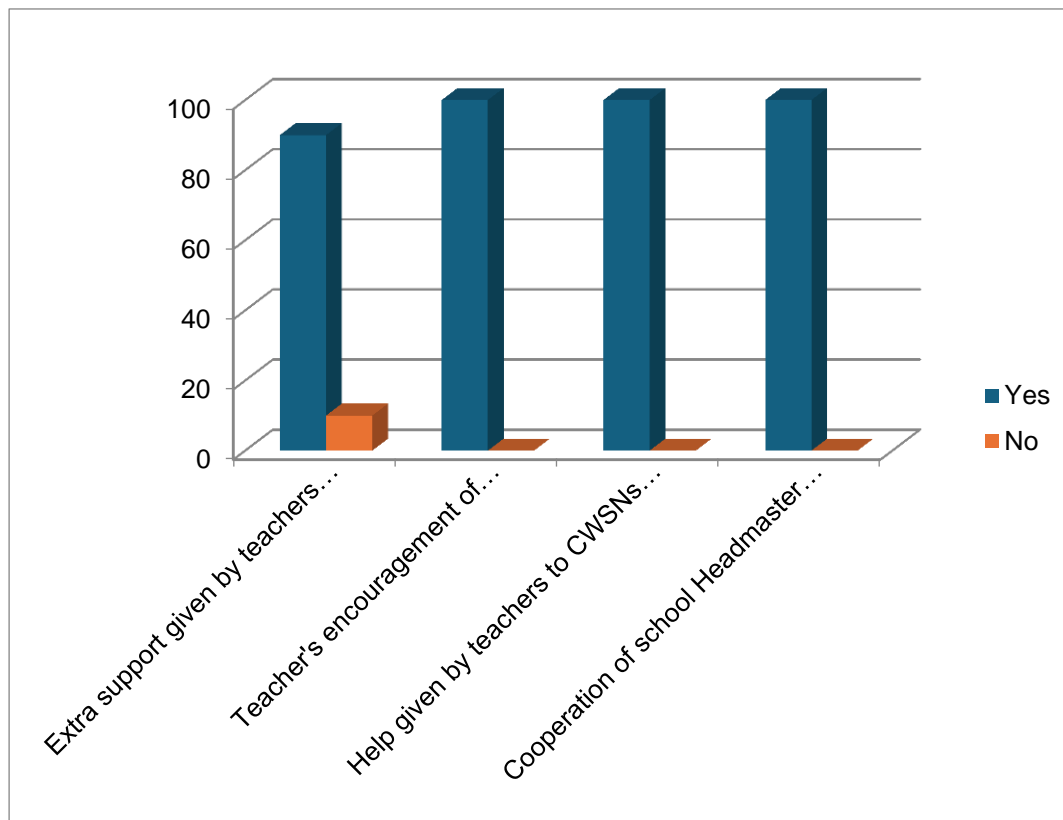
4.5.3. Academic environment:

Academic or educational environment referred to the learning environment provided in the school and inside the classroom. To find out the level of social inclusion regarding academic environment, students and parents were interviewed. There were four statements to understand the educational environment of the elementary schools in Mizoram.

Table No. 4.19: Academic environment to show level of social inclusion of CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram

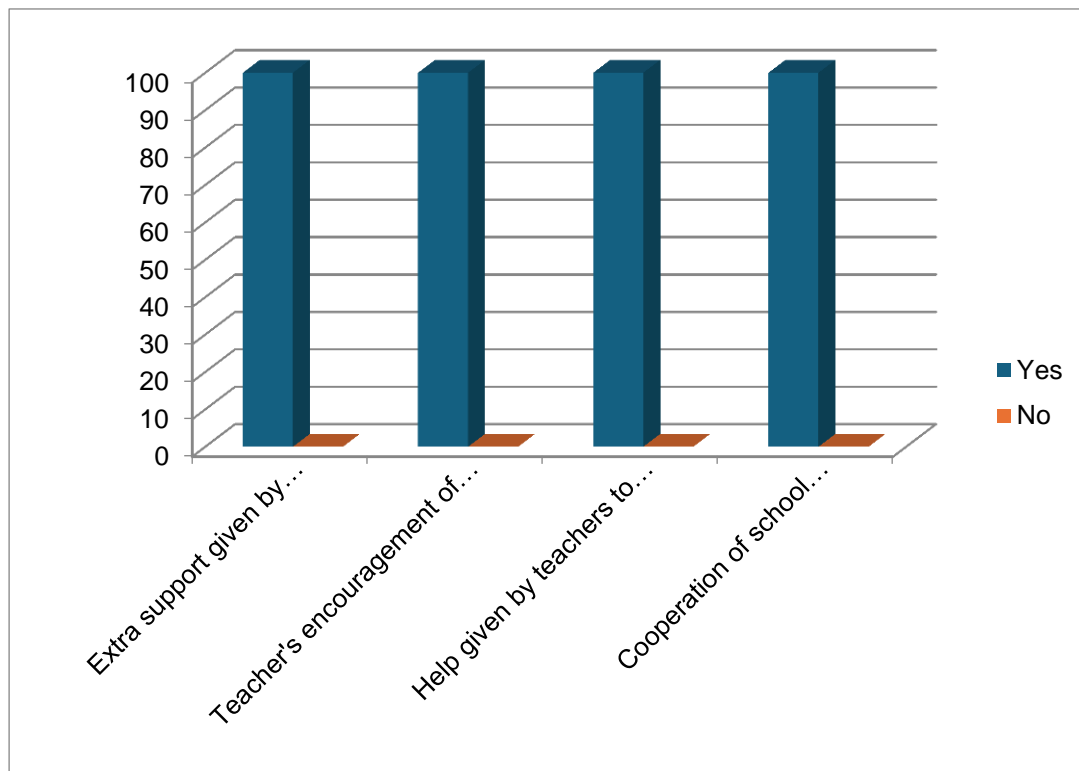
Sl.No.	Statement	Peers		Parents	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Extra support given by teachers to CWSNs apart from classroom teaching like home-assignments	45 (90%)	5 (10%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
2	Encouragement of CWSNs to raise and answer questions in the class by teachers	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
3	Help given by teachers to CWSNs within and outside school	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
4	Cooperation of school Headmaster in solving problems of CWSNs	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)

Figure 4.6: Graphical representation of social inclusion through academic environment for peer's responses



The above graphical representation highlights the level of social inclusion of CWSNs regarding academic environment. The responses of the peers of CWSNs were presented graphically. It is evident from the responses that 90% of the respondents agreed that extra support was given by their teachers apart from the classroom. The teachers were available for the CWSNs in times of need and address to them when they face any difficulty academically. All the respondents agreed that teachers encourage the CWSNs whenever they raise questions and answer to them; accordingly, helped their CWSN classmates even outside their classroom in case of any academic problem they have; and the headmaster too cooperate in solving any problems faced by the CWSNs academically.

Figure 4.7: Graphical representation of social inclusion through academic environment for parent's responses



The above graph represents the social inclusion through academic environment as responded by the parents. In this segment, positive responses were found from all the parents that adequate support was given in and outside the school academically. All the parents' respondents were satisfied with the academic support given by the schools.

Observation on academic environment:

To understand the academic environment, the researcher spent time in the classroom and cautiously observed from the outside as per the location and situation. The researcher observed the various topics and activities done academically in and around the school. It was observed that the teachers are extremely helpful, dedicated and passionate about their teaching as a profession. They were understanding and always ready to help the students with special needs whenever and whatever problems they faced, academically.

The Case: One incident took place in Lunglei district where the teacher gave extra time to provide free tuition to one of the students with special needs. This

helped a lot in her academical performance which was showed in her exam results. The researcher observed many such dedicated teachers who gave importance to teach the CWSNs, trying to uplift their potentialities to do better in their academic performance. The teachers from Lunglei School 1 reported that they have proved that the CWSNs have potentialities to perform as the other students if they work hard enough. Thus, they tried their best to help them achieve better position academically. It can be concluded that there was a good academic environment between the teachers and the students, and the teachers tried their best to provide better academic environment to promote inclusive education.

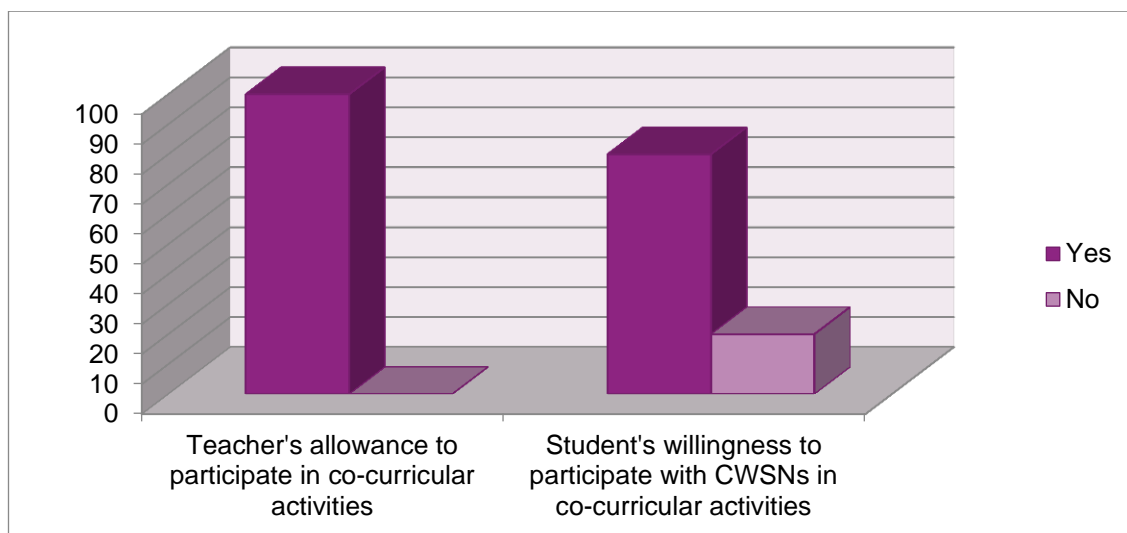
4.5.4. Co-curricular Activities:

Co-curricular activities referred to the activities that takes place outside the traditional classroom but compliment academic learning from classroom curriculum (Levitas, 2023). These cocurricular activities are so important that it helped children obtain all round development which is the main aim of education. To find out the levels of social inclusion with regard to the nature of co-curricular activities done in the school, students and parents were interviewed. There were three statements to understand the nature and types of co-curricular activities done in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

Table 4.20: Nature of Co-curricular activities done to show level of social inclusion of CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram

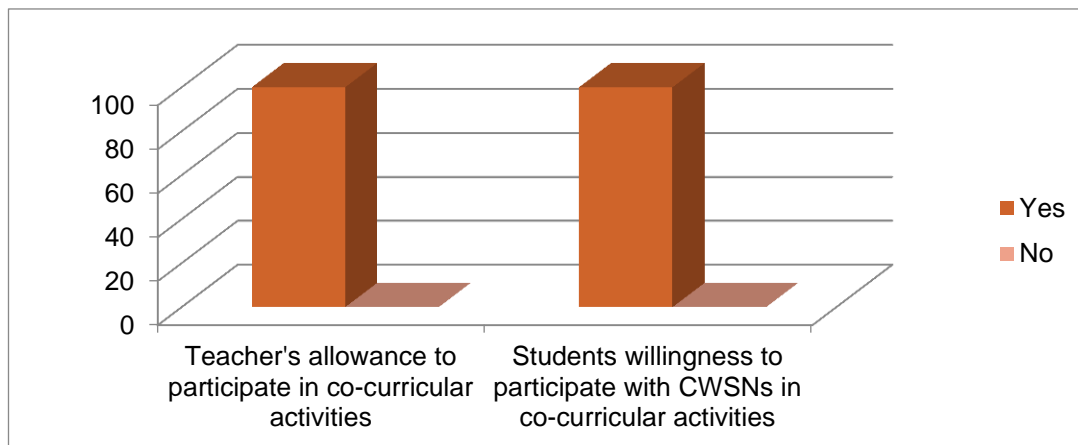
Sl. No.	Statement	Peers		Parents	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Does teacher allow CWSNs to participate in co-curricular activities?	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
2.	Are students with disability willing to participate with CWSNs in co-curricular activities?	40 (80%)	10 (20%)	50 (100%)	0 (0%)
3.	Different kind of co-curricular activities in school	Football, Dead ball, volleyball, boxing, tag race, basketball, tug of war, debate, extempore speech, dancing, singing, drawing, poster making, work experience, collage making.		Football, Dead ball, volleyball, boxing, tag race, basketball, tug of war, debate, extempore speech, dancing, singing, drawing, poster making, work experience, collage making.	

Figure 4.8: Graphical representation of social inclusion through co-curricular activities for peer's responses



The above Table 13 and figure 8 highlighted the level of social inclusion of CWSNs with regard to co-curricular activities. The responses of the peers of CWSNs were presented graphically. It is evident from the responses that all of the respondents agreed that their teachers allowed the CWSNs to take part in the co-curricular activities with no hesitation. Majority (80%) of the peers were willing to participate in the co-curricular activities while 20% hesitate to do so. The different types of co-curricular activities were organised in the school as reported by the peers, namely football, dead ball, volleyball, boxing, tag race, basketball, tug of war, debate, extempore speech, dancing, singing, drawing, poster making, work experience and collage making.

Figure 4.9: Graphical representation of social inclusion through co-curricular activities for parents' responses



The above figure 9 highlighted the responses of parents with regard to co-curricular activities to find out the level of social inclusion. The responses of parents of the CWSNs were presented graphically. It is evident from the responses that all of the parents agreed that their teachers allowed the CWSNs to take part in the co-curricular activities with no hesitation. And all of the students (classmates of the CWSNs) were willing to participate in the co-curricular activities. The different types of co-curricular activities done in the school as reported by the parents are football, dead ball, volleyball, boxing, tag race, basketball, tug of war, debate, extempore speech, dancing, singing, drawing, poster making, work experience and collage making.

Observation on the nature and types of co-curricular activities:

Co-curricular activities are an essential component to promote all round development in a student. The common co-curricular activities done in the schools visited were mostly outdoor play and games, sports like football, dead ball, volleyball, basketball, tug of war; indoor activities like debate, extempore speech, dancing, singing, drawing, poster making and collage making. The students were also made to do certain work experience like cleaning the classroom and the surroundings. These activities were all part of education and enhance all round development. Emotional management, communication and all sort of social skills were developed through co-curricular activities. All the schools visited promote a place where CWSNs could actively take part in these co-curricular activities. The

students were also willing to participate with the CWSNs in these activities. Thus, the researcher was satisfied with the co-curricular activities done in the schools and the CWSNs were found to be included in these activities.

4.6. Analysis of Objective No. – 6

To analyse the elementary school textbooks for accommodating CWSNs in Mizoram.

In this study, textbooks were analyzed to find out the inclusivity for accommodating CWSN in the elementary schools of Mizoram using content analysis. Mizo subject was chosen to be analysed which was purely developed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram. The rationale of choosing Mizo textbook was that it will show the cultural aspect of Mizo community towards disability or CWSNs which will be reflected in the textbooks. From the elementary stages, class 1, class 4, class 5 and class 8 textbooks were selected for analysis. The textbooks of these classes were selected in such a way that it includes the lowest and highest class in both primary section and middle section of the elementary school stages.

A textbook wise analysis was done, first presenting the basic information about the books, teacher's note, pedagogical processes, learning objectives, evaluation techniques, publication and different topics of the unit. Thereafter, the books have been assessed on the five set parameters which were explained in Chapter 3. A textbook wise analysis was done, the section has been concluded with parameter-based analysis of all the four textbooks. A discussion on the results and analysis of all the textbooks were also presented.

4.6.1. Result and Analysis of Mizo Textbook for class I:

- i. Basic details about the book: A textbook entitled 'Kumtluang – Bu khatna' was prescribed for class I by the State Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram.
- ii. The book analysed was published by SCERT, Mizoram in the year 2021 (seventh edition).

- iii. 'Zirtirtu hriat turte' which meant note for teachers was given next to foreword. It was written in Mizo language and was meant to be read and applied by the teachers.
- iv. After this section, objectives of the textbook, expected learning outcomes, evaluation techniques, pedagogical processes and logo indicating time for different activities like reading, writing, etc. were given.
- v. There were 10 units with 19 chapters in the textbook. Except the first unit which contained 1 chapter, the other units contained two chapters each.
- vi. At the beginning, there were four prayers to be said or recited at the time of waking up in the morning, before meals, before bed and just after the school end.
- vii. In the first unit, the first chapter was a lesson on Mizo alphabets.
- viii. Unit II contained chapter 2 & 3. Chapter 2 was a lesson on colours. Chapter 3 was a Mizo folk song named 'Lo sul haw hmuah hla', a song sung to welcome the parents from their work.
- ix. Unit III contained chapter 4 & 5. Chapter 4 was song named 'Pawnto hla', where Mizo children used to sing while playing. Chapter 5 was a story of a boy named Zara and his family.
- x. Unit IV contained chapter 6 & 7. Chapter 6 was a lesson on basic life skills like washing hands, face and clothes, combing hair, sweeping, eating, brushing teeth and doing the dishes. Chapter 7 was a lesson on how to write alphabets in capital and small letters.
- xi. Unit V contained chapter 8 & 9. Chapter 8 was a lesson on how to read words. Chapter 9 was a lesson on socialization through an excerpt from the Bible.
- xii. Unit VI contained chapter 10 & 11. Chapter 10 was a lesson on friends and chapter 11 was a story of the little red hen.
- xiii. Unit VII contained chapter 12 & 13. Chapter 12 was a song about a puppy; chapter 13 was a lesson about fruits.

- xiv. Unit VIII contained chapter 14 & 15. Chapter 14 was a lesson on happiness and contentment. Chapter 15 was an excerpt from the Bible about lessons to children.
- xv. Unit IX contained chapter 16 & 17. Chapter 16 was a story of two boys named Buangpuia and Mawipuia. Chapter 17 was a short song about thanksgiving.
- xvi. Unit X contained chapter 18 & 19. Chapter 18 was a song named 'Lawmthu sawina hla'. Chapter 19 was an old Mizo folktale 'Chemtatrawta'.

4.6.1.1. Parameter based Analysis:

Table 4.21: Parameter based Analysis for Class-I Mizo textbook

Sl. No	Parameters	Descriptions
1.	Physical Aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The font size was 20 points (pt), and the font style was VNT times font. - No images with disability related content. - There were no braille textbooks for the visually impaired students.
2.	Content Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No contents with related to CWSNs
3.	Objective cited in the Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The teachers were instructed to teach the students as per their abilities and personalities to foster effective teaching and learning. - This showed the inclusive nature by accepting all kinds of learners as they are and make them learn according to their own capacities.
4.	Exercises and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The activities and exercises were mainly of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Colouring ii. Drawing iii. Reading and reciting iv. Question and answer v. Matching vi. Classification and sorting problems vii. Tracing viii. Action song ix. Fill in the blanks x. To learn by heart sentences or paragraphs xi. True or false xii. Activities to be done practically in the classroom and at home. - No disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook. - However, picture/logos indicating on how to perform different activities and exercises were labelled. This will enhance easy understanding on how to do the activities in the textbooks for all

		learners. - But there was no specific instruction for the teachers to teach CWSN or students with disability.
5.	Digital Content	- Digital content was available for easy access of the textbook. - The whole textbook can be downloaded through the link provided: https://scert.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/ef079ea9eb71e9c9d4c3265004a32f94/kumtluang-1.pdf

4.6.1.2. Discussion for Textbook of Class-I:

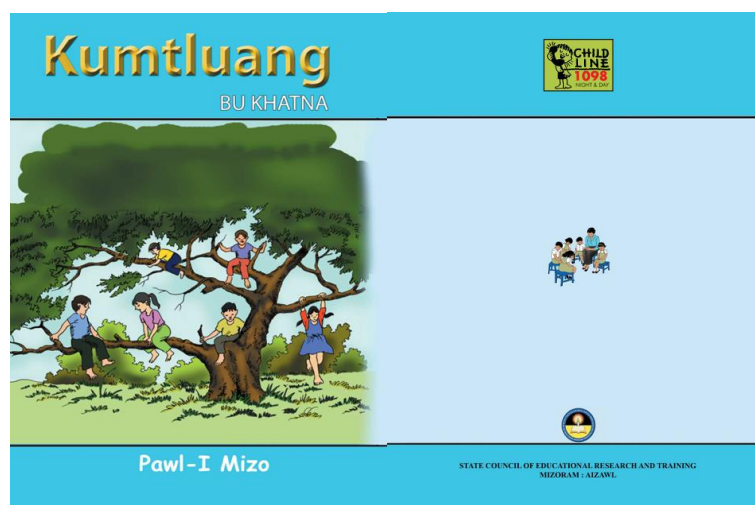


Figure 4.10: Cover pages of Class-I Mizo Textbook

The textbook for class-1 directed teachers to teach the basics of Mizo language so that students will learn how to read, write and understand. There were large fonts used in the textbook; bright, clear and colourful pictures were inserted to make the lessons understandable as shown in the pictured below. There were no images related to disability. Besides, there were no braille textbooks for the visually impaired students. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT for students with low vision.



Figure 4.11: Pictures depicted in Class-I Mizo Textbooks

There were no content of CWSNs found in the textbook. This indicated the under-representation of CWSNs. Through these textbooks, children should be made aware of the CWSNs so that they will be accepted and socially included in the educational institutions.

Regarding objectives cited in the book, it was instructed the teachers to teach the students as per their abilities and personalities to foster effective teaching and learning. This showed the inclusive nature by accepting all kinds of learners as they are and make them learn according to their own capacities. Teachers play a crucial role in making the children learn, accepting all kinds of learners and accommodate them in the regular classroom.



Figure 4.12: Different pictures to denote on how to perform activities and exercises mentioned in Class I Mizo Textbook

Regarding the exercises and activities, there were no disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook. However, picture/logos indicating on how to perform different activities and exercises were labelled. This will enhance easy understanding on how to do the activities in the textbooks for all learners. There was no specific instruction for the teachers to teach CWSN or students with disability. However, the guidance and modifications that the teacher made will be meaningful for the CWSNs to fulfil the directions of the textbook. For example, changing an assignment to accommodate the learning needs of CWSNs, extending time to finish home assignments or classwork, provide alternatives to written assignments to meet the ability of the CWSNs, etc. Besides, to make the children understand what and how to perform different activities and exercises better, logos (pictures) indicating different exercises like to be read orally, to be written, to be read, to perform through conversation and activities to be done in group settings were labelled in each exercise (as mentioned in the above figure). This will allow all kinds of learners to be able to know easily on how to do these certain activities to be done just by looking at the pictures.

An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content. There was a QR code which give easy access for the CWSNs using different software. The e-textbooks can be made useful for visually impaired students and students having other types of disabilities through various accessible formats and technologies designed to meet their specific needs. E-textbooks can be available in audio formats allowing students to listen to the content. Services like Learning Ally and Bookshare offer extensive libraries of audiobooks, including textbooks that are narrated by professional voice actors, making it easier for students to absorb the material. E-textbooks can also be converted in Braille or tactile formats, which are essential for students who rely on touch to read. Many e-textbooks can be adjusted to display text in larger fonts, which aids students with low vision. Regarding assistive technologies, software such as JAWS or NVDA can read aloud the text displayed on a screen, enabling visually impaired students to access e-textbooks independently (Willings, n.d.). Applications like Voice Dream Reader and Read2Go allow students to access e-textbooks from platforms like Bookshare directly on their mobile devices (Willings, n.d.). These apps offer advanced text-to-speech capabilities and customizable reading experiences. Thus, this e-source will make the CWSNs adapted to learn from textbooks using different method mentioned.

4.6.2. Result and Analysis of Mizo Textbook for class IV:

- i. Basic details about the book: A textbook entitled ‘Kumtluang – Bu lina’ was prescribed for class IV by the State Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram.
- ii. The book analysed was published by SCERT, Mizoram in the year 2024 (tenth edition).
- iii. ‘Zirtirtu hriat turte’ which meant note for teachers was given next to foreword. These were the direction to the teachers and also implied the objectives of learning Mizo language at class IV. It was written in Mizo language and was meant to be read and applied practically by the teachers.
- iv. After this section, objectives of the textbook, expected learning outcomes, evaluation techniques and pedagogical processes were given.

- v. There were 10 units with 20 chapters in the textbook. Each unit contained two chapters.
- vi. In the first unit, the first chapter was a song named 'Par mawi vulna'. The second chapter was a lesson on misused words in Mizo language.
- vii. Unit II contained chapter 3 & 4. Chapter 3 was an article on 'lehkhabu' (books). The next chapter was the use of capital letters.
- viii. Unit III contained chapter 5 & 6. Chapter 5 was lesson on punctuation. Chapter 6 was a story of mice who lived in the home and the forest.
- ix. Unit IV contained chapter 7 & 8. Chapter 7 was a song called 'Lawngte tuipui dawh cham chungah'. Chapter 8 was a story of a father and son going on fishing.
- x. Unit V contained chapter 9 & 10. Chapter 9 was a lesson on a famous strong Mizo man 'Saizahawla'. Chapter 10 was a lesson on birds.
- xi. Unit VI contained chapter 11 & 12. Chapter 11 was a lesson about the various festivals of Mizo. And in the next chapter, Mizo proverbs were presented.
- xii. Unit VII contained chapter 13 & 14. Chapter 13 was a song named 'Mizo kan nih kan lawm e'. chapter 14 was a story of Fela and his family.
- xiii. Unit VIII contained chapter 15 & 16. Chapter 15 was a story of the hidden treasure. Chapter 16 was a poem named 'Haudang leng'.
- xiv. Unit IX contained chapter 17 & 18. Chapter 17 was a lesson on posting letters and chapter 18 was a story of a war between animals who lived on the land and the air.
- xv. Unit X contained chapter 19 & 20. Chapter 19 was a poem named 'Tui mal far te te chu' highlighting about the importance of a drop of water. The last chapter presented different clothes worn by the ancient Mizos.

4.6.2.1. Parameter based Analysis:

4.22

Parameter based Analysis for Class-IV Mizo textbook

1. No	Parameters	Descriptions
1.	Physical Aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The font size was 18 points (pt), and the font style was VNT times font. - No images with disability related content. - There were no braille textbooks for the students with visual impairment.
2.	Content Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No contents with related to CWSNs
3.	Objective cited in the Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first objective of the textbook acknowledges the teachers to make the students learn even by not looking or seeing them; making them understand what they were teaching through their voice. This will be helpful for the students with visual impairment to learn through the voice of the teachers.
4.	Exercises and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The activities and exercises were mainly of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Questions and answers Fill in the blanks Completing the incomplete sentences Matching sentences and its meaning Creative writing based on topics of the chapters Sharing based on the lessons Making sentences out of words cited in the chapters To learn by heart verses from the Bible Punctuations Reading activities Classification and sorting problems Projects to be done individually - No disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook. - Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to perform tasks.
5.	Digital Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital content was available for easy access of the textbook. - The whole textbook can be downloaded through the link provided: https://scert.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/c5e615931dadfac91970eba7cdb3b51f/kumtluang-4.pdf

4.6.2.2. Discussion for Textbook of Class-IV:

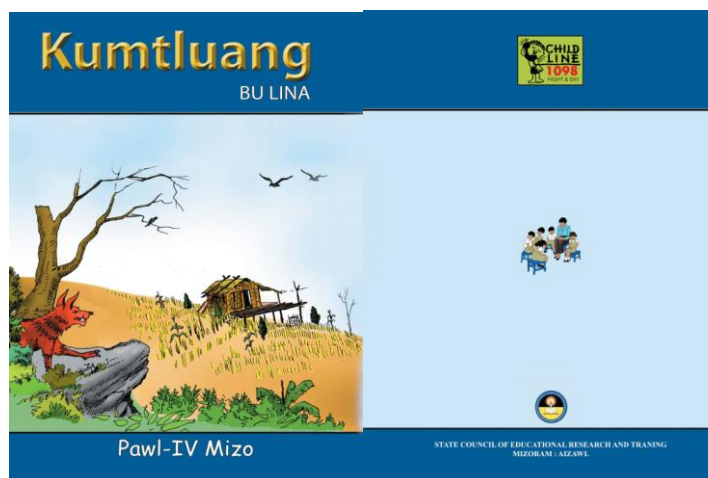


Figure 4.13: Cover pages of Class-IV Mizo Textbook

The textbook for class-IV directed teachers to teach the Mizo language so that students will learn how to read, write, speak, pronounce correctly, increase vocabulary and understand. Regarding physical aspect, there were large fonts used in the textbook; bright, clear and colourful pictures were inserted to make the lessons understandable. There were no images related to disability and there were no braille textbooks for the visually impaired students. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT for students with low vision for Elementary stages (Class I-VIII).



Figure 4.14: Pictures printed in Class-IV Mizo Textbook

There were no content of CWSNs found in the textbook. This indicated the under-representation of CWSNs. Through these textbooks, children should be made aware of the CWSNs so that they will be accepted and socially included in the educational institutions.

The first objective of the textbook acknowledges the teachers to make the students learn even by not looking or seeing them; making them understand what

they were teaching through their voice. This promotes auditory learning, and it will be helpful for the students with visual impairment to learn through the voice of the teachers even by not seeing them. This indicated that it included the CWSNs in the objectives cited in the textbook.

Regarding the exercises and activities, there were no disabled activity or tasks found in the textbook. However, the guidance and modifications that the teacher made will be meaningful for the CWSNs to fulfil the directions of the textbook. For example, changing an assignment to accommodate the learning needs of CWSNs, extending time to finish home assignments or classwork, provide alternatives to written assignments to meet the ability of the CWSNs, etc.

An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content. There was a QR code which give easy access for the CWSNs using different software. This will make the CWSNs adapted to learn from textbooks using different method by making use of software made for different learners like screen readers, dictation software, etc.

4.6.3. Result and Analysis of Mizo Textbook for class V:

- i. Basic details about the book: A textbook entitled ‘Kumtluang – Bu ngana’ was prescribed for class V by the State Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram.
- ii. The book analysed was published in the year 2021, sixth edition by Director of SCERT.
- iii. ‘Zirtirna kalpui dan tur’ which meant pedagogical processes was given next to foreword. It was written in Mizo language and was meant to be read and applied practically by the teachers.
- iv. After the above section, ‘Tehna’ which means evaluation was given. This section includes a series of assessment techniques to be used by the teachers.
- v. After this, learning objectives were presented. The objectives include: Listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, writing skills, grammar knowledge, knowledge of Mizo culture and vocabulary.
- vi. There were 10 units with 26 chapters in the textbook.

- vii. In the first unit, there were 3 chapters. The first chapter was a song named 'Khawvel sum tinreng leh lunglu' extracted from Kristian Hla Bu (Christian Hymn) No. 525. The second chapter was on how to use capital letters. The third was a story of a bear and the tourists.
- viii. Unit II contained two chapters, chapter 4 & 5. Chapter 4 was a story on the birthday of Valtea's grandmother. This chapter contained coloured pictures to help in easy understanding of the lesson. Chapter 5 contained a lesson on 'Punctuation'.
- ix. Unit III contained three chapters, chapter 6, 7 & 8. Chapter 6 was a dialogue between a teacher and the students with illustrated pictures. Chapter 7 was a poem titled 'Mi ropui' which means a great person. Chapter 8 was a lesson on forest with pictures depicting forests.
- x. Unit IV contained two chapters, chapter 9 & 10. Chapter 9 was an old Mizo story 'Raldawna and Tumchhingi' in which pictures were illustrated.
- xi. Unit V contained three chapters, chapter 11, 12 & 13. Chapter 11 was a proverb, an excerpt of the Bible. Chapter 12 was a song titled 'Par mawi thang vulna' which talked about the various flowers that can be seen in Mizoram. Chapter 13 was a story about a peculiar morning.
- xii. Unit VI contained two chapters, chapter 14 & 15. In chapter 14, fifteen idioms and phrases were explained with examples. And in the next chapter, an article about 'hnam inpumkhatna' was presented to promote unity among different tribes.
- xiii. Unit VII contained three chapters, chapter 16, 17 & 18. Chapter 16 was a story about 'Rimenhawihi, a Mizo folktale. Chapter 17 was a song called 'Zo tui thiang te' which talked about the fresh river water of Mizoram. Chapter 18 was a story of Kairuma, a great Mizo chief.
- xiv. Unit VIII contained two chapters, chapter 19 & 20. Chapter 19 was a story of a greedy beggar and chapter 20 contains parts of speech, explained with examples.

- xv. Unit IX contained three chapters, chapter 21, 22 & 23. Chapter 21 was a story of Patechaka, a strong Mizo man which was illustrated with pictures. Chapter 22 was a song called Teuh lo mai which was a motivational song for Mizo men to never back down. Chapter 23 was an article of encouragement to become success in life.
- xvi. Unit X contained three chapters, chapter 24, 25 & 26. Chapter 24 was a presentation of different Mizo traditional dress illustrated with pictures. Chapter 25 was a drama plot regarding the courageous man, Hmingsanga. The last chapter, chapter 26 was an article about education and development.

4.6.3.1. Parameter based analysis:

Table 4.23: Parameter based Analysis for Class-V Mizo textbook

Sl. No	Parameters	Descriptions
1.	Physical Aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The font size was 18 points (pt) and the font style was VNT times font. - No images with disability related content. - There was no braille version of the textbooks for the visually impaired students.
2.	Content Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In chapter 14 Idioms and phrases, there was one content, ‘be chhawhchhi’ which means talking to others badly or talk to them in an absurd manner. There was an exemplary sentence to clarify the words like, do not talk badly towards the disabled. This content was a teaching to not talk badly of the disabled because of their disability and to accept them as they are. - This will create positive attitude towards disability and the CWSNs among the readers and learners of the textbook.
3.	Objective cited in the Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In evaluation, it was cited that remedial teaching should be given for students who cannot learn at a single lecture. - This was to be done by changing their method of teaching to make everyone learn. The teachers were expected to coordinate with the parents as well to make the children learn. - This indicates the inclusive nature in the objective cited in the textbook.
4.	Exercises and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercises and activities to be done were mainly of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Question and answers ii. Fill in the blanks iii. Synonyms iv. Making sentences out of words cited in the chapters v. Abbreviations

		vi. Creative writing based on topics of the chapters vii. Choose the correct words viii. Long answer type questions ix. Punctuations x. Projects to be done individually - No disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook. - Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to perform tasks.
5.	Digital Content	- Digital content was available for easy access of the textbook. - The whole textbook can be downloaded through the link provided: https://scert.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/c40728e242d4fcaad1b4bfd948fd14a3/kumtluang-5.pdf

4.6.3.2. Discussion for Textbook of Class-V:

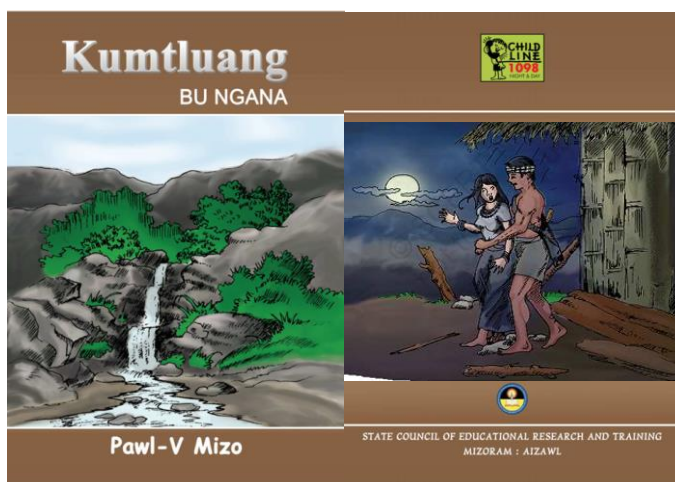


Figure 4.15: Cover pages of Class-V Mizo Textbook

The textbook for class-V directed teachers to teach the Mizo language so that they will promote different skills like listening, reading, writing, grammar knowledge, increase vocabulary and understand Mizo cultures through stories and folksongs. Regarding physical aspect, there were no images related to disability found in the textbook.



Figure 4.16: Pictures inserted in Class-V Mizo Textbook

Besides, there were no braille textbooks for the students with visual impairment. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT for students with low vision.

be chhawhchhi : Be nawmna, thu taka be lo.
Entir nan: *Piangsualte be chhawhchhi suh.*

Figure 4.17: Picture of content related to CWSN in Class V Mizo Textbook

In chapter 14, Page No. 66, Mizo idioms and phrases were presented as mentioned above in the figure. Among them, there was one content, ‘be chhawhchhi’ which means talking to others impolitely or talk to them in an absurd manner. There was an exemplary sentence to clarify the words in Mizo ‘Piangsualte be chhawhchhi suh’. This content referred to not showing *dominating, disrespect and scornful* attitude towards the disabled person. The type of disability mentioned in this content was ‘piangsual’ which means a person having physical disability. This will create awareness about the physically disabled person to accept as they are. This will also inculcate positive attitude towards disability and the CWSNs among the learners of the textbook.

Regarding evaluation, it was cited that remedial teaching should be given for students who cannot learn at a single lecture. This was to be done by changing their method of teaching to make everyone learn. The teachers were expected to coordinate with the parents as well to make the children learn. This indicates the inclusive nature in the objective cited in the textbook. With the remedial teaching being taken by the teacher, slow learners will be able to receive tutorials so that they will be able to keep up and understand what they have not attain in a single lecture.

Regarding the exercises and activities, there were no disability related activity or tsks found in the textbook. However, the guidance and modifications that the teacher made will be meaningful for the CWSNs to fulfil the directions of the textbook.

An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content. There was a QR code which give easy access for the CWSNs using different software. This will make the CWSNs adapted to learn from textbooks using different

method by making use of software made for different learners like screen readers, dictation software, etc.

4.6.4. Result and Analysis of Mizo Textbook for class VIII:

- i. Basic details about the book: A textbook entitled ‘Kumtluang – Bu riatna’ was prescribed for class VIII by the State Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram.
- ii. The book was published by Director of SCERT, Mizoram in the year 2020 (fourth edition).
- iii. ‘Zirtirna kalpui dan tur’ which meant pedagogical processes was given next to foreword. It was written in Mizo language and was meant to be read by the teachers. Psychology of middle school students were given, how to teach and make them learn; and what activities to be given were written.
- iv. After this section, ‘Tehna’ which means evaluation was given. This section includes a series of assessments like oral test, unit test, assignment/project work and remedial teaching to be used by the teachers were explained.
- v. After this, learning objectives for class VIII students were presented. The objectives include Listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, writing skills, grammar knowledge, knowledge of Mizo culture and vocabulary.
- vi. There were 10 units with 30 chapters in the textbook. On the top of each chapter, there was a QR code that can be scanned which was directed to a link and can be easily accessed. After each chapter, important words were listed out and there were exercises to be done by the students containing questions, fill in the blanks, synonym writing, making sentences from words, projects/activity, etc.
- vii. Each unit contained three chapters. In the first unit, the first chapter was an article named ‘Rimawi ram’ (country of music). The second chapter was a song named ‘Aw Lal Pathian, I kutchhuak’, a christian hymn extracted from Kristian Hymn Book No. 18. The third chapter was a

lesson named 'Thu ziah zawm loh tur te' which reflected on words to be written 'with' or 'without'.

- viii. Unit II contained chapter 4, 5 & 6. Chapter 4 was an article on 'kei leh ka chenna' which talked about our planet earth. The next chapter a story of Mizo pasaltha 'Vanapa'. Chapter 6 was a poem named 'I hun I hmang tha em?' teaching about time management.
- ix. Unit III contained chapter 7, 8 & 9. Chapter 7 was lesson on the youth and the use of mass media. Chapter 8 was a lesson on usage of Mizo words, teaching on how to use Mizo language correctly by highlighting how it was used in a wrong manner. Chapter 9 was a lesson on the value of enjoying life without tobacco and the like giving awareness about the effects of using tobacco and the like.
- x. Unit IV contained chapter 10, 11 & 12. Chapter 10 contained two Esop's fables – the ant and the grasshopper and the fox and the boar stories. Chapter 11 was a lesson on the benefits and necessity of being a strong-willed person to achieve life's goals. The next chapter was a poem on Mizo folk-story 'Thlanrawkpa Khuangchawi', an old Mizo folktale.
- xi. Unit V contained chapter 13, 14 & 15. Chapter 13 was an article on 'Ka tiang kha'. Chapter 14 was an old Mizo story 'Mauruangi'. Chapter 15 was a grammar lesson on Verb and Tense.
- xii. Unit VI contained chapter 16, 17 & 18. In chapter 16, a lesson about a person who protected the mother of the writer from a serious accident. And in the next chapter, a song named 'Awmkhua a har tlang tin' was presented. Chapter 18 was a lesson of Grammar on Adverb.
- xiii. Unit VII contained chapter 19, 20 & 21. Chapter 19 was a lesson about a true educated person. Chapter 20 was a drama titled the forgiving hands. Chapter 21 was a lesson on various Mizo proverbs.
- xiv. Unit VIII contained chapter 22, 23 & 24. Chapter 22 contained Mizo idioms and phrases. Chapter 23 was a song named 'I lenna ram'. The next chapter was a history of the Mizos.

- xv. Unit IX contained chapter 25, 26 & 27. Chapter 25 was an article on hard work and faithfulness. Chapter 26 was a Mizo folk song named 'Tlanglam zai'. Chapter 27 was a lesson on finding out which path to choose in a career.
- xvi. Unit X contained chapter 28, 29 & 30. Chapter 28 was a lesson on the values of Mizo traditions. Chapter 25 was a song named 'Chawngtinleri'. The next chapter, chapter 30 was an old Mizo story 'Lalruanga leh Keichala'.
- xvii. In each chapter, bright, clear and relatable pictures were illustrated to make the lessons clearer and understandable.

4.6.4.1. Parameter based Analysis:

Table 4.24: Parameter based Analysis for Class-VIII Mizo textbook

Sl. No	Parameters	Descriptions
1.	Physical Aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The font size was 15 points (pt) and the font style was VNT times font. - No images with disability related content. - There were no braille textbooks for the VI students.
2.	Content Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 21 contained lists of Mizo proverbs. Among them, serial no. 11 was 'Piansual leh phar charin tlai luat a neilo' which meant disability can happen to anyone at any time. This is to educate the students not to show disrespect or mock the disabled person as it can happen to anyone at any time.
3.	Objective cited in the Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regarding evaluation, it was cited that remedial teaching should be given for students who cannot learn at a single lecture. This was to be done by changing their method of teaching in order to make everyone learn. The teachers were expected to coordinate with the parents as well to make the children learn. - This indicates the inclusive nature in the objective cited in the textbook.
4.	Exercises and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The activities and exercises were mainly of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv. Questions and answers v. Fill in the blanks vi. Choose the correct words vii. Making sentences out of words cited in the chapters viii. Creative writing based on topics of the chapters ix. Classification and sorting problems x. Long answer type questions xi. Projects to be done individually xii. Synonyms

		xiii. Matching sentences and its meaning xiv. Writing meaning of words - No disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook. - Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to perform tasks.
5.	Digital Content	- Digital content was available for easy access of the textbook. - The whole textbook can be downloaded through the link provided: https://scert.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/f04935376f4ed1602c181b7a31957111/kumtluang-8.pdf

4.6.4.2. Discussion for Textbook of Class-VIII:



Figure 4.18: Cover Pages of Class VIII Mizo Textbook

The textbook for class-VIII directed teachers to teach the Mizo language so that they will promote different skills like listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar knowledge, increase vocabulary, Mizo traditional norms & values and understand Mizo cultures through stories and folksongs.



Figure 4.19: Pictures depicted in Class-VIII Mizo Textbook

Regarding physical aspect, there were no images related to disability found in the textbook. Moreover, there was no braille version of the textbook for the visually impaired students. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT for students with low vision.

11. *Piansual leh phâr chârîn tlai luat a nei lo.*
 A tira piangsual lo pawh, tawhsual tawh vangin kut ke kim lo
 leh mitdel leh hnahnawh pawh a awm theih. A tira phâr natna
 vei kher lo pawh a phâr leh theih tho bawk. Chuvangin, piansual
 leh natna tha lote hi eng hunah pawh kan chung a thlang thei a
 nih avangin hetiang mite hi kan hmusit tur a ni lo.

Figure 4.20: Picture of CWSN content in Class-VIII Mizo Textbook

Chapter 21 contained lists of Mizo proverbs. Among them in serial no. 11, page no. 116 was ‘Piansual leh phar charin tlai luat a neilo’ which meant disability can happen at any time to anyone (as in the above Figure). A person might not be born with a disability but can happen at any time due to factors like accidents. The type of disability referred here is physical disability. The content was to educate the students not to show disrespect or mock disabled person as it can happen to anyone at any time. This will create positive attitude towards the CWSNs to accept their disability and to never look down upon them.

Regarding evaluation, it was cited that remedial teaching should be given for students who cannot learn at a single lecture. This was to be done by changing their method of teaching to make everyone learn. The teachers were expected to coordinate with the parents as well to make the children learn. This indicates the inclusive nature in the objective cited in the textbook. With the remedial teaching being taken by the teacher, slow learners will be able to receive tutorials so that they will be able to keep up and understand what they have not attain in a single lecture.

Regarding the exercises and activities, there were no disabled related activity or tasks found in the textbook. However, the guidance and modifications that the teacher made will be meaningful for the CWSNs to fulfil the directions of the textbook. For example, changing an assignment to accommodate the learning needs of CWSNs, extending time to finish home assignments or classwork, provide alternatives to written assignments, modify project topics and activities to meet the ability of the CWSNs, etc.

An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content. There was a QR code which give easy access for the CWSNs using different software. This will make the CWSNs adapted to learn from textbooks using different

method by making use of software made for different learners like screen readers, dictation software, etc.

4.7. Analysis of Objective No. 7

To find out the problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram from the perspective of teachers and peers

To find out this objective, the researcher employed interview as a tool for gathering responses from 50 peers of the CWSNs and 100 teachers. Semi-structured interview schedule was also used to allow for a more conversational flow in finding out the problems faced by the CWSNs in the schools. The interview schedules were categorized under two broad categories: problems related to physical access and academic problems.

4.7.1. Problems related to physical access:

The respondents were interviewed to find out the problems with regard to the physical access of the schools.

Table 4.25: Problems related to physical access of the schools

Sl. No.	Statement	Peers		Teachers	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1.	Problem faced by CWSNs with regard to infrastructure of school	3 (6%)	47 (94%)	4 (4%)	96 (96%)
2.	Difficulty faced by CWSNs to reach School	2 (4%)	48 (96%)	6 (6%)	94 (94%)

Looking into table No.10, majority (94%) of the peers reported there were no problems faced by the CWSNs regarding the infrastructure of the school. 6% of the peers reported some problems were faced by their special needs classmates while majority (94%) responded they did not. The problems reported were based on the level of their disability and special needs. Some special needs children like muscular dystrophy were facing problems to reach the school as there were too many stairs to climb.

Majority (96%) of the teachers reported there were no problems faced by the CWSNs with regard to the physical infrastructure of the schools, majority (94%) reported that the CWSNs does not face any difficulties to reach the school.

Only small number of respondents reported problems due to unavailability of barrier free environment. This may be due to lack of awareness about the importance of a barrier free infrastructure in the schools. Another reason was that only mild level of disabled students were admitted to the school where their need for a barrier free environment is minimal. Majority (89%) of the teachers reported that due to lack of financial assistance, no special infrastructure and modifications can be made as per the needs of the CWSNs.

If barrier free infrastructure were provided in the schools, the CWSNs will benefit the most and special needs children who were not enrolled in the mainstream school would admit themselves as the schools will be able to accommodate them.

Other physical support like ramps, special toilets, railings were hardly seen, and which were visible, they were also in poor condition. They were temporarily made which did not seem to be made useful by the CWSNs. When the researcher asked the teachers and Headmasters why they had poor physical infrastructure, they responded by saying that they did not receive regular funds from the Government. Thus, the schools were not properly equipped with physical infrastructure required for the CWSNs.

4.7.2. Academic problems:

To find out the academic problems, peers and teachers were interviewed.

4.7.2.1. Responses of peers:

The peers reported that the CWSNs in their class were having minimal academic problems. Even when they did not do home-assignments and class-works, the teachers understand them and were not expected to do all things as the non-disabled students. However, whenever they face difficulty doing tasks such as exercises and activities, the teachers always helping them out. They also responded that their teachers were very helpful, they were always open and ready to help the CWSNs when they have academic problems. They were always willing to help them in times of need. All the respondents agreed that teachers encourage the CWSNs

whenever they raise questions and answer to them; accordingly, helped their CWSN classmates even outside their classroom in case of any academic problem they have; and the headmaster too cooperate in solving any problems faced by the CWSNs academically. One peers in Aizawl School 1 said, *“Not only our teachers, our headmaster too was always ready to help the CWSNs whenever they have problems not only academically, but also financial problems”*. They did not report any specific type of problems faced by the CWSNs academically.

4.7.2.2. Responses of teachers:

The teachers sometimes found it hard to teach CWSNs due to rigid curriculum. They cannot modify the curriculum according to the needs of the CWSNs as they must follow the system maintained by Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE). This problem was reported by majority (67%) of the teachers. Besides, they cannot confine the time to CWSNs only as they need to look after the other students as well. A teacher from Aizawl School 2 said, *“We need more time and more support to make the CWSNs learn, but we have to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time, due to time constraints, we cannot give the required attention to the CWSN. If an individual education plan (IEP) can be made for the CWSN, and a flexible curriculum and assessment system for them, it will be very helpful for them”*.

Thus, due to fixed curriculum and fixed assessment system, the teachers faced problems in providing effecting teaching learning for the CWSNs in the schools. This make them stay behind the non-disabled students academically as it was difficult to keep track of the formal system due to their different ability and capacities.

It was observed that the teachers were helpful, dedicated and passionate in their teaching. They were understanding and were ready to help the students with special needs to academic problems they faced. They tried their best to help them achieve better position academically. It can be concluded that there was a good academic environment between the teachers and the students, and the teachers tried their best to provide better academic environment to promote inclusive education.

The following problems faced by the CWSNs can thus be mentioned from the perspective of peers and teachers.

- The schools were not properly equipped with special modification regarding physical infrastructure like ramps, special toilets, railings, etc. required for CWSNs.
- Lack of financial assistance to build special infrastructure: Majority (89%) of teachers reported that due to lack of financial assistance, no special infrastructure and modifications can be made as per the needs of the CWSNs.
- Rigid curriculum: Due to rigid curriculum, the teachers cannot modify the curriculum according to the needs of the CWSNs. This problem was reported by majority (67%) of the teachers.
- Fixed assessment system: Absence of IEP for the CWSN and fixed assessment system followed, the capabilities of the CWSNs were not recognized in the formal assessment system. This makes them stay behind the non-disabled students academically.

4.8. Analysis of Objective No. – 8

To find out the problems in effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

To find out the problems in effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram, a semi-structured interview and problem tree analysis were adopted. A semi-structured interview was held among the teachers and administrative officers of the BRCs visited. From the responses collected, a problem tree analysis was done. This technique was used to draw the main problems, along with their causes and effects to identify clear and manageable goals and strategies of how to achieve them (Dillon, 2020; Wageningen University and Research, n.d.; Ingenio Empresa, 2024). A problem tree was developed by reversing the negative statements that form a problem in inclusive education in Mizoram, also found out the impacts to turn it into a positive solution. This technique will help in improving the situation.

The researcher first identified the negative aspects of the existing situation, finding out the main causes in a problem tree. Secondly, the causes were analysed to find out the impacts of the problem. As the main problem, the causes and impacts

were highlighted, the last stage was finding meaningful solutions or suggestions to the problems. The findings were also analysed by listing and coding of the responses with an intention of finding reliable and valid results.

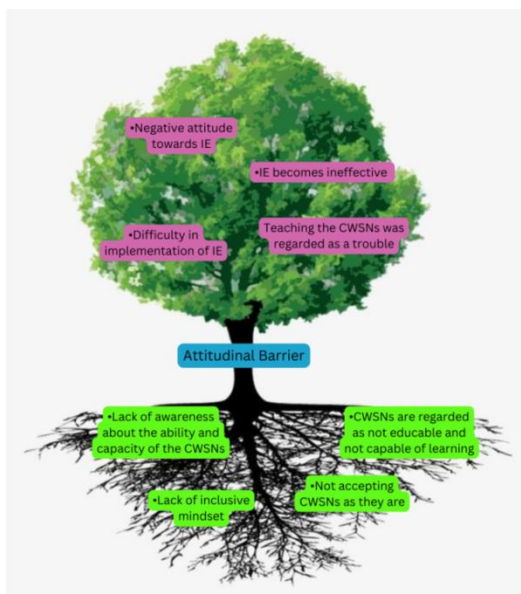
For each problem, a problem tree analysis was done using an interpretation diagram showing the main problem, causes, and impacts of inclusive education in Mizoram. The trunk represents the core problem; the root represents the causes of the problem; and the branch represents the impacts of the problem. The following five problems were found:

- Attitudinal barrier
- Infrastructural barrier
- Untrained teacher
- Impracticability
- Unacceptance of disability by the parents

Discussion of each problem:

4.8.1. Attitudinal Barrier:

Attitudinal barriers refer to discriminatory actions, beliefs, and presumptions towards people with disabilities. These obstacles frequently resulted from misunderstandings that caused people to overlook, criticize, or have false beliefs about a person with a disability.



(Tree Image source: pngtree)

Figure 4.21: Causes and impacts of attitudinal barrier presented using problem tree analysis

Core problem: Attitudinal barrier

Causes:

- i. Lack of awareness about the ability and capacity of the CWSNs.
- ii. Lack of inclusive mindset.
- iii. Not accepting the CWSNs as they are.
- iv. CWSNs are regarded as not educable and incapable to learn.

Impacts:

- i. Negative attitude towards IE.
- ii. Difficulty in the implementation of IE
- iii. IE becomes ineffective
- iv. Teaching of CWSNs was regarded as a trouble.

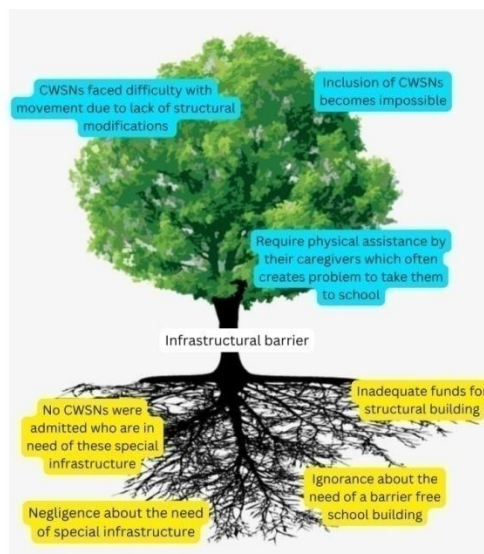
The root cause here lies in the lack of awareness about the abilities and capacities of special needs children (reported by 71.43% of respondents). Even though they have a specific type of disability, they can be educated and trained under special care and support. Due to this negative attitude, inclusive education has become ineffective in some schools.

One of the administrative officers reported that the CWSNs in inclusive schools cannot develop at a faster pace because of the attitudinal barriers of the teachers. According to her report, most of the teachers did not accept the CWSNs as they are. “They regard IE as an ‘adds-on service’”, she exclaimed. Whenever any new plans were made, such as the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for teaching the CWSNs, they often faced difficulties in the implementation process. The teachers and parents thought it was difficult to make the CWSNs learn, and they regarded it as troublesome to make them learn. Most teachers cannot spare their time for them, as they are not committed enough to guide and give them extra effort. Due to this negative attitude, IE becomes ineffective in many schools.

Thus, it can be suggested that awareness about the abilities and capabilities of the CWSNs be given to teachers and parents so that they will have a positive attitude and IE will be effective.

4.8.2. Infrastructural Barrier:

Infrastructural barriers refer to barriers or obstacles to the inclusion of CWSNs with regard to the physical infrastructure of the school. This can include modifications to classrooms and school buildings by building ramps, railings on stairs, separate toilets for CWSNs, special seating arrangements, the provision of wheelchairs and other support materials, the availability of potable water, etc. Many schools lacked the necessary infrastructure to serve pupils with special needs, as it required financial support from the higher authorities to make the necessary modifications.



(Tree Image source: pngtree)

Figure 4.22: Causes and impacts of infrastructural barrier presented using problem tree analysis

Core problem: Infrastructural barrier

Causes:

- i. Inadequate funds for structural building
- ii. Negligence about the need of special infrastructure
- iii. Ignorance about the need of barrier free school building
- iv. In some schools, no CWSNs were admitted who were in need of these infrastructural modifications.

Impacts:

- i. Inclusion of CWSNs become impossible
- ii. Require physical assistance by their care givers which sometimes creates trouble to take them to school.
- iii. CWSNs faced difficulty with movement due to lack of structural modification.

The main problem here is the infrastructural barrier. This referred to the modifications made in the physical infrastructure of the school, such as the building of ramps, railings, special toilets, special seats in the classroom, etc. The main reason for this problem was inadequate funds to meet these infrastructural needs. Another reason can be negligence or ignorance about the importance of these modifications

for special needs children. Without these modifications, especially children with orthopaedic disabilities, they would face difficulty in school.

Another reason that was reported by 54% of the schools was that there were no special needs children who needed this special infrastructure, as students who sought admission had a moderate level of disability. In addition, due to the geographical conditions of Mizoram, it was almost impossible for every school to provide physical infrastructure for CWSNs because most schools were in isolated hilly areas where ramps could not be installed. Whatever the case may be, an inclusive school or classroom should have all these infrastructural modifications to be able to support and accommodate any CWSNs admitted at any time.

The same problem was also found out in a research study where majority of the elementary schools in Mizoram did not have functional ramps and only minority of the school have special toilets (Hlondo, 2017). Though numerous provisions have been made under different acts and policies for the creation of an infrastructural barrier-free environment for the CWSNs, those were hardly found being executed in most of the schools. This was revealed in the table 8.

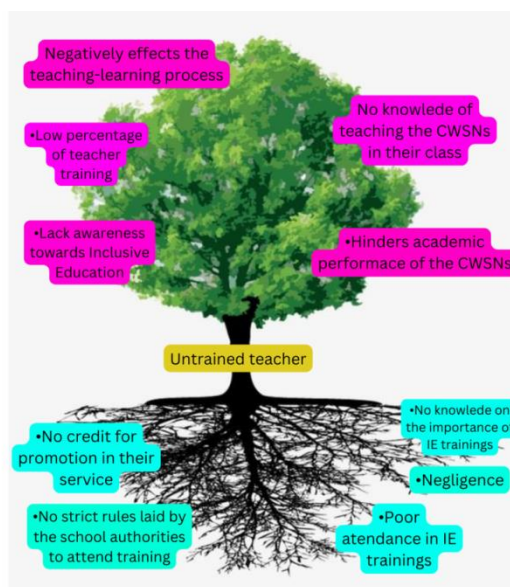
Looking into the overall data on Physical support provided by the elementary schools in Mizoram as depicted in Table 4.4, majority (68%) of the schools did not provide ramps for wheel-chair users. Majority of the schools (92%) did not make any structural changes for the easy movement of the CWSNs in and around the schools. Majority (84%) of the school did not provide railings at the stairs. Majority (68%) of the schools did not have separate toilet for the CWSNs. Majority (96%) of the schools did not have bench nor desk specially made for the CWSNs. However, wheelchairs were distributed free of charge by the government, and students were made to report to the authorities. All the schools within the two districts provided potable water to the students, which was clean and safe for drinking and cooking purposes.

Looking into the overall data, there has been less provision of infrastructural changes to promote barrier-free structures in the elementary schools of Mizoram. This adversely affected the inclusion of CWSNs in mainstream schools. Thus, it can be suggested that the concerned authorities from the government should take the

necessary actions to provide these infrastructural modifications to accommodate the CWSNs and promote an inclusive environment.

4.8.3. Untrained teacher:

Untrained teachers refer to teachers who have not received any training to conduct inclusive practices in the classroom. Some teachers might be able to naturally teach CWSNs in the classroom, but IE required practical skills that aimed to minimize or remove barriers to learning and support to facilitate the success of all the learners (Lee, 2021). Teachers played a crucial role in creating an inclusive classroom by creating an environment where all children could learn according to their own abilities and pace. Thus, teachers need to be well trained to promote an inclusive classroom.



(Tree Image source: pngtree)

Figure 4.23: Causes and impacts of untrained teacher presented using problem tree analysis

Core problem: Untrained teacher

Causes:

- i. No knowledge on the importance of IE trainings
- ii. Negligence of IE training
- iii. Poor attendance on IE trainings
- iv. No strict rules laid by the school authorities to attend the trainings

- v. No credit for promotion in their service

Impacts:

- i. Negatively impacted the teaching-learning process
- ii. Low percentage of teacher training
- iii. Lack of awareness towards IE
- iv. No knowledge of teaching the CWSNs in their class
- v. Hinders the academic performance of the CWSNs

Table 4.26: Training received by teachers on Inclusive Education

	Training on IE received by teachers	
	Yes	No
Aizawl district	18 (36%)	32 (64%)
Lunglei district	20 (40%)	30 (60%)
Overall data N=100	38 (38%)	62 (62%)

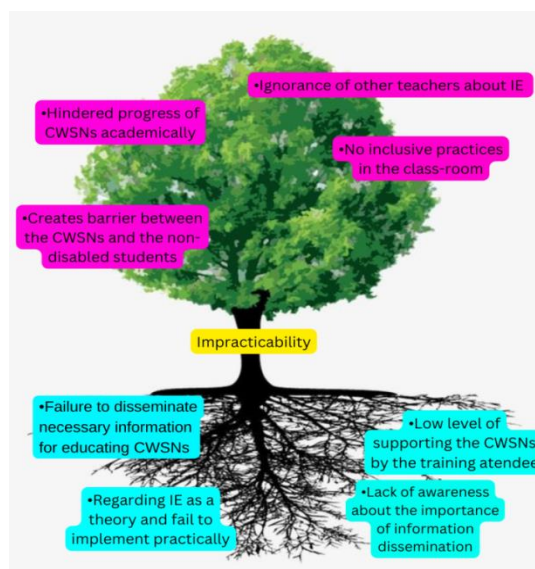
Table 4.26 revealed that one of the major problems found was untrained teachers. It was found out that majority (62%) of the teachers in both districts have not received any type of training to educate the CWSNs, thus creating a problem where teachers do not know how to take care of the CWSNs in the classroom. This will have a negative impact on the teaching-learning process and hinder their academic performances as they do not receive the right type of treatment in the classroom. 29.55% of teachers reported that they do not feel comfortable teaching the CWSNs in their class, saying that they do not know how to teach them as per their needs. This problem needs to be tackled as soon as possible to promote inclusive practices in the classroom.

Another problem being reported was that whenever trainings were conducted, the same teacher who had already attended the training was made to attend the training by the school authorities. This means that all the teachers did not receive

training, which is meant for all the teachers. There was poor attendance of teachers in trainings conducted for inclusive education, as reported by administrative officers of the BRCs. Some teachers admitted that they neglected this kind of training because there was no credit for their promotion in their service. This is why the percentage of teacher training was found to be low in both districts. The same problem has been reported that in majority of the schools in Mizoram, some of the teachers did not undergo training on inclusive education (Hlondo, 2017). Thus, it was suggested that strict and mandatory rules should be laid down by the authorities so that all teachers attend IE trainings and use them practically in the classroom to teach all students effectively.

4.8.4. Impracticability:

According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2024), impracticability refers to the fact of being impossible or very difficult to do or of not being practical in a particular situation. Impracticability signifies a significant challenge in executing plans or programs effectively. The problem of impracticability in this study referred to a challenge that occurred in the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom situation.



(Tree Image source: pngtree)

Figure 4.24: Causes and impacts of impracticability presented using problem tree analysis

Core problem: Impracticability

Causes:

- i. Failure to disseminate necessary information for educating the CWSNs
- ii. Regarding IE as a theory and failure to implement practically
- iii. Low level of supporting the CWSNs by the training attendee
- iv. Lack of awareness about the importance of information dissemination.

Impacts:

- i. Hindered progress of CWSNs academically
- ii. Ignorance of other teachers towards IE
- iii. No inclusive practices in the classroom
- iv. Creating barrier between the CWSNs and the non-disabled students.

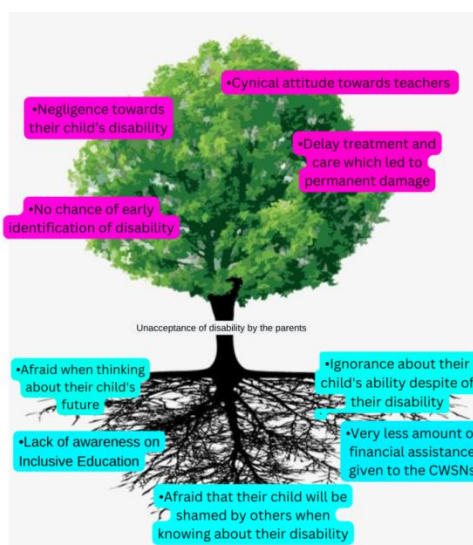
Another problem found was its impracticability. In the earlier problem, it was mentioned about the poor attendance of teachers attending trainings on IE. There were also cases when teachers who had attended the training did not disseminate the important information they had learned in the training to their colleagues. And there were also certain cases where the colleagues did not give support to practically impose on the lessons learned while training. They regarded IE as a theoretical basis, while it must be implemented on a practical basis.

Some CWSNs attract attention because of their disability or peculiar behaviour, which sometimes impacts classroom discipline and the teaching process. This can have a huge impact on the CWSN's psychology as well as the teacher's attitude towards them, which can ultimately build a barrier between them and the non-disabled students.

As mentioned above, the information and ideas of IE were not used practically to teach the CWSNs. IE was not based on theories, but on practical aspects. The ideology and the methods should practically be implemented so that there can be effective learning for the CWSNs. Due to their impracticability, their progress is hindered, and no progress is found in some of them. Thus, measures should be taken to make teachers put the theories of IE that they know into practice when teaching the CWSNs in the class.

4.8.5. Unacceptance of disability by the parents:

Another problem reported was that the parents of the CWSNs did not want to accept the disability of their child. This was because they did not know that their child, irrespective of their disability, was educable and had many capabilities to learn and be trained. This was because they have no knowledge about the practices of inclusive education that can help their child achieve top grades in their schools.



(Tree Image source: pngtree)

Figure 4.25: Causes and impacts of Unacceptance of disability by the parents presented using problem tree analysis

Core Problem: Unacceptance of disability by the parents

Causes:

- i. Lack of awareness on IE
- ii. Afraid of their child's future having a thought of no hope of progress academically
- iii. Afraid that their child will be shamed by others when knowing about their disability
- iv. Ignorance about their child's ability despite their disability
- v. Very less amount of financial assistance given to the CWSNs.
- vi.

Impacts:

- i. Cynical attitude towards teachers
- ii. Negligence towards their child's disability
- iii. No chance of early identification of disability
- iv. Delay treatment and care

Another problem found in this study was that 24.32% of the parents did not want to accept the disability of their child. They were afraid that their child would have no future possibility of progressing academically, which made them unwilling to accept their disability. They were also afraid that their child would be shamed by other students because of their disability. "No parents want to have a disabled child," said the young mother while having a conversation about her special needs child. The same kind of finding was revealed in a study where 63% male and 73% of female parents were shocked on the birth of their disabled child and admitted that their future and dreams were shattered (Hasan, 2017). 67% male parents and 75% female parents were not aware of the schemes and programmes benefitting their special needs children (Hasan, 2017). Some parents get offended when giving information about their child's disability and then develop a cynical attitude towards the teachers, which can result in mistrust and hinder cooperation between parents and teachers.

It was also clear that the current financial assistance does not cover the needs of CWSNs. Up to class IV, Rs. 30/- p.m. per student (360/- p.a.), for class V–class VII, Rs. 40/- p.m. per student (480/- p.a.), and for class VIII–class XII, Rs. 85/- p.m. per student (1020/- p.a.) were given as stipends under the Government of Mizoram (Social Welfare & Tribal Affairs, 2023). If a greater amount of stipend or scholarship were given to CWSNs, they could have more benefits, which might be helpful in achieving their academic needs. This also might influence the attitude of parents in a positive way, thinking that even if their child has specific needs, they can be trained and educated free of charge without any burden for them.

Parents unacceptance of disability often creates problems for the special needs child to get appropriate treatment due to delayed identification of their disability. Thus, parents should be given awareness to accept the disability that their child has

so that they can get proper treatment and support at the earliest and that their child will enjoy the rights and benefits that are rightfully theirs. Parents should try to find their child's capabilities and encourage them to do activities of their interest.

4.8.6. Conclusion for Objective 8:

The findings of the study highlighted several problems that hindered the effective implementation of inclusive education. Since education is the natural right of all children, it is the duty of the concerned personnel to provide learning. The education sector laid down numerous acts and policies to effectively implement inclusive practices in various fields. However, these problems prevent these acts and policies from being fully implemented. Therefore, to effectively practice inclusion, we must address these problems in every possible manner. Concerned authorities should take the necessary steps to remove barriers and problems so that all children learn in an inclusive environment. The ground reality must be checked and corrected as needed to promote effective learning for both present and future generations.

4.9. Analysis of Objective No. – 9

To find out the prospects of inclusive education in Mizoram.

To find out the prospects of inclusive education in Mizoram, a semi-structured interview was held among the teachers and administrative officers. Prospects according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary is 'something that is awaited or expected'; 'the act of looking forward'. The vision of CWSNs in an Inclusive educational setting was studied after understanding the status and problems. For this objective, the prospect of inclusive education in Mizoram was asked to teachers and administrative officers. They were asked about the future possibilities and what was expected of IE in the near future using a semi-structured interview.

There always has been a debate whether inclusion is a better policy than segregation for the CWSNs to have a quality education. There are numerous policies and schemes such as IEDC, IEDSS, RTE Act 2009, RCI act 1992, RPwD Act 2016, Samagra Shiksha, etc. for the well-being and provision of quality education to the CWSNs, these somehow remain an ideology or theoretical concept. On the contrary, they should be implemented on practical grounds to provide effective learning for the CWSNs. Inclusion in the mainstream education was benefitted by the special needs

children as it stimulates the learning environment while mixing with other abled students as they have the opportunities to observe higher models of social and academic behaviour (Fareo, 2020). All children thus benefitted inclusion academically and socially in ways such as more opportunities for social and communication, age-appropriate behaviour models, active involvement in the school community, individualized education goals, and enhancing learning environment (Lakshmi, 2018).

Looking into the ground reality of IE in Mizoram, there has been many barriers to implement it effectively. Different problems which this study found out were attitudinal barrier of parents and teachers, inadequate trained teachers, impracticability, infrastructural barrier and unacceptance of disability by the parents. These problems needs to be tackled so that inclusive education will become effective and that all the students will benefit from the inclusive education system.

If inclusion is to be successful in Mizoram, the following matters/concern need to be taken care of:

- Training conducted under inclusive education needs to be attended by all the teachers at Elementary schools of Mizoram.
- The ideology of IE to be used practically to educate the CWSNs.
- The schools and the office authorities (Eg. BRC and Samagra Shiksha) should coordinate more and move onto a more co-operative approach towards a better provision of IE in practice.
- The government to look more into matters concerning IE, act more towards making the schools equipped to provide IE.
- The attitudinal barriers of the teachers and the parents to be shifted towards positive attitude regarding the ability and capabilities of the CWSNs and give more priorities to their education. To think more of their ability rather than their ability.

In view of the status of IE in Mizoram from the findings of the study, it is important to stress on the above matters or concern so that the CWSNs will have a bright future ahead and achieve its full potential. The students themselves as well as their parents and teachers should develop more positive outlook towards the ability

of the CWSNs and find ways to uplift and develop their ability to achieve more and have a better prospect. This holistic approach will ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in an inclusive educational environment.

4.10. Analysis of Objective No. – 10

To formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

The experts and professionals like Resource teachers, senior teachers who have attended several trainings on IE, experienced teachers in IE, experts in IE from BRCs were interviewed to formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram. Their suggestions were as follows.

- i. Identification and assessment: For easy and early identification of any type of disability, medical assessment camp should be organized twice every year. The assessment must be done in collaboration with health care professionals from Health Department at each Block level. From the results of the medical assessment, disability certificate must be issued at the earliest accordingly to the identified CWSN.
- ii. Provision of special educator: It was recommended to have one special educator or trained special teacher for each school. This will be helpful in attending the problems of CWSNs in the school and promote inclusive education more effectively.
- iii. Peer-tutoring: Since there were problems of inadequacy of teachers, 'peer-tutoring' should be promoted. It was reported by the experts that students benefitted from their peers thus recommended teachers to promote more peer tutoring.
- iv. Teacher training: It was also recommended that whenever trainings were called, it should be attended by all the teachers in alternation so that all teachers in the schools attended the trainings conducted on IE. Attendance should be strictly maintained by each school headmaster.
- v. Opening of a new course of Special B.Ed. in ID: From the research findings, majority of the disability in the elementary schools of Mizoram were having Intellectual Disability (ID). Therefore, it was suggested to

open a new course of Special B.Ed. in ID. Since B.Ed. Spl. Ed. V.I. has been discontinued at SCERT, Mizoram from 2024, the government should restart the programme either at SCERT or the other institution like under the state government; or may write to Mizoram University to start such programmes.

- vi. Vocational education: Vocational education should be introduced right before they finish elementary schooling. Many of the CWSNs cannot attend school after elementary stage because of their disability. Therefore, certain kind of vocational and skill development programs should be enhanced during this stage so that they will be able to earn a living and not be dependent on others solely during their lifetime.
- vii. Resource rooms: Resource rooms should be established in schools where CWSNs were admitted promoting vocational/skill enhancement courses.

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CHAPTER – V
MAJOR FINDINGS &
DISCUSSIONS,
RECOMMENDATIONS &
SUGGESTIONS FOR
FURTHER STUDIES

CHAPTER – V

MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This chapter deals with the major findings of the study and discussions were made after each finding. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies were also presented based on the findings of the study, educational implications of the study, limitations of the study and conclusions were also highlighted at the end of the chapter.

5.1. Major findings of the study and Discussions:

A. Findings related to analysis of Acts and Policies:

- i. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992:
 - The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was set up as a registered society in the year 1986. It became a statutory body on 22nd June 1993 by an act of the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 passed by the Parliament of India.
 - The main role/ target given to RCI was to regulate and monitor services given to the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), to standardise the syllabus and maintain a ‘Central Rehabilitation Register’ of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- According to the information booklet made by RCI, by the year 2021, there were 1,712 professionals registered under the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) in Mizoram (Govt. of India, 2021).
- In Mizoram, several departments have organized Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programs to enhance the skills of professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education. Notable departments include Department of Clinical Psychology and

Department of Social Work, Mizoram University and SCERT, Mizoram.

- These departments were involved in providing ongoing training to ensure that professionals are well-equipped to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Each department conducts programs based on RCI guidelines, contributing to the professional development of practitioners in the region.
- The Govt. of Mizoram has recently hired 50 special educators to enhance the educational support for children with disabilities. This recruitment is part of ongoing efforts to fill vacant teaching positions and improve the availability of qualified professionals in the state's educational system. The hiring process is currently underway and is expected to be completed shortly, addressing the need for more specialized educators in schools across Mizoram (Govt. of India, 2023).
- Thus, it was evident from the above-mentioned ground realities that RCI has contributed towards the promotion of inclusive education. Through these initiatives, RCI aimed to create a more inclusive educational environment in Mizoram, ensuring that children with disabilities receive quality education and support services.

ii. Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Act, 1995:

- The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PwD Act 1995) is a significant piece of legislation in India aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and rights for individuals with disabilities.
- The Act came into force on February 7, 1996.
- The focus of the act was towards the rights and education of persons with disabilities.
- The act tries to provide prevention and early detection of disabilities; provide education and paves the way for their employment.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The Govt. of Mizoram offered different schemes for disability which can be grouped into two: Schemes which are funded under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), Schemes funded by the Ministry of Rural Development and schemes funded under the Govt. of Mizoram.
- Despite its progressive provisions, ongoing challenges remain in the effective implementation of the Act and the realization of its objectives.
- The allowances and stipends given to disabled students were insufficient to cover their basic needs and educational needs. The current stipend amounts may not keep pace with rising living costs and inflation, limiting their effectiveness. Thus, the stipends must be regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living and the specific needs of disabled individuals.

iii. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016:

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, was enacted in the year 2016 by the Indian Parliament to enhance the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities across various domains of life, including education, employment, and social participation.
- It became operational on 15th June 2017.
- The Bill replaced the existing PwD Act 1995, which was enacted 21 years back.
- The importance of this act for the CWSN is that *the Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education.*
- 21 types of disabilities are recognized under this Act.
- 4% reservation which applies to all groups of posts-Group A, B, C, and D in government and public sector undertakings.
- 5% reservation for persons with benchmark disabilities in all government and government-aided higher educational institutions

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The government of Mizoram has also adopted the changes made under the RPwD Act, 2016. It made a notification that the government that with the commencement of the RPwD Act, 2016, i.e. 19th April, 2017 (the date from which the RPwD Act, 2016 came into force), the reservation of identified posts within the direct recruitment quota for Persons with Disabilities shall be as per the Act [Govt. of Mizoram Notification No. A. 12027/1/2011-P&AR(GSW), 2018].
- The rules were mainly concerned within the fields of education, jobs where 4% seats of government jobs were reserved for PwDs; accessibility in terms of transportation, physical environment, information & communication; and issue of disability certificate.
- The RPwD Act represents a shift towards a more inclusive society, recognizing the rights and potential of individuals with disabilities. However, despite these advancements, challenges remain in the effective implementation of the Act across different regions.
- Issues such as societal attitudes, lack of awareness, and inadequate resources continue to hinder full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in various aspects of life (Barman, 2023).
- From the findings of the study, there were different problems found which impacted the effective implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools of Mizoram. Problems such as untrained teachers, lack of awareness about inclusive education, impracticability, lack of school infrastructure to accommodate the CWSNs and attitudinal barriers were found. Regarding physical infrastructure, 68% of the schools did not have functional ramps, 84% did not provide structural building changes for the CWSNs, 68% did not provide special toilets and 96% of the schools did not provide special desks and benches for the CWSNs.
- Thus, even in the state of Mizoram, there are many challenges which need to be tackled to promote an inclusive environment in the schools.

Thus, measures must be taken by the concerned authorities to put policies and acts into practice and provide an inclusive environment for all.

iv. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006

- The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was formulated by the Government of India in the year 2006 to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society.
- This policy stressed on provision of barrier free environment in schools and public places for easy access for persons with disabilities, prevention of disabilities and rehabilitation.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- Community based awareness programs were held in various communities and in schools of different stages.
- Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programs were also utilised in such a manner that professionals in the field of special education were trained.
- Under the National Institute of Locomotor Development (NILD), aids and appliances like hearing aids, crutches, walking sticks, spectacles, prosthetics like limbs were disseminated to PwDs having disability certificate free of cost.
- In collaboration with Social Welfare Department, NILD also hosted free health camps in certain communities and schools for diagnosing and this also aid in the early identification of disabilities.
- ALIMCO has set up an apex centre named Pradhan Mantri Divyasha (PMDK) Aizawl; this centre started functionary in July 2023 under Zoram Medical College. PMDK-Aizawl started disseminating aids and appliances for persons with disabilities from April 2024.
- It has made services available for PwDs by producing different aids and appliances like wheelchairs, rollator, walking stick, tripod, tetrapod, spinal support, knee brace, braille kit, blind stick, smartphone for the blind, hearing aid and crutch.

- There have been 1000 beneficiaries under the PMDK-Aizawl, 2372 items have been disseminated till now.

v. Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009:

- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4th August 2009.
- The main aim or focus of the act is towards the provision of free and compulsory education for all children between the age of 6 and 14 years.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The Government of Mizoram adopted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and based on it has enacted its own Mizoram Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011.
- The rules demand compulsory schooling for children aged between 6 and 14 years, special training for children in need of special development, provision of free textbooks and writing materials, and free uniforms for Below Poverty Line (BPL) children.
- Some key points about the Mizoram RTE Rules 2011 are as follows:

The rules apply to conferment of rights on children to free and compulsory education, subject to the provisions of articles 21A of the Constitution

They define "child with special needs" to include children with disabilities and children living with or affected by HIV/AIDS (Section 3(2) & Section 35)

The rules reserve 25% of seats for economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups which also include children with disabilities for admission in schools within this framework (Section 12(1)(c)).

- According to 2011 Census of India, Mizoram had the lowest percentage of disability in India which is 1.38%. Looking into the statistics, the number of seats reserved were adequate to include the CWSNs in the mainstream school in Mizoram.

- The Mizoram RTE Rules 2011 aims to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the state in accordance with the National RTE Act 2009.
- Under Part-III, Duties of State Government, Local Authorities, it was stated that for children with disabilities, if their disabilities prevent them from accessing the schools, the Govt./local authority shall make appropriate and safe transportation arrangements for them to attend school and finish elementary education [Clause No. 4(7)].
- A child with disabilities shall also be provided with free special learning and support material, which is given under inclusive education in schools (Clause No. 5(1)).
- In conclusion, the Mizoram RTE Rules followed a "zero rejection policy", ensuring that no child with special needs is deprived of the right to education. The focus is on inclusion and mainstreaming CWSNs into regular schools with adequate resource support.

vi. National Education Policy, 2020:

- The new National Education Policy 2020 is built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability.
- To promote inclusion, the policy aimed towards ensuring universal access to school education at all levels, i.e. from pre-school to secondary education.
- The policy also advocated for early identification of learning disabilities and the provision of continuous support.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The state government of Mizoram has taken different steps towards the implementation of NEP 2020. It was reported that almost 25% task has been completed in the implementation of this new policy.
- As of now, there are only few steps taken towards the promotion and development of a more inclusive educational environment especially for the CWSNs.

- As reported by the SCERT, Mizoram, 2673 teachers have been given trainings under the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (Diksha) which is a digital platform for teachers, students, and parents in India that provides access to educational resources. This portal will be made useful for the teachers to improve their digital skills which will be helpful in teaching the CWSNs by using certain audio-visual aids to foster effective learning.
- Braille construction have been developed for the blind students. However, this has not been released till now. This Braille construction was not developed based on the school textbooks but will serve as a guide for gaining information and knowledge for the blind students.
- Large print textbooks of elementary section (classes I to VIII) were also made available for low vision students developed by SCERT Mizoram.

Discussion on Policy Analysis:

The focus of a policy review encompasses several critical aspects aimed at evaluating and improving existing policies. This review aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies for inclusive education for Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) in India. After carefully examining the acts and policies for inclusion of CWSNs in India, it can be concluded that it highlights a comprehensive framework aimed at ensuring equitable access to quality education. This framework is shaped by various legislative measures, schemes, and educational policies that collectively strive to create an inclusive environment for CWSNs. Numerous actions have been made for the inclusion of CWSNs in the mainstream education such as reservation of seats in schools, provision of stipends, provision of aids and appliances free of cost, providing training of teachers to accommodate CWSNs in the class, developing trained professionals, providing non-discrimination and provision of barrier free access to schools.

The promotion of free and equitable access to education has long been acknowledged. However, problems and challenges have always been encountered in the implementation process. The analysis revealed significant gaps in implementation, particularly concerning infrastructure and teacher training. These

findings suggest that without addressing these gaps, the goal of inclusive education may remain unattainable.

Policymakers should prioritize funding for training programs and accessible infrastructure to support CWSNs. If implemented with appropriate planning, these educational policies will serve as an agent for promoting inclusive education. Further research is needed to explore innovative practices in inclusive education that can be scaled nationally. Ultimately, ensuring equitable education for all children is not just a policy goal but a moral imperative that reflects our commitment to an inclusive society.

B. Findings related to the number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram

- The total number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools (Class I-VIII) of Mizoram during the academic year 2021-2022 (UDISE) was 2609.
- There were 115 CWSNs enrolled in the 50 sampled schools: 67 CWSNs in Lunglei district and 48 CWSNs in Aizawl district.
- Govt. Primary School-I, Pukpui in Lunglei district has the highest admission of CWSN. There were 8 students with special needs and the types of disabilities found were VI, ID and Specific Learning Disabilities.

Discussion on number of CWSNs enrolled in the Elementary schools of Mizoram:

From the visited schools, 115 children with special needs were found out. 67 CWSNs were found out in Lunglei district and 48 CWSNs in Aizawl district. Comparing between the two districts, Lunglei has a higher number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools than Aizawl. As per the records of Samagra Shiksha Mizoram, there were 449 (0.76%) CWSNs in Aizawl district; and 693 (2.38%) CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools in Lunglei district. This may be due to the fact that there are more special schools in Aizawl than in Lunglei district. More CWSNs were enrolled in the mainstream school in Lunglei while the CWSNs

have more options to be enrolled in either special school or mainstream school. Therefore, more CWSNs were found in Lunglei district and a smaller number of CWSNs were found in Aizawl district.

C. Findings related to the type of disabilities that exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram

- According to the office records of Samagra Shiksha Mizoram, 14 types of disabilities exist in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- The researcher found out 12 types of disabilities from the visited schools.
- Types of disability existed in the schools were – visual impairment, low vision, hearing impairment, special learning disabilities, learning disability, speech and language impairment, mental illness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy and autism spectrum disorder.
- The most common type of disability found out from the study was Intellectual Disability (ID) which was 23.47%. Dwarfism and autism being the least common type of disability detected with 0.86% each.

Discussion on the type of disability that exist among the Elementary schools of Mizoram:

The most common type of disability found out from the study was Intellectual Disability (ID). Dwarfism and autism being the least common type of disability detected. As per the report of respondents, the mode of assessment used were functional assessment. In functional assessment, the schools were made to report any signs of disability of their students. The suspected students were carefully analysed at the times of doctor visit to the school. The doctors then underwent several tests after which the type of disabilities was diagnosed and declared. Some students were also referred to other private doctors for screening and identification of their disability.

As mentioned earlier, the largest number of CWSN falls under the category of Intellectual Disability. In Mizoram, there is only one institution where B.Ed. special education was imparted, i.e. SCERT, Mizoram. The institution offered two

programs, B. Ed. Special education (HI) and B.Ed. Special education (VI) only till 2024. From the session 2024 SCERT, Mizoram offered B.Ed. Spl. Ed. H. I. only. Whereas the number of students with visual disability is the second largest group after intellectual disability which needs teacher with specific competencies. There was no program offered for B. Ed. Special education (I.D.), rather it was the most needed program looking into the types of disabilities found in the elementary schools. Thus, it was highly needed to open and offer more programs for B. Ed. Special education (ID) so that students having intellectual disability will benefit as they occupy the largest number of disability types in the schools.

D. Findings related to schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

Physical support:

- Majority of the schools (68%) did not provide ramps for wheel-chair users.
- Majority of the schools (92%) did not make any structural changes for the easy movement of the CWSNs in and around the schools.
- Majority of the schools (84%) did not provide railings at the stairs.
- Majority of the schools (68%) did not have separate toilet for the CWSNs.
- Majority of the schools (96%) did not have bench nor desk specially made for the CWSNs.
- Thus, elementary schools in Mizoram were not equipped for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to physical infrastructure provided in the schools.

Academic support

- Majority (96%) of the teachers agreed that all the CWSNs who seek admission in their schools were admitted.
- Majority of the teachers (83%) consider the needs of the CWSNs while preparing their lesson plan for teaching in the class.
- Majority of the teachers (83%) always tried to create opportunities for the CWSNs to make them learn with the other students in their class.

- Half (50%) of the respondents always provide materials for the CWSNs, 17% usually provide materials, 10% provide materials sometimes, 9% seldomly provide and 14% never provide materials.
- Majority (56%) of the respondents always devoted their time in tutorials for the CWSNs, 22% usually devote their time, 13% devoted their time sometimes, 2% seldomly devoted their time and 7% never devoted their time.
- Majority (75%) of the respondents always tried to accommodate the CWSNs, for easy understanding.
- Majority (75%) of the teachers always encourage the students to learn together.
- 32% of the respondents always use audio-visual aids, 19% usually use, 14% use audio-visual aids sometimes, 9% seldomly use and 26% never utilise audio-visual aids to foster learning.
- Majority (75%) of the teachers always received support from the school administrators to deal with/ teach CWSNs.
- Majority (57%) of the respondents responded that the CWSNs were always supported by their peers in their learning and other activities, 28% responded 'usually' against this statement, 6% responded 'sometimes' against this statement, 6% responded as 'seldom' and 3% responded as 'never' against this statement.
- Majority (75%) of the respondents gave differentiated assignments in their class according to the ability of the students.
- Majority (91%) of the teachers support the rights of the special needs children to learn in the regular classes with other students.

Thus, it can be said that elementary schools in Mizoram were equipped and ready for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to academic support provided by the teachers.

Discussion on the findings related to schools that are equipped for imparting IE:

Looking into the trend of the findings, it can be said that Elementary schools in Mizoram were not equipped for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to

physical infrastructure provided in the schools. With reference to the various criteria and assessment made by the researcher, this conclusion can be made.

However, it was reported by the respondents that due to lack of financial aid, these special services were not met. Since the schools were functioned under the provisions of the Govt. of Mizoram, it was the role of the government authorities and local bodies to provide these services for the CWSNs.

Looking into the trend of the responses on academic support provided by the elementary schools of Mizoram, there were more positive responses in each of the statements. It can be concluded by saying that Elementary schools in Mizoram were equipped and ready for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to academic support provided by the teachers.

However, there were negative responses being observed against the statements which are:

- It was reported that some teachers felt it difficult to cope with some special needs children during their class. Some students did not want to comply with the norms and rules laid by the teachers, they sometimes provoke and did not want to obey the teachers' orders. There were also instances that teachers cannot devote their time solely to the CWSNs as they need to look after the others as well. They cannot give individualised care and support as per their needs. Therefore, due to inadequacy of teachers and time constrain, teachers could not give undivided attention to the CWSNs which thus sometimes hamper the classroom teaching.

- It was also observed that there were equal number of teachers who used audio-visual aids and who does not use in the class to foster learning. These audio-visual learning aids were beneficial for diverse learners to make the explanation clear and understandable in an easy way. But these aids were mostly absent in the schools visited. The aids that were commonly used were smart phones and laptops which were brought by the teachers from home since the school does not own any of these. Therefore, schools should be equipped with these audio-visual aids to foster effective learning for diverse learners.

E. Findings related to level of social inclusion faced by the children with special needs (CWSNs) in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

i) Responses of peers:

Social participation

- Majority of the peers (98%) were excited to go to school with the CWSNs.
- Majority (96%) of the peers can easily get along with the CWSNs during their free period like short break and tiffin break.
- Majority (72%) of the peers responded that their classmates does not refuse to socialize with the CWSNs in their class.

Academic participation

- Majority (90%) of the respondents agreed that extra support was given by their teachers apart from the classroom. The teachers were available for the CWSNs in times of need and address to them when they face any difficulty academically.
- All the respondents agreed that teachers encourage the CWSNs whenever they raise questions and helped them accordingly even outside their classroom in case of any academic problem they have; and the headmaster cooperated the teachers in solving any problems faced by the CWSNs academically.

Participation in co-curricular activities

- All the respondents agreed that their teachers allowed the CWSNs to take part in the co-curricular activities with no hesitation.
- As reported by the peers, majority (80%) of the CWSNs were willing to participate in the co-curricular activities while less number of respondents (20%) hesitate to do so.

Physical Access:

- Majority (86%) of the respondents reported that there was no barrier free access in the school.

ii) Responses of parents:

Social participation

- All the respondents agreed that students were excited and were comfortable to get along with the CWSNs in the school.
- Majority (88%) responded that the classmates of their children were not refusing to socialize with them.

Academic participation

- All the respondents agreed that support was given to their children with disability within and out of the school.
- Reading, explaining, carrying their bags and helping them with home assignments were the kind of support provided to their CWSN classmates.
- All respondents responded that adequate support was given in and outside the school academically.
- All the parents were satisfactory regarding the academic support given by the schools.

Participation in co-curricular activities

- All the parents agreed that their teachers allowed the CWSNs to take part in the co-curricular activities with no hesitation.
- All the CWSNs were willing to participate in the co-curricular activities conducted in the school.

Physical access

- Majority (90%) of the respondents reported that there was no barrier free access in the school.

Observation:

- The researcher observed the excitement of the students to learn and play together in the school campus. At the times of observation, no such behaviour was seen where CWSNs were socially excluded.

- The non-disabled students were easily getting along with the CWSNs during their free periods. They played together and learn together in the class.
- All the schools visited promoted a place where CWSNs could actively take part in the co-curricular activities. The students were also willing to participate with the CWSNs in these activities.
- There was no barrier free access provided in the visited schools.

Overall findings:

- Level of social inclusion was found to be high on parameters like social participation, academic participation and in participation in co-curricular activities.
- There was no barrier free access in majority of the schools.

Discussion on level of social inclusion:

On the grounds of philosophy and pragmatism, inclusive education is primarily about belonging, membership and acceptance (Soodak, 2003). This means that for a school to be inclusive, all learners should have a feeling of belongingness, we-feeling in the school community and acceptance of all members. Looking into the trend of the above analysis, level of social inclusion was found to be high in parameters like social environment, academic environment and in co-curricular activities. The data showed that all the respondents, classmates, teachers and parents of CWSNs reported positively about their social inclusion socially, academically and in co-curricular activities done in the schools. On the contrary, schools were found to be un-equipped to include the CWSNs in terms of physical infrastructure. Barrier free infrastructure which was one the most important criteria for inclusion of CWSNs, was not met in all the schools visited. Thus, it can be concluded from the findings that the level of social inclusion was found to be high and satisfactory in terms of social environment, academic and in co-curricular activities done in the school; but was found to be low and unsatisfactory in terms of physical infrastructure.

F. Findings related to analysis of elementary school curriculum for accommodating CWSNs in Mizoram

Textbook of Class-I:

- The textbook for class-I directed teachers to teach the basics of Mizo language so that students will learn how to read, write and understand.
- There were no images with disability related content found in the textbook.
- Braille textbooks were not available for the visually impaired students. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT specially for students with visual impairment or low vision.
- There were no content relating to CWSNs in the textbook. This indicated the under-representation of CWSNs.
- Regarding objectives cited in the book, teachers were instructed to teach the students as per their abilities to bring out the best in them. This showed the inclusive nature by accepting all kinds of learners as they are and make them learn according to their own capacities.
- There were no disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook analysed. Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to complete the tasks to be performed. In case the CWSNs were not able to perform the activities, teachers should be flexible by giving alternate exercises to be done by the special needs students while keeping their abilities in mind. For example, changing an assignment to accommodate the learning needs of CWSNs, extending time to finish home assignments or classwork, provide alternatives to written assignments to meet the ability of the CWSNs.
- An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content through QR code. This can be made useful for visually impaired students and students having other types of disabilities through various accessible formats and technologies designed to meet their specific needs.

Textbook of Class-IV:

- The textbook for class-IV directed teachers to teach the Mizo language so that students will learn how to read, write, speak, pronounce correctly, increase vocabulary and understand.
- There were no images with disability related content found in the textbook.
- Braille textbooks were not available for the visually impaired students. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT specially for students with visual impairment or low vision.
- There were no content relating to CWSNs in the textbook. This indicated the under-representation of CWSNs.
- The first objective of the textbook acknowledged the teachers to make the students learn even by not looking or seeing them; making them understand what they were teaching through their voice. This promotes auditory learning, and it will be helpful for the students with visual impairment to learn through the voice of the teachers even by not seeing them.
- There were no disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook analysed. Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to complete the tasks to be performed. In case the CWSNs were not able to perform the activities, teachers should be flexible by giving alternate exercises to be done by the special needs students while keeping their abilities in mind. For example, changing an assignment to accommodate the learning needs of CWSNs, extending time to finish home assignments or classwork, provide alternatives to written assignments to meet the ability of the CWSNs, etc.
- An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content through QR code.

Textbook for Class-V:

- The textbook for class-V directed teachers to teach the Mizo language so that they will promote different skills like listening, reading, writing, grammar knowledge, increase vocabulary and understand Mizo cultures through stories and folksongs.
- There were no images related to disability in the textbook.
- Braille textbooks were not available for the visually impaired students. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT specially for students with visual impairment or low vision.
- In chapter 14, Page No. 66, Mizo idioms and phrases were presented. Among them, there was one content, ‘be chhawhchhi’ which means talking to others impolitely or in an absurd manner. There was an exemplary sentence to clarify the words in Mizo ‘Piangsualte be chhawhchhi suh’. This content referred to not showing *dominating, disrespect and scornful* attitude towards the disabled person. The type of disability mentioned in this content was ‘piangsual’ which means a person having physical disability. This content will create awareness to students about the physically disabled person by inculcating positive attitude towards them.
- Regarding evaluation, it was cited that remedial teaching should be given for students who cannot learn at a single lecture. This was to be done by changing the method of teaching. The teachers were expected to coordinate with the parents to make the children learn. With the remedial teaching being taken by the teacher, slow learners will be able to receive tutorials so that they could keep up and understand what they have not attained in a single lecture.
- There were no disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook analysed. Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to complete the tasks to be performed. In case the CWSNs were not able to perform the activities, teachers should be flexible by giving alternate exercises to be done by the special needs students while keeping their abilities in mind.

- An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content. There was a QR code which give easy access for the CWSNs using different software. This will make the CWSNs adapted to learn from textbooks using different method by making use of software made for different learners like screen readers, dictation software, etc.

Textbook for Class – VIII:

- The textbook for class-VIII directed teachers to teach Mizo language to promote skills like listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar knowledge, increasing vocabulary, acknowledging Mizo traditional norms & values and make them understand Mizo cultures through stories and folksongs.
- There were no images relating to disability in the textbook.
- Braille version of the textbook was not available for the visually impaired students. However, there was large print textbook developed by SCERT for students with low vision.
- Chapter 21 contained lists of Mizo proverbs. Among them in serial no. 11, page no. 116 was ‘Piansual leh phar charin tlai luat a neilo’ which meant disability can happen at any time to anyone due to accidents and other unforeseen circumstance. The type of disability referred here is physical disability. The content was to educate the students not to show disrespect or mock disabled person as it can happen to anyone at any time. This will create positive attitude towards the CWSNs to accept their disability and to never look down upon them.
- Regarding evaluation, it was cited that remedial teaching should be given for students who cannot learn at a single lecture. This was to be done by changing method of teaching. The teachers were expected to coordinate with parents to make the children learn. This indicates the inclusive nature in the objective cited in the textbook. With the remedial teaching being taken by the teacher, slow learners will be able to receive tutorials so that they will be able to keep up and understand what they have not attain in a single lecture.
- There were no disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook analysed. Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to

complete the tasks to be performed. In case the CWSNs were not able to perform the activities, teachers should be flexible by giving alternate exercises to be done by the special needs students while keeping their abilities in mind. For example, changing an assignment to accommodate the learning needs of CWSNs, extending time to finish home assignments or classwork, provide alternatives to written assignments to meet the ability of the CWSNs, etc.

- An adaptation was also made in the textbook that provide a digital content. There was a QR code which give easy access for the CWSNs using different software. This will make the CWSNs adapted to learn from textbooks using different method by making use of software made for different learners like screen readers, dictation software, etc.

Discussion on textbook analysis:

Teaching and learning resources played a significant role in educating learners for effective teaching-learning process. Among the different teaching learning resources, textbooks are the most essential tools, providing numerous knowledge that significantly enhance students' learning experiences (Scholarly, 2023). Textbooks thus need to address disabilities, gender bias and discrimination against the socially disadvantage groups of the society. It needs to cater the diverse needs of the children and address the barriers that exist in minds as well. Moreover, textbooks have direct impact on children's attitude, behaviour and academic achievement (Ahuja & Middleton, 2016). Keeping in mind the importance of textbooks, there is a need to analyse the textbook from an inclusive education perspective. Several research done in different country highlighted limited representation of disabled people in the school textbooks (Ahuja & Middleton, 2016).

The textbook analysed were of different edition since the researcher selected textbooks which were used during the academic year 2023-2024. Regarding the physical aspect of the textbooks, MBSE fixed the font size, the topic headings were written in larger fonts, which were easily visible for the readers. There were no images related to disability in all the textbooks. Including disability-related images in textbooks can have several benefits for both students with disabilities and the broader

student population. Benefits can include promotion of inclusion and awareness, enhancing empathy and acceptance, supporting students with disabilities and compliance with educational policies. Overall, the inclusion of disability-related images in textbooks contributes to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment, benefiting both students with disabilities and the broader student body. Although the textbooks were convenient to read for healthy students, children with visual impairments may find it difficult because of their disability. Braille versions of the textbooks were not available for the VI students. Hence, it was suggested to prescribe Braille textbooks for the VI students so that they will be able to read and learn from their own textbooks. However, large print textbooks were also developed by SCERT which were distributed among different schools who needed them. These textbooks will serve useful purpose for the low vision students in different schools.

Regarding the content of the textbooks, it was found out that they provide a limited amount of information about disability. Out of the four textbooks, there were only two (50%) contents about disabled people about having positive attitude towards them. There were no other contents highlighting about their disability, their ability and their capability. It was suggested that the contents of the textbook should provide a more comprehensive portrayal of persons with disabilities, highlighting about their disability as well as their ability and capacities. This will aware students about the CWSNs by learning how to respect and value disability. The world is full of motivating success stories of person with disabilities such as Sudha Chandran, Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller etc. It is required to give place to stories of some famous personalities with disabilities in the textbook of Mizo language which will not only motivate person with disability but also create a positive environment in the school and society for them.

Regarding the objectives cited in the textbook, none of the textbooks clearly cited objectives to be attained for making the CWSNs learn. Some textbook added remedial class for the slow learners, while some mentioned to adapt their teaching methodologies as per the needs of the students. It was suggested that textbooks should have clear goals and objectives for the CWSNs to learn in the mainstream

classroom teaching. The goals and objectives should be well defined and highlighted in the textbooks for the teachers to read and adopt while teaching them.

Regarding the exercises and activities, there were no disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook analysed. Thus, proper guidance and help from the teachers would be needed to complete the tasks to be performed. In case the CWSNs were not able to perform the activities, teachers should be flexible by giving alternate exercises to be done by the special needs students while keeping their abilities in mind. Looking to the variety of the activities it is assumed that some of them can be done by students with disabilities. But there was no clear-cut plan or instruction to the teachers' to address the assessment of the students with disabilities.

The Diksha initiative in India, officially known as the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing, is a national platform aimed at enhancing school education through digital learning. Launched on September 5, 2017, by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) under the Ministry of Education, it serves as a comprehensive resource for teachers and students across the country. Diksha is designed to be inclusive, offering resources in multiple languages and formats to cater to diverse learning needs, including materials for Children with Special Needs (CWSNs). Regarding the digital contents of the textbook, all the textbooks provided QR code which can be scanned and easily accessed using digital systems under the Diksha initiative. These QR codes and digital tech enhance students' engagement and adaptation to modern educational needs. It was found out that QR codes in textbooks enhance student engagement by 40% (Chakrabarty, 2024). Thus, the digital content in the textbooks served a useful purpose for all types of learners catering their individual learning needs.

There have been findings that many textbooks often fail to consider the lived realities of many children and issues such as non-discrimination and stereotyping (Ahuja & Middleton, 2016). Textbooks need to sensitively address and challenge the highlighted concerns and cater to the needs of all the learners. It is also important to consider how well or not the teacher educators and teachers can be flexible in

preparing and adapting to the teaching learning resources for providing equal learning opportunities to all.

G. Findings related to problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSNs) in the elementary schools of Mizoram as perceived by their peers and teachers

- The schools were not properly equipped with special modification regarding physical infrastructure like ramps, special toilets, railings, etc. required for CWSNs.
- Lack of financial assistance to build special infrastructure: Majority (89%) of teachers reported that due to lack of financial assistance, no special infrastructure and modifications can be made as per the needs of the CWSNs.
- Rigid curriculum: Due to rigid curriculum, the teachers cannot modify the curriculum according to the needs of the CWSNs. This problem was reported by majority (67%) of the teachers.
- Fixed assessment system: Absence of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the CWSN and fixed assessment system followed, the capabilities of the CWSNs were not recognized in the formal assessment system. This makes them stay behind the non-disabled students academically.

Discussion on problems faced by CWSNs:

From the findings of the objective, the problems faced by the CWSNs physically and academically were lack of physical infrastructure and modifications to accommodate the CWSNs, lack of financial assistance to build special infrastructure, rigid curriculum and fixed assessment system. If barrier free infrastructure were provided in the schools, the CWSNs will benefit the most and special needs children who were not enrolled in the mainstream school would admit themselves as the schools will be able to accommodate them.

Other physical support like ramps, special toilets, railings were hardly seen, and those were present were also in poor condition. They were temporarily made which did not seem to be made useful by the CWSNs. When the researcher asked the

teachers and Headmasters why they had poor physical infrastructure, they responded by saying that they did not receive regular funds from the Government. Thus, the schools were not properly equipped with physical infrastructure required for the CWSNs.

The teachers sometimes found it hard to teach CWSNs due to rigid curriculum. They cannot modify the curriculum according to the needs of the CWSNs as they must follow the system maintained by Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE). This problem was reported by majority (67%) of the teachers. Besides, they cannot confine the time to CWSNs only as they need to look after the other students as well. A teacher from Aizawl School 2 said, “We need more time and more support to make the CWSNs learn, but we must complete the syllabus within the stipulated time, due to time constraints, we cannot give the required attention to the CWSN. If an IEP can be made for the CWSN, and a flexible curriculum and assessment system for them, it will be very helpful for them”.

Thus, due to fixed curriculum and fixed assessment system, the teachers faced problems in providing effective teaching learning process for the CWSNs in the schools. This make them stay behind the non-disabled students academically as it was difficult to keep track of the formal system due to their different ability and capacities.

It was observed that the teachers were helpful, dedicated and passionate in their teaching. They were understanding and were ready to help the students with special needs to academic problems they faced. They tried their best to help them achieve better position academically. It can be concluded that there was a good academic environment between the teachers and the students, and the teachers tried their best to provide better academic environment to promote inclusive education.

H. Findings related to problems in effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

Problem 1: Attitudinal barrier

The root cause here lies in the lack of awareness about the abilities and capacities of special needs children (reported by 71.43% of respondents). Due to this negative attitude, inclusive education has become ineffective in some schools.

Causes:

- i. Lack of awareness about the ability and capacity of the CWSNs.
- ii. Lack of inclusive mindset.
- iii. Not accepting the CWSNs as they are.
- iv. CWSNs are regarded as not educable and incapable to learn.

Impacts:

- i. Negative attitude towards IE.
- ii. Difficulty in the implementation of IE
- iii. IE becomes ineffective
- iv. Teaching of CWSNs was regarded as a trouble.

Suggestion:

Awareness about the abilities and capabilities of the CWSNs should be given to teachers and parents so that they will have a positive attitude, and IE will be more effective.

Problem 2: Infrastructural barrier

The main reason for this problem was inadequate funds to meet the infrastructural needs. Another reason can be negligence or ignorance about the importance of physical modifications for special needs children. Another reason that was reported by majority (54%) of the schools was that there were no special needs children who needed this special infrastructure, as students who sought admission had a moderate level of disability. In addition, due to the geographical conditions of Mizoram, it was almost impossible for every school to provide physical infrastructure for CWSNs because most schools were in isolated hilly areas where ramps could not be installed or constructed.

Causes:

- i. Inadequate funds for structural building
- ii. Negligence about the need of special infrastructure
- iii. Ignorance about the need of barrier free school building
- iv. In some schools there were no CWSNs who required such infrastructural modifications.

Impacts:

- i. Inclusion of CWSNs becomes a challenge
- ii. Require physical assistance by their care givers which sometimes creates trouble to take them to school.
- iii. Posed safety risks for the CWSNs which can lead to accidents due to infrastructural barriers.

Suggestion:

The concerned authorities from the government should take necessary actions to provide infrastructural modifications in the Elementary schools of Mizoram to accommodate the CWSNs and promote an inclusive environment.

Problem 3: Untrained teacher

Majority (62%) of the teachers have not received any type on inclusive education, thus creating a problem where teachers lacked skills in handling the CWSNs in the classroom. Another problem being reported was that whenever trainings were conducted, the same teacher who had already attended the training was made to attend by the school authorities.

Causes:

- i. No knowledge on the importance of IE trainings
- ii. Negligence of IE training
- iii. Poor attendance on IE trainings
- iv. No strict rules laid by the school authorities to attend the trainings
- v. No credit for promotion in their service

Impacts:

- i. Negatively impacted the teaching-learning process
- ii. Low percentage of teacher training
- iii. Lack of awareness towards IE
- iv. No knowledge of teaching the CWSNs in their class
- v. Hinders the academic performance of the CWSNs

Suggestion:

Strict rules should be laid down by the authorities so that all teachers attend IE trainings and use them practically in the classroom to teach all students effectively.

Problem 4: Impracticability

There were cases when teachers who had attended the training did not disseminate the important information they had learned in the training to their colleagues. And there were also certain cases where the colleagues did not give support to practically impose on the lessons learned while training. They regarded IE as a theoretical basis, while it must be implemented on a practical basis.

Causes:

- i. Failure to disseminate necessary information for educating the CWSNs
- ii. Regarding IE as a theory and failure to implement practically
- iii. Negligence on the needs of CWSNs
- iv. Lack of awareness about the importance of information dissemination.

Impacts:

- i. Hindered progress of CWSNs academically
- ii. Ignorance of other teachers towards IE
- iii. No inclusive practices in the classroom
- iv. Creating barrier between the CWSNs and the non-disabled students.

Suggestion:

Measures should be taken to make teachers put the theories of IE into practice while teaching the CWSNs in the class.

Problem 5: Unacceptance of disability by the parents

Another problem found in this study was that some of the parents found it hard to accept the disability of their child. They were afraid that their child would have no future possibility of progressing academically, which made them unaccepted their disability. Parents unacceptance of disability often creates problems for the special needs child to get appropriate treatment due to delayed identification of their disability.

Causes:

- i. Lack of awareness on IE
- ii. Afraid of their child's future having a thought of no hope of progress academically
- iii. Afraid that their child will be humiliated because of their disability
- iv. Ignorance about their child's different ability
- v. Very less amount of financial assistance or privilege given to the CWSNs.

Impacts:

- i. Cynical attitude towards teachers
- ii. Negligence towards their child's disability
- iii. Delayed identification of disability
- iv. Delayed treatment and care

Suggestion:

Parents should be given awareness to accept the disability that their child has so that they can get proper treatment and support at the earliest and that their child will enjoy the rights and benefits that are rightfully theirs. Parents should try to find their child's capabilities and encourage them to do activities of their interest.

Discussion on problems in effective implementation of IE:

The findings of the study revealed that there were different problems in the implementation process of inclusive education in Mizoram. Problems such as inadequately trained teachers (Bhat & Geelani, 2017), negative attitudes of parents and teachers (Hoque, 2022), inadequate infrastructure (Sarao, 2016), and lack of

awareness about inclusive education (Singh & Aggarwal, 2015) were also found in other studies conducted in India.

As common problems arise from different findings, which can be seen from a review of related literature as well as from the findings of this study, nationwide changes would be helpful to tackle the problems therein. Regarding the inadequacy of trained teachers, the concerned authorities for taking up IE trainings should be stricter than before, making sure all permanent teachers working in elementary schools in Mizoram should attend. Besides, IE trainings should be made mandatory to be attended by all teachers, as IE is the newest approach to educating all learners, which has been implemented in all government schools in the country (Govt. of Mizoram, 2020). As untrained teachers negatively impacted the academic performance of the CWSNs, which was found out from this research, this matter is to be taken seriously. Thus, effort should be made for all teachers to attend the required training in inclusive education for educating all learners.

The attitudinal barrier found among teachers and parents should also be taken care of by the provision of community-based awareness towards inclusive education. This will be helpful to all parents to have knowledge of IE and will be able to give moral support to the parents of the disabled, which will foster cooperation to work together to have an inclusive environment. With the knowledge of the abilities and capabilities of the CWSNs, parents and teachers can also collaborate and work together to bring about progress and development. Teachers played a pivotal role in creating an inclusive classroom environment where every student felt welcomed, respected, and valued. The role of teachers in inclusive education is very important, as they are the ones who can control the whole classroom environment directly. Thus, it is a necessity to have a positive attitude towards IE to make all children learn. But this is possible only when teachers realize the importance of IE. Therefore, it can be suggested that teachers have awareness about the needs and importance of promoting inclusive classrooms and attend trainings on IE to acquire knowledge on how to deal with all kinds of children admitted to the school.

Regarding the inadequacy of physical infrastructure, it is imperative for school headmasters and other higher authorities to have knowledge about the needs and importance of structural modifications for the CWSNs in the school. Given that inclusive schools and classrooms must cater to a diverse range of learners, it is essential to implement structural modifications or changes to accommodate those with special needs. It was discovered that many schools did not have functional materials for the CWSNs because they did not receive financial assistance from the government. It is imperative to have an assessment from the government by personally visiting each school to find out the needs therein. Since infrastructural changes require a lot of financial assistance, the concerned authorities from the government therefore must inquire about them and take the necessary actions so that all schools are equipped with the necessary infrastructure to accommodate learners with special needs.

Impracticability and unacceptance of disability by the parents were the two findings that were not common with other findings as far as the related literature reviewed by the researchers is concerned. IE has been regarded as only a theoretical aspect that does not need practical implementation. There were diverse learners in the school/classroom, but some teachers did not try to adapt to all the needs of the learners. Teachers need to have flexibility in their teaching methods and approaches to accommodate all learners in their class. Besides, IE is not only a theoretical concept but a practical aspect to be utilized in every class, including all learners, adapting to the needs of all learners. Thus, inclusion should function under the principle of 'equity' and must be implemented practically in the classroom.

As it was reported earlier, 24.32% of the parents did not accept the disability of their children. The reason found out from this study was that parents were afraid of their child's future, thinking negative thoughts like they would not receive the same education or treatment as the other children. Another reason was that they were afraid that their child would be disrespected and treated differently by others because of their disability. The main problem was ignorance about the abilities of their children. This hindered early identification and late treatment of disabilities, which led to delayed treatment. Parents also developed a cynical attitude towards the

teachers, which disrupted the relationship between teachers and parents. Thus, proper awareness should be given to the parents of the CWSNs, teaching them about the abilities of their children despite their disabilities, the possibilities they have in the future, their value, and that they can learn best in an inclusive classroom with their classmates.

I. Findings related to prospects of Inclusive education in Mizoram

Looking into the ground reality of IE in Mizoram, there has been many barriers to implement it effectively. Different problems which this study found out were attitudinal barrier of parents and teachers, inadequate trained teachers, impracticability, infrastructural barrier and unacceptance of disability by the parents. These problems need to be tackled so that inclusive education will become effective and that all the students will benefit from the inclusive education system.

As per the findings on the objective no. 7 and 8 and triangulating the information with experts interviewed, it can be concluded that the inclusive education in Mizoram is having several challenges in its implementation. As such it cannot be visualized as having bright prospects. If inclusion is to be successful in Mizoram, the following matters need to be taken care of:

- i. Training conducted under inclusive education needs to be attended by all the teachers at Elementary schools of Mizoram.
- ii. The ideology of IE to be used practically to educate the CWSNs.
- iii. The schools and the office authorities (Eg. BRCs and Samagra Shiksha) should coordinate more and move onto a more co-operative approach towards a better provision of IE in practice.
- iv. The government to look more into matters concerning IE, act more towards making the schools equipped to provide IE.
- v. The attitudinal barriers of the teachers and the parents to be shifted towards positive attitude regarding the ability and capabilities of the CWSNs and give

more priorities to their education. To think more of their ability rather than their disability.

Discussion on Prospects of IE in Mizoram:

In view of the status of IE in Mizoram from the findings of the study, it is important to stress on the above matters or concern so that the CWSNs will have a bright future ahead and reach their full potential. The students themselves as well as their parents and teachers should develop more positive outlook towards the ability of the CWSNs and find ways to uplift and develop their ability to achieve more and have a better prospect. This holistic approach will ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in an inclusive educational environment. The problems therein should be tackled by the concerned authorities for IE to have a bright prospect in Mizoram.

J. Findings related to formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

The suggestions of fifty experts in the field of inclusive education in Mizoram were as follows.

- **Identification and assessment:** For easy and early identification of any type of disability, medical assessment camp should be organized twice every year. The assessment must be done in collaboration with health care professionals from Health Department at each Block level. From the results of the medical assessment, disability certificate must be issued at the earliest accordingly to the identified CWSN.
- **Provision of special educator:** It was recommended to have one special educator or trained special teacher for each school. This will be helpful in attending the problems of CWSNs in the school and promote inclusive education more effectively.
- **Peer-tutoring:** Since there were problems of inadequacy of teachers, 'peer-tutoring' should be promoted. It was reported by the experts that students benefitted from their peers thus recommended teachers to promote peer tutoring.

- **Teacher training:** It was also recommended that whenever trainings were conducted, it should be attended by all teachers in alternation. Attendance should be strictly maintained by each school headmaster.
- **Opening of a new course of Special B.Ed. in ID:** From the research findings, majority of the disability in the elementary schools of Mizoram were Intellectual Disability (ID). Therefore, it was suggested to open a new course of Special B.Ed. in ID. Since B.Ed. Spl. Ed. V.I. has been discontinued at SCERT, Mizoram in 2024, the government should restart the programme either at SCERT or the other institution under the state government; or may write to Mizoram University to start such programmes.
- **Vocational education:** Vocational education should be introduced right before they finish elementary schooling. Many of the CWSNs cannot attend school after elementary stage because of their disability. Therefore, certain kind of vocational and skill development programs should be enhanced during this stage so that they will be able to earn a living and not be dependent solely on others during their lifetime.
- **Resource rooms:** Resource rooms should be established in schools where CWSNs were admitted promoting vocational/skill enhancement courses.

Discussion on suggestions made by experts:

The above suggestions were made by experts in the field of inclusive education. They have great experiences regarding inclusive education in practical field. They wanted to improve the situation of IE in Mizoram to have a brighter prospect so that the CWSNs will have a better-quality education as per their rights. They have suggested that frequent and more systematic identification and assessment for different types of disabilities as early identification was so important as it can, to a certain extent minimise the impact of disability. They also suggested to provide resource teacher in each school and resource rooms in schools where CWSNs are admitted. This will also help to cater the specific needs of the CWSNs and meet their needs academically. It was also suggested to practice peer-tutoring in the class as it has a positive impact in their learning. Knowing the importance of teacher training and the lack of teacher training

received in the elementary schools of Mizoram, they also suggested all teachers to attend training on IE so that they will be able to address the immediate needs of the CWSNs. Vocational education was also suggested to be imparted in schools as they understand the abilities of the CWSNs, this was suggested with an intention to promote independence. Lastly, it was felt the need to open a teacher training course on Special B.Ed. in Intellectual disability. As per the findings, majority of the disability types found in the visited schools were having Intellectual disability. It was also recommended by the experts to start up this course so that students having ID will benefit from the trained teachers and will receive the right type of education. Thus, these suggestions were made by experts with strong determination and if these suggestions are fulfilled, IE will be implemented effectively in Mizoram.

5.2. Recommendations:

- i. Policymakers should prioritize funding for conducting training programs and provision of barrier free infrastructure in schools to support CWSNs.
- ii. There was no program offered for B. Ed. Special education (I.D.) in Mizoram, rather it was the most needed program looking into the types of disabilities found in the elementary schools. Thus, it was highly recommended to open and offer programs for B. Ed. Special education (ID) so that students having intellectual disability will benefit as they occupy the largest number of disability types in the Elementary schools.
- iii. There is only one institution offering B.Ed. Special Education in Mizoram, i.e. SCERT. Thus, more institutions should be opened offering more programs for special teacher training in Visual Impairment, learning disabilities, etc. to meet the needs and demands of various disability exist in Mizoram.
- iv. All Elementary Schools of Mizoram must be ensured to be physically accessible with functional ramps, specialized toilets and barrier free environment.

- v. School-wise Inclusive Awareness Programs should be conducted to promote positive attitudes and support from the non-disabled students towards CWSNs.
- vi. Assistive technologies: Provide necessary tools like screen readers, hearing aids and customised learning aids for CWSNs.
- vii. Curriculum should be adapted to allow differentiated instruction based on the abilities and learning pace of the CWSNs. Curricular adaptations should also be made in the textbooks of Elementary schools of Mizoram, providing a more flexible curriculum.
- viii. It was suggested to prescribe Braille textbooks for the VI students so that they will be able to read and learn from their own textbooks.
- ix. Disability related images should be included in the textbooks as inclusion of disability-related images in textbooks contributes to a more inclusive and supportive educational environment, benefiting both students with and without disabilities.
- x. The contents of the textbook should provide a more comprehensive portrayal of persons with disabilities, highlighting about their disability as well as their ability and capacities. It is required to give place to stories of some famous personalities with disabilities in the textbook of Mizo language which will not only motivate person with disability but also create a positive environment in the school and society for them.
- xi. Textbooks should clearly have goals and objectives for the CWSNs to learn in the mainstream classroom teaching. The goals and objectives should be well defined and highlighted in the textbooks for the teachers to read and adopt while teaching them.
- xii. Teachers should adapt and modify their ways of teaching to meet the needs and abilities of the CWSNs in their classroom teachings.
- xiii. Teachers in schools along with parents at home should together try to identify and understand the limitations of the learner and help them to overcome the difficulties.

- xiv. Teachers should foster cooperative learning by encouraging peer tutoring so that the CWSNs benefit the classroom teaching and learn from their peers.
- xv. It is necessary to ensure the presence of resource teachers and special need students' friendly classrooms for the promotion of collaborative teaching and learning. Thus, appointment of a special teacher in each school is recommended.
- xvi. CWSN may be given opportunities to participate in all the classroom activities along with normal children.
- xvii. Regular counselling programs for parents of CWSNs should be conducted to help them understand and support their child's abilities which is crucial for successful inclusion.
- xviii. Community participation: The Mizo society is characterized by its close-knit structure, communal living, and strong kinship ties. To get the advantage of this social organization, community participation and collaboration should be advocated to promote inclusive nature in the community.

5.3. Suggestion for Further Studies:

In the light of the present study, the researcher come up with the following suggestions for further studies.

- i. Further research is needed to explore innovative practices in inclusive education that can be scaled nationally.
- ii. The status and problems of inclusive education in private institutions in Mizoram may be studied.
- iii. The inclusionary practices in other state may be compared to Mizoram to highlight their strengths and weaknesses.
- iv. A Longitudinal study may be conducted to find out the impact of providing vocational education to CWSNs.
- v. A study on how inclusive education affects non-disabled students' attitudes towards diversity and their social skills development may be studied.

- vi. Evaluate different models of inclusive education like cooperative teaching, peer-tutoring, etc. to determine their effectiveness in promoting an inclusive environment for all students.

5.4.Limitations of the study:

The present study has the following limitations.

- i. The researcher had intended to conduct the pilot testing of the questionnaires to the teachers by personally visiting the schools. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the test was administered online using Google Forms.
- ii. The researcher could not get the exact required data on district wise analysis of disability and their types from the office records.
- iii. Face-to-face interview of the parents of CWSNs was not feasible, thus data were collected through telephonic interview.

5.5. Educational Implications of the Study:

- i. The present study will have implications for Government authorities. It will provide insights to take necessary measures to improve the inclusive education of CWSN by providing the schools physically accessible with functional ramps, specialized toilets, barrier free environment, assistive technologies like screen readers, hearing aids and customised learning aids and appointments of resource teachers in schools where CWSNs are admitted.
- ii. This present study will have implications for textbook developers and curriculum planners to include contents to provide a more comprehensive portrayal of persons with disabilities in the textbooks.
- iii. The present study will give awareness to the teachers at government elementary schools in Mizoram that they play crucial roles in nurturing the CWSNs. It will also enlighten them that their trainings are vital to accommodate the CWSNs in the classroom for effective teaching and learning.

- iv. This study will be helpful in providing knowledge to teachers and parents in identifying and understanding the strengths and limitations of the CWSNs and help them to overcome the difficulties in the school and at home.
- v. The present study will be helpful for the parents of CWSNs to realize their strengths despite their disability. By fostering a positive attitude, collaborating with schools, providing emotional support, and advocating for their rights, parents can significantly enhance their children's educational experiences and outcomes.

5.6. Conclusion:

“If a child can’t learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way that they learn.” - Ignacio Estrada

This quote denotes the inclusive nature of educating different types of learners by teaching them the way they learn best. As it is the right of every child to learn, there must be a system wherein it includes all learners to receive education the way they benefit the most. From the findings of this research study, there have been many grounds where improvements need to be made. The infrastructure of the school were not feasible for accommodating the special needs children, teachers training were not adequate to cater the needs of the CWSNs, due to lack of awareness there have been attitudinal barrier among the parents and teachers to include the CWSNs in the mainstream schools, our textbooks also have to include different kinds of disability in the contents so as to aware the children of the types, their abilities and capacities to reduce the social stigma one can have. All these problems need to be tackled by the concerned authorities to provide the type of education everyone is expected to receive.

However, with regard to social inclusion, the teachings of Christianity have shaped the minds of the Mizo locals where there were teachings that no type of disability should not be taunted or belittled. These teachings and practices were also evident in the contents of the Mizo textbooks which were

analyzed in this study. Moreover, CWSNs were also found to be socially included in the Mizo community, which were depicted in and around the campus by the non-disabled students as well as the teachers. Teachers were also found to be academically supportive of the CWSNs. They support the rights of the special needs children to learn in the mainstream school and always lend a helping hand in times of need.

Thus, this study highlighted the positive and negative aspects of the status of inclusive education in the elementary schools in Mizoram.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICES

Appendix-I: Questionnaire

Teacher's Questionnaire (100 teachers)

Dear Respondent:

This Questionnaire is prepared to gather information on the Research Title, "Inclusive Education in Mizoram with Special Reference to Children with Special Needs: Status, Problems and Prospects". It will mainly concern to find out the schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram. The information you provide will be used only for research purpose and will remain highly confidential. Your genuine responses to all items of the questionnaire will contribute a lot to the successful completion of this study. You are therefore kindly requested to provide genuine information.

Thanking you for your cooperation.

Part-A: Information of the respondent

Please show your response(s) by putting a tick mark in the appropriate box.

1. Name (Optional):
2. Mobile No:
3. Name of the School:
4. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
5. Educational qualification:
6. Teaching Experience (in years):
7. Have you received any training for teaching Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) in:
 - i. Inclusive education? Yes ☐ No ☐
 - ii. Special Education? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please Specify the name of the Program and duration:

Program: _____

Duration: _____

8. Number of CWSN in your class _____
9. Type (s) of disability of CWSN in your class _____
10. For how many years have you been teaching to CWSNs? _____

Part-B: Information regarding Physical Support

1. **Physical Supports** are available for the CWSNs in our school.

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please mention them

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

If no, please write the reasons behind it

Part-C: Academic support

For each of the statement, please indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement by putting a tick mark in the most appropriate box. Your choice should be based on the teaching-learning process held in your class. The scale indicates the following:

5=Always, 4=usually, 3=sometimes, 2=seldom, 1=never

Sl. No	Statements (Practices)	Scale				
		A	U	ST	SD	N
1	Every Child with Special Need (CWSN) who seeks admission in my school is admitted					
2	When I prepare my lesson plans, I consider the needs of CWSNs					

3	I always try to create opportunities for the CWSNs to make them learn with the other students in my class					
4	I provide help/materials to the CWSNs who need support					
5	I devoted more time in tutorials for CWSNs					
6	I try to adapt the content of teaching to accommodate the CWSNs for easy understanding					
7	I encourage cooperative learning to make all students support each other in their learning					
8	I use audio-visual aids in the class to foster learning					
9	I receive adequate support from the school administrators to deal with/ teach CWSN					
10	In my class, CWSNs are supported by their peers in their learning and activities					
11	I give differentiated assignments in my class according to the ability of my students					
12	I support the rights of the special needs children to learn in the regular classes with other students					

Appendix-II: Interview Schedule

Department of Education, Mizoram University

Interview Schedule for Parents of CWSNs to find out the Level of Social Inclusion

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Name of the School the child is admitted to : _____

Mobile Number : _____

Physical environment:

1. Does your child feel excited to go to school?
Rate the level of his/her excitement from 1 to 10 _____
2. Does your child feel comfortable in his/her school campus?
If No, what are the reasons that made him/her feel uncomfortable?
3. Are the designs of your child's school building barrier-free?

Social Environment:

A. Peers:

1. Does your child often get along with his/her classmates in their free/break periods?
2. Does your child feel comfortable to get along with his/her other friends in their school?
If no, what are the reasons behind it?
3. Does your child ever experience any type of refusal from his/her peers?
If yes, what do you think the reason of their refusal?
4. Does your child's peers help in and out of the class when he/she ask them questions/needed help from them?
5. What kind of help/assistance does your child get from his/her class mates?

B. Teachers/Academic:

1. What kind of help does your child get from their teachers?

2. What kind of extra support does their teacher give your child considering his/her special needs?
3. Do you think your child is encouraged by their teachers to raise and answer questions in the class?
4. Does your child's teacher(s) help him/her within and out of their school whenever he/she approaches them?

C. Co-curricular activities:

1. What kind of activities (Sports, competitions, festivals, etc) does your child used to have in their school?
2. Does your child's teacher allow him/her to participate in such activities?
If Yes, how does he/she feel to participate in such activities?
If No, can you tell me what the reasons are?
3. Are your child's peers/teammates willingly participating with him/her in those activities?
If Yes, how does your child feel to participate in such activities?
If No, can you tell me what the reasons are?

Interview Schedule for Peers to find out the Level of Social Inclusion

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Name of the School : _____

Class/Standard : _____

Parent's Contact No. & Address: _____

Physical environment:

1. Do you feel exited to go to school with the CWSNs in your class?
2. Do you feel comfortable to be along with the CWSNs in your school campus?
If No, what are the reasons that made you feel uncomfortable?
3. Are the designs of your school building barrier-free?
- 4.

Social Environment:

A. Peers:

1. Do you often get along with your CWSN classmates in your free/break periods?
2. Do you ever experience any type of refusal of your CWSN classmates from your other classmates?
If yes, what do you think the reason of their refusal?
3. Do you help your CWSN classmates in and out of the class when they ask you questions/needed help from you?
4. What kind of help/assistance do you give for your CWSN classmates when they need?

B. Teachers/Academic:

1. What kind of extra support (apart from classroom teaching) does your teacher give your CWSN classmate?
2. Do you think you your CWSN classmates are encouraged by your teachers to raise and answer questions in the class?
3. Does your teacher(s) help your CWSN classmate within and out of your school whenever they approach them?
4. Is your school administration (Headmaster/Headmistress) cooperative to solve any kind of your CWSN classmate's problems?

C. Co-curricular activities:

1. What kind of activities (Sports, competitions, festivals, etc) do you used to have in your school?
2. Does your teacher allow your CWSN classmates to participate in such activities?
If yes, how do they feel to participate in such activities?
If No, can you tell me what the reasons are?
3. Are your classmates/teammates willingly participating with them (CWSNs) in those activities?
If yes, how do they feel to participate in such activities?
If No, can you tell me what the reasons are?

Appendix-III: Interview schedule for Peers to find out the problems faced by CWSNs in the school

Name of the student: _____

Name of the school: _____

Problems related to physical access of the school:

1. Does your CWSN classmate faced problems with regard to infrastructure of your school? Yes/No

If yes, what are the problems?

2. Does your CWSN classmate faced difficulty to reach your School? Yes/No

If yes, what type of difficulty does your CWSN classmates face in reaching your school?

—

3. What are the special modifications available to solve problems for the CWSNs with regard to physical infrastructure?

Problems related to academic:

1. What are the problems that your CWSNs peers faced academically in the classroom teaching?
2. What are the problems that your CWSNs peers faced academically in class assignment?
3. What are the problems that your CWSNs peers faced academically regarding activities and exercises done in the classroom?
4. What are the problems that your CWSNs peers faced academically in the home assignment?
5. Are your teachers helpful in solving the problems of the CWSNs?

**Semi-structured interview schedule for teachers to find out problems
faced by CWSNs**

Problems related to infrastructure of school:

1. Does the CWSN faced problems with regard to infrastructure of your school?

Yes/No

If yes, what are the problems?

2. Does the CWSN faced difficulty to reach your School? Yes/No

If yes, what are the difficulties faced by them in reaching the school?

—

3. Are there any special modifications to create barrier free access in the school?

Problems related to academic:

1. What are the academic problems that the CWSNs faced in your class?
2. Is there any difficulty in following the syllabus to make CWSNs learn?
3. Any other type of academic difficulty faced in the teaching- learning process with respect to CWSN _____

Appendix-IV:Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers and Administrative Officers to find out the Problems and Prospects of Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools of Mizoram

1. Are you satisfied with the existing system of inclusive education in Mizoram?
If no, please elaborate the reasons why you are not satisfied with it
2. Do you think the CWSNs in your Schools are given the right education and facilities which they must receive?
If no, please elaborate your answer
3. What are the problems that the Inclusive education system is facing in the Elementary Schools of Mizoram?
4. Do you think the type of services given to the CWSNs provide more opportunities for their future?
If no, please elaborate your answer
5. What do you think of the future of the CWSNs with respect to their career in education with what they are being offered in your school?
6. Do you think there are scopes for improvement in the inclusive education system in Mizoram?
If yes, please mention/specify

Appendix-V: Semi-structured interview schedule for experts to formulate suggestions for effective implementation of IE in Mizoram

1. Suggestions for effective implementation of IE in Mizoram as per your experience in the field.

Appendix-VI: Observation schedule to find out the level of social inclusion of CWSN in elementary schools of Mizoram

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Aspects of observation	Criteria	Observation
Physical access	Availability of barrier free environment	
	Other physical modifications	
Social participation	Classroom observation	
	Interaction of children during free period	
Academic environment	Classroom observation	
Co-curricular activities	Observation during CCA periods	
	Observation during sports periods	

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National Education Policy 2020 and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

Vanlallawmkimi*
Dr. Krishna Kant Tripathi**

Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India represents a significant shift towards inclusive education, particularly for children with special needs (CWSN). This policy aims to create an educational framework that ensures equitable access and quality education for all children, including those with disabilities. This study is secondary based research which uses existing data to analyze or describe prior research. The main aim of the study is to highlight the provisions of NEP 2020 towards the inclusion of CWSNs. The key provisions are integration into regular schools, teacher training and resources, flexible curriculum, home based education, assessment and monitoring, resource centers and support mechanisms. The study also highlighted the challenges and recommendations in providing a more inclusive approach towards education in India.

Key words: National Education Policy, Inclusion, Children with Special Needs.

Introduction:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India represents a significant shift towards inclusive education, particularly for children with special needs (CWSN). This policy aims to create an educational framework that ensures equitable access and quality education for all children, including those with disabilities. One of the key characteristics of NEP 2020 was the emphasis on creating a Gender Inclusion Fund and providing Special Education Zones for underserved areas and populations. The fundamental principles of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability form the basis of this new policy. This policy also seeks to make school and higher education more comprehensive, adaptable, and multidisciplinary to turn India into a thriving education society and a global knowledge superpower.

Concept of Inclusive Education:

Inclusive education is a philosophy and practice that aims to provide quality education to all students, including those with disabilities or special needs, in mainstream educational settings. This approach emphasizes the importance of creating an educational environment where all students can learn together, regardless of their individual differences.

Inclusive education can be defined as a process that seeks to address the diverse needs of all students by ensuring they participate in a common learning environment. According to Michael F. Giangreco, it encompasses values, principles, and practices aimed at delivering effective and meaningful education for every student, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities (Deswal, n.d.). The Salamanca Statement from UNESCO (1994) further reinforces this by asserting that inclusive education is about adapting schools to meet the needs of all children, promoting a zero-rejection policy (Madhesh, 2023).

Inclusive education is essential for promoting equality and diversity in educational settings. It not only enhances academic outcomes but also plays a significant role in improving self-esteem, social status, and confidence among individuals who may otherwise be marginalized. As we strive for a more equitable society, embracing inclusive education is crucial for fostering understanding, acceptance, and progress for all members of our communities.

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Inclusion of Children with Special Needs:

The inclusion of Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) in mainstream education is a fundamental aspect of inclusive education, aimed at ensuring that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have access to quality education. This approach is guided by various educational policies and frameworks that promote equal opportunities for CWSNs.

Article 21(A) of the Indian Constitution is a pivotal provision that guarantees the right to education as a fundamental right for children. Introduced by the 86th Constitutional Amendment in 2002, it mandates that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine". This article represents a significant step towards achieving universal education and aligns with India's commitment to ensuring that every child has access to quality education.

The inclusion of Children with Special Needs in mainstream education is essential for promoting equality and diversity within educational settings. By addressing individual needs through tailored support and fostering an inclusive environment, we can ensure that all children can learn together, thereby enriching the educational experience for everyone involved. This approach not only benefits CWSNs but also contributes to building a more inclusive society that values diversity.

Methodology:

This paper is *secondary based research* which uses existing data to analyze or describe prior research. The provisions and challenges of NEP 2020 were the main aim to be highlighted in this paper which were based on secondary data such from research articles, notifications made by Ministry of Education and Samagra Shiksha under the Government of Education and blogs.

Provisions of NEP 2020 towards the inclusion of CWSNs:

The key provisions of NEP 2020 towards inclusion of CWSNs are discussed as follows:

i. Integration into Regular Schools:

NEP 2020 emphasizes that children with disabilities should fully participate in the regular schooling process from pre-primary to higher education (Sarkar, 2020). This aligns with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, which defines inclusive education as a system where students with and without disabilities learn together, adapting teaching methods to meet diverse needs (Kishore, 2020).

ii. Teacher Training and Resources:

The policy mandates the inclusion of training on teaching students with disabilities in all teacher education programs. This includes short-term specialization courses aimed at equipping teachers with the skills necessary to support CWSN effectively (Kapur et al., n.d.). Additionally, the recruitment of special educators trained in cross-disability techniques is prioritized to address the shortage of qualified personnel (Government of India, 2020).

iii. Flexible Curriculum:

NEP 2020 proposes a flexible curriculum that can be adapted based on individual learning needs. This is crucial for accommodating various disabilities and ensuring that all students can progress at their own pace (Kishore, 2020).

iv. Home-Based Education:

For children who cannot attend school due to severe disabilities, home-based education is recognized as a viable option. The quality of this education will be monitored according to standards set by the RPWD Act (Kapur et al., n.d.).

v. Resource Centers and Support Mechanisms:

The establishment of resource centers is planned to support both educators and CWSN. These centers will provide necessary aids, appliances, and assistive devices to facilitate learning (Government of India, 2020). Furthermore, schools are expected to create barrier-free environments, ensuring accessibility for all students (Ministry of Education, 2024).

vi. Assessment and Monitoring:

The NEP introduces the National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, which aims to develop accessible assessment guidelines specifically for children with learning disabilities. This initiative is intended to ensure that assessments are fair and tailored to the needs of all learners (Kapur et al., n.d.).

Challenges and Considerations:

Despite these progressive measures, challenges remain in effectively implementing NEP 2020's inclusive education provisions:

i. Infrastructure Gaps:

Many schools still lack basic infrastructure such as ramps and accessible toilets, which are essential for accommodating students with physical disabilities (Sarkar, 2020).

ii. Quality of Home-Based Education:

There are concerns regarding the quality and consistency of home-based education, particularly how children are selected for this option and the resources available to them (Sarkar, 2020).

iii. Cultural Attitudes:

Negative societal attitudes towards disability can hinder the effective inclusion of CWSN in mainstream education settings (Kishore, 2020).

iv. Funding constraints:

According to NEP 2020, all mainstream schools are to be equipped with barrier free access and accommodate all kinds of learners. This can be a challenge due to lack of funding constraints (Suja and Elamaram, 2024) because for providing an inclusive classroom, the existing infrastructure must be changed to accommodate all types of learners, especially the CWSNs.

NEP 2020 also aims to provide quality education to all learners through provision of assistive devices, technology- based tools, appropriate teaching – learning materials. This can also turn into a quite challenging aspect due to lack of financial assistance, especially in the north-east region where development does not grow in a rapid rate with compared to other parts of the country. In Mizoram, there is lack of infrastructure and technical support services given to CWSNs in Special Schools (Vanlallawmkimi, 2017). This is the reason that the schools were not receiving proper financial aid and grants. As infrastructure and technical services require more financial assistance, it is difficult to provide these services to the CWSNs in the mainstream schools. This can become a serious challenge for effective implementation of the Inclusive education system.

v. Rigid Curriculum:

Provide an inclusive curriculum that is value oriented and responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity. As the concept of our educational system is based on a rigid and traditional concept, provision of flexible curriculum might become an excellent theory but hard to practice. Schools often find it difficult to change the existing curriculum as they are executed according to formal and planned routines. Therefore, it leads to a fixed and rigid curriculum where children with diverse needs must follow the same curriculum and compete with others under the same platform (Kumari, 2024).

vi. Lack of trained teachers:

Regarding special trained teachers, especially in the northeast, there lies a problem where there are inadequate numbers of special teachers to teach the CWSNs in schools (Lakshmi, 2018). For instance, in a small state like Mizoram, the first Institution for training of Special Teachers has been established only in 2019. This clearly shows that there are less trained teachers to teach the Special children. Thus, to benefit from what the NEP 2020 aimed to provide, it will take more time to be practiced and function as it is proposed.

Recommendations:

The NEP 2020 represents a comprehensive approach towards fostering an inclusive educational environment for children with special needs in India. By aligning its provisions with existing laws like the RPWD Act, it aims to create a more equitable educational landscape. However, the following recommendations were made for successful implementation:

- i. Addressing infrastructural challenges
- ii. Ensuring quality in home-based education
- iii. Changing societal perceptions about disability
- iv. Provision of more funds to provide barrier free access in mainstream schools
- v. Provide more scope for teacher training on inclusive education practices
- vi. Alternate to provide flexible curriculum like Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to the CWSNs.

Conclusion:

Generally looking into the new National Education Policy 2020, it provides a clear picture that it aimed for a more inclusive, innovative and comprehensive outlook towards all aspects of education. To provide a more inclusive educational set up, all the stakeholders of education should work together without anyone leaving behind or far more ahead. Cooperative learning should be promoted to provide inclusive education so that all children can benefit and further leads to a good quality education system.

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Inclusive Teacher Education: A Pre-requisite to Inclusive School Education

Vanlallawmkimi*
Dr. Krishna Kant Tripathi**

Abstract

Inclusion is a human right as indicated in the Universal declaration of human rights. Inclusion simply means that no child is left alone to study in a school irrespective of caste, class, disability, ability, sex, socio-economic background, etc. As inclusion calls for an education for all, it includes different types of school-going students in an educational setting. Thus, to bring about inclusion into the classrooms, teachers are the first most important person that can bring about it. Almost two decades have been passed from acceptance of policy of inclusive education in India; but gaps are still found at the ground level. Real and purposive change will come from the action of the ground level functionaries. It can be assumed that if significant input is provided through education of the teachers, the scenario will positively change. For that reason, it means that the inclusion of teacher education will be the first condition to bring the change of inclusion of Children with Special Needs (CWSNs). This paper describes the initiatives of the Government of India towards inclusion of CWSNs into the mainstream education, assess the courses offered in teacher education programs for CWSNs; highlight the major problems for inclusion and make suggestions to bring about inclusiveness and equality in education that should be cultivated and nurtured in teacher education programs.

Key Words: Inclusion, Teacher education, Children with Special Needs (CWSNs), Inclusive education, Persons with Disabilities (PwD)

Introduction

The school education system of every country tries to achieve an inclusive and/or equitable education. 'Inclusion' simply means that no child is left alone to study in a school irrespective of their caste, class, disability, ability, sex, socio-economic background, color, race, etc. to whatever he/she belongs. It is a human right that every child can attain education in every possible way.

To make education purely inclusive, all learners must be included in the learning environment or the institution and accept them as a valued member of that community within all the educational settings. They must be accepted and integrated into an inclusive educational setting in such a way that their voices are heard and are taken care of. Whatever problems they have should be dealt with and find a way to overcome them. They are the future of their family, society or a country at large. Therefore, their needs must be met, and they should be educated and mould to a finer person having a great potential for their future.

As inclusion demands education for all, it includes different types of school-going students in an educational setting viz. the high/low IQs, gifted, creative, normal children who can easily adapt to the system and the CWSNs. Inclusive education means that all students attend the school and are welcomed by the school or institution in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life in the School/ Institution.

To bring about inclusion and equality among the students, it requires a positive educational set up. Thus, in the classrooms, teachers are the first most important person that can bring about positiveness. They are the ones who directly interact with the students. They knew the environment of the learning situation and they could change and modify it too. Therefore, the training of teachers plays a very important role in bringing about an inclusive environment in the School/Institution.

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Different research studies emphasize that to promote inclusive education, regular schoolteachers should be empowered to accommodate the CWSNs. However, the question remains, '*How should the teaching training program be organized?*' and '*What will be its critical components?*' This paper highlights some information about the type of teacher training programs offered in India; the different initiatives of the Government and the problems of providing inclusive education in India and also make suggestions for teachers of Inclusive Schools to provide more effective ways of learning.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the Teacher Education for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in India. To obtain results for this main objective, the following subsidiary objectives were formed.

- i. To highlight the initiatives of Government of India for the inclusion of CWSNs.
- ii. To assess the courses offered in teacher education programs for CWSNs in India.
- iii. To highlight the major problems for inclusion of CWSNs in the Schools of India.
- iv. To make suggestions for teachers in an Inclusive School to provide an effective learning environment.

Research Method

The present study is a *narrative review* (Baumeister & Leary, 1997) of different research studies conducted to study various teacher education programs for inclusion of the CWSNs in India.

The researcher used secondary sources of data for collecting the required data to obtain the different objectives of the study. Secondary data includes policy documents of Government of India, research articles of various authors, published articles and research journals. This secondary data serves a useful purpose for conducting reviews of related literature for this present study and obtain results from it.

Results and Discussions

Government of India's Initiative for inclusive education:

The Government of India (GOI) is constitutionally dedicated to ensuring the right of every child to provide basic education. It has formed several policies to ensure quality education for the CWSNs so that they can develop and be educated as par the other children.

After independence, one of the earliest formal initiatives undertaken by the GOI was the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme in 1974 (NCERT, 2011). The Kothari Commission (1964-66) has highlighted the importance of educating children with disabilities. In the 1980's the then Ministry of Welfare, GOI realized the critical need of an institution to monitor and regulate the programs in the field of disability rehabilitation. Till the 1990's, 90% of India's estimated 40 million children in the age group of 4-16 years having physical and mental disabilities were being excluded from mainstream education.

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and the Programme of Action (PoA) 1992 stressed the need for integrating children with special needs with other groups of children. Thus, the GOI implemented the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) in 1994-95. *In the year 1997, the philosophy of inclusive education is added in DPEP.* This programme laid special emphasis on integrating the child with mild to moderate level of disability, in line with the world trend. This became one of the GOI's largest flagship programs of the time in terms of funding (with 40,000 million rupees).

In September 1992, the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act was enacted by the Parliament of India and become a statutory body on 22nd June 1993. It is mainly responsible for education and rehabilitation as well as assessing the activities and situations related to educating and helping the CWSNs. The Act was then amended by Parliament to make it broader based. The roles given to RCI are:

- To monitor and regulate services given to Persons with Disability (PwD)
- To standardize a syllabus and

- To maintain Central Rehabilitation, register of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of rehabilitation and special education.
- The Act also prescribes punitive action against unqualified persons delivering services to PwDs.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was then launched in 2001 to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Three important aspects of the UEE are:

- Access
- Enrolment; and
- Retention, of all children between 6-14 years of age.

A **zero-rejection policy** has been adopted by SSA which ensures that every CWSNs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is to be provided meaningful and quality education.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has also laid down a clear context of inclusive education. In 2005, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) implemented a National Action Plan for the inclusion (in education) of children and youth with disabilities.

Furthermore, IEDC was revised and was named “Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS) in 2009-10 to provide assistance for the inclusive education of the disabled children at the higher secondary schools (i.e. 9th and 10th classes). This scheme is 100% funded by the central government. It has now subsumed under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) mission from 2013. RMSA is an important scheme to integrate and include the CWSNs into regular schools, helping them to socialize and build their future. This mission is meant for higher secondary school going children. The **Samagra Shiksha Scheme** has subsumed two significant educational initiatives in India: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), along with the Teacher Education (TE) program. This integration aims to create a cohesive framework for school education from pre-school to class XII, emphasizing quality, equity, and inclusivity in educational outcomes.

Under the Ministry of Justice and Empowerment, GOI a separate affair was set up to deal with the disabled persons in India. It was opened on 12th May, 2012. This Department was renamed as “Department of empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)” on 8th Dec 2014. This department acts as a nodal agency for issues and matters pertaining to disability and PwDs. The main vision of the department is to provide equal stage for the disabled persons in India and provide equal opportunity. This implies that the main aim is to uplift the persons with disability and provide platforms to have a better life they can achieve best. It is based on the policy of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, revised in 2016. Some of the activities done by this Ministry are:

- Provision of Scholarships for students with disabilities
- Accessible India Campaign was launched in December 2015 for creating universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) – Divyangjan. It was a tool for making the RPwD Act, meaningful and in action. The main purpose of the Campaign is to bring about a change in the public infrastructure, to make it accessible for PwDs. The campaign components are on public buildings, information and communication technology (public websites, electronic media etc) and public transport (road, railway, air).

Courses offered in teacher education programs for CWSNs

According to Kumar & Kumar (2007) in India, teacher training in special education is imparted through both face-to-face and distance mode.

- 1) **Pre-Service Training:** There is a provision for pre-service teacher training in Special Education (SE) who can teach both in Inclusive and Special Schools, but it is mainly concentrated in secondary level training.

The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) is the apex authority to develop, recognize and regulate the curriculum for teachers of SE.

There are Universities and Institutions imparting B. Ed. (SE) both in regular and distance learning mode like Bachelor of Special Education, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Post Graduate Professional Diploma in Special Education Course for general B.Ed. students and various Degree and Diploma courses.

However, as the Indian school system is one of the largest in the world and the numbers of CWSNs are quite high - 2.21% of the total populations having disability in India (Disabled persons in India: A statistical profile, 2016), the prevailing situation of pre-service teacher training in special education needs to be strengthened. In order to assist the problems of many disabled students in the schools, teacher education programs should be enriched with such type of knowledge. Special degrees and skills should be attained to teach them and include them in mainstream education.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) National Educational Testing Bureau has included 'Special Education' in their curriculum as an educational discipline. It includes details about special education, integrated education, education of mentally retarded (MR), visually impaired (VI), hearing impaired (HI), orthopedically handicapped (OH), gifted and creative children, learning disabled children and education of Juvenile delinquents. This clearly marked the importance of inclusion of CWSNs into higher education as well.

- 2) **In-Service Training:** Different kinds of teacher training programs are being conducted by SSA to orient elementary teachers towards Inclusive Education (IE). The IE course has been incorporated as a part of 20 days mandatory training of in-service teachers under SSA. This aims at orienting every teacher to the concept, meaning and importance of inclusion. Furthermore, the state's SSA programme also taken up a 3 to 5 or 5 to 7 days teacher training exclusively in I.E. This program includes a 2–3-day capsule on inclusive education.

Under the SSA mission, different Schools are being made more disabled friendly by incorporating barrier free features in their infrastructural designs. This includes building ramps, easily accessible school roads, building special toilets, etc. About 444 thousand schools in India have been made barrier free and the work is still going on till now. Around 575 thousand CWSNs have been provided with the required assistive devices like hearing aid, walking sticks, wheelchair, etc.

Different in-service training programs are in operation in all Indian states under SSA. At present, all the educational schemes of inclusive education are moving towards the acquisition of Universalization of primary/elementary education (UEE). But it seems that secondary and higher education is still at the edge of ignorance. So, there is a critical need to create Inclusive Education Departments under these stages to cater to the needs and challenges of inclusion principles.

In some cases, PwDs who tend to study higher education failed to do so because of the lack of facilities provided to them. This means that their interest, ability, enthusiasm and passion were being limited because of the lack of resources. Thus, it is crucial for the higher authorities to provide these students with the required facilities they need to attain higher education.

Scenario of Mizoram:

Knowing the needs of qualified special professionals and to develop more professionals in the field of special education, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Mizoram was given permission by RCI to run teacher training programs in special education after a thorough and careful inspection. The programs run in the institution were Bachelor of Education- Special Education in Hearing Impairment (B.Ed. Spl. Ed. H. I.) and Bachelor of Education- Special Education in Visual Impairment (B.Ed. Spl. Ed. H. I.) from the academic session 2018-2020. The intake capacity for the 2 courses was 30 each. In each academic session, the seats were fully occupied (Directorate of SCERT, 2019). The institution was affiliated under Mizoram University, and it stood

as the only institution in its category in the Northeastern India selected to conduct such programs so that more professionals can be developed.

These programs aimed to develop professionals in the field of special education to break barriers in special education by promoting inclusive education. The program also aimed to prepare individuals to acquire knowledge and develop skills and competencies to impart education and training to deal with children with disabilities. As per the RCI rules, the candidates of B. Ed. Special Education shall be able to obtain 'Registered Professional Certificate' from RCI to work as a Special teacher in the field of Special Education (SCERT Mizoram, 2019). RCI not only recognizes such professional training programs but also monitors the quality through its established units. As such one (B. Ed. Spl. Ed. V.I.) of the two programs offered by SCERT Mizoram have been discontinued from the session 2024.

Major problems for inclusion of CWSNs in the Schools of India

According to Patra, G (2017) the parents/guardians of CWSNs generally faced problems both in the social and psychological aspects resulting in marginalization and exclusion of CWSNs in the mainstream schools. Hence, it is important to take on widespread awareness among the people/masses especially to the parents of CWSNs. They should be counseled and make them aware so that they may prepare themselves to send their child into the mainstream schools. They should know that it is the place where their child belongs and as it is where their child can develop and be educated to his/her full potential.

Inclusive education is a priority for the government of India. However, there is a wide gap in policy and practice of inclusive education. There are number of barriers that hinder proper practice of inclusive education in our country as mentioned by Prabhakar Rao, (2017). They are:

- i. Skills of teachers
- ii. Attitude towards inclusion and disability among teachers, administrators, parents, peers and policy planners
- iii. Lack of awareness about children with disabilities among general teachers
- iv. School environment including difficulties in physical access (absence of barrier free environment)
- v. Support services
- vi. Family collaboration
- vii. ICT availability

According to Singh & Agarwal (2015), another problem of Inclusion in India are:

- i. Improper Curriculum adaptation: In Indian Inclusive education, there are same curriculum followed by schools in different regions. As CWSNs have unique needs, they require different adaptations. Therefore, there is a lack of proper curriculum and flexibility where the CWSNs faced problems in adapting to the existing curriculum.
- ii. Insufficient and improper pre-service teacher education: Pre-service teacher education courses like B. Ed in general were not taught and trained properly how to practically use special methods to treat the CWSNs in the classrooms. So, there are no proper teachings and training given to the future teachers of the country. Therefore, there are problems in teaching them and including them in the mainstream schools.
- iii. Negative self-perceptions of CWSNs: the CWSNs often hamper their self-esteem and confidence because of the false attitudes of their neighbors, community, peers, as well as teachers. This causes negative perception towards their disability and they have a feeling that they cannot attain anything in life.
- iv. Expenses involved: As the CWSNs have other special needs apart from the other children, huge expenses were involved for their studies. This often creates problems for their inclusion in Mainstream schools.

To solve these different problems, teacher education programs play an important role in minimizing it. Keeping in view the above problems, the researcher suggested that the curriculum

planners should plan to meet the needs of the CWSNs; make the teacher trainers aware about the necessities; plan out the best to educate them; and plan a curriculum to promote skills to extract the best out of their ability.

Thus, all these problems cannot be eradicated in one action and by one person alone. It is the joint effort of different people with multiple actions that will change and modify the problems and barriers therein. Thus, if we join hands and work together for the benefit of CWSNs in India, we all can transform the lives of many, and help them to live on their own creating their own future, and for the future generations.

Suggestions for teachers in an Inclusive School to provide an effective learning environment

White, (2019) identified six qualities or nature to bring about inclusiveness and equality in education that should be cultivated and nurtured in teacher education programs. They are discussed as follows:

- i. Psycho-socio-cultural consciousness
- ii. High expectations
- iii. Desire to improve life
- iv. Social Constructivist approach
- v. Holistic Knowledge of every student

Thus, teachers who possess these six dispositions/qualities will be in a better place to implement inclusive and equitable education. They will easily adopt the theories into practices according to the needs of the CWSNs. The trained teacher, who not merely got a degree but possess the above traits will effectively contribute to the provision of an inclusive environment.

According to Chase, (2015), the role of a teacher to bring about inclusion of CWSNs and to educate all learners effectively is stated below.

- i. Differentiated instruction

According to him, one of the most important principles of inclusive education is that no learners are alike, and so inclusive schools place great importance on creating opportunities for students to learn. He also stated that the students should be assessed in a variety of ways to show their ability in different ways. Teachers in inclusive schools therefore must consider a wide range of learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) while designing of curriculum.

- ii. Academic support

Inclusive schools should provide academic opportunities that create a supportive environment for all learners. Thus, teachers in inclusive schools should create better teaching-learning environments and engage gifted and talented learners by building a more responsive learning environment.

- iii. Behavioral support

Another important factor for fostering effective inclusive education is the implementation of consistent behavioral support throughout the learning environment. Teachers in an inclusive classroom should help the students in supporting their positive actions like giving appraisal, praise, rewards, token, encouragement and motivation to enhance a good learning environment.

- iv. Respect for diversity to create a welcoming environment for all.

Inclusive education can only be successful when the CWSNs feel that they are truly a part of the school community. This requires a teacher with an open heart and creates honest discussion about differences in backgrounds and abilities. In inclusive schools, the establishment of such a positive environment by the teacher benefits everyone by fostering an environment where each students feel liked and welcomed.

According to Prabhakar Rao, (2017), suggestions to overcome problems of inclusion for the teachers in India are:

- i. To develop an educational system that can respond to all the needs of children in the school.

- ii. To develop a 'Whole faculty approach' in facilitating an inclusive pre-service teacher education curriculum implanted across all discipline areas. This will train all the teacher trainers so that they all can be fit and skillful to educate the CWSNs.

UNICEF acknowledges two opposing approaches on what knowledge; skills and attitudes teachers need to obtain to be able to teach in an inclusive setting.

- The *first approach* highlights the teaching of different kinds of disability, the medical causes of disability, identification and special adjustments to make when teaching children with disabilities.
- On the other hand, the *second approach* trains teachers in a child-centered pedagogy, child-centered schools and acquisition of education for all.

In this way, teachers in an inclusive school will be able to create a positive and balanced environment for making teaching-learning in an effective way.

Conclusion

There is a well-known saying that teachers are the builders of the nation and there is no doubt that their education and training programs were a crucial part of it. The quality of a teacher education program needs to be upgraded according to the changing needs of society. From this present study, we can see that there are many problems that arise to hamper the quality of teacher education in the field of Special Education. If these problems are unresolved, it will result in low quality of teacher education, and the students will be the worst sufferers.

As we see from this study, there is also a transition of the type of education given to the CWSNs. The best system so far is to bring about an inclusive set up, including them in the normal pattern of schooling. Therefore, the teacher education programs should also contain a curriculum that can include pedagogy of teaching the CWSNs and include them in the mainstream education which will be most beneficial for them. Merely getting a degree will not be enough to need the needs of the diverse learners. Therefore, teacher education programs should aim at bringing about a holistic and inclusive approach to meet the needs of all the learners and provide a healthy environment to learn.

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has chaired Technical session / delivered Plenary Lecture / Participated / Presented a Paper entitled

..... *Teacher Education for the Inclusion of Children with Special Needs*

in the National Seminar on Teacher Education Program : New Panorama and Challenges in
the Context of Draft National Education Policy 2019.

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in the International Conference on Higher Education: Issues, Challenges and Ways Forward
held on 25th-27th October, 2023, organized by the School of Education, Mizoram
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Head
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ABSTRACT

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MIZORAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: STATUS, PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

MARCH, 2025

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MIZORAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: STATUS, PROBLEMS AND
PROSPECTS**

**BY
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**Submitted
In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Education of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

INTRODUCTION:

Inclusive education is an important concept of education which functioned for the promotion of education to all. It works under the principle of 'Education for all'. It aims to promote education to all the diverse needs, irrespective of class, caste, ability, disability, socio-economic differences, etc. It treats all people equal to provide educational opportunities according to the needs of each student. The concept of inclusion has been practiced with the formal educational system. We can see the importance of education in the concept of 'inclusive education' to bring about a progressive change for mankind. Hence, inclusive education is crucial for improving self-esteem, enhancing social status, and gaining confidence for people who are drifted apart from the mainstream society (Datta, 2021; Madhesh, 2023). Education has always been the only key component of human development and liberating force. Thus, education has held the most prestigious position for the upliftment of the diverse needs in every society.

UNICEF defines inclusive education as, "Inclusive education means all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools. It means real learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded – not only children with disabilities, but speakers of minority languages too" (UNICEF, 2024).

UNESCO defined inclusive education as, "*Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve Education for All*" (UNESCO, 2009). UNESCO tries to promote inclusive education system knowing that it is a challenge to every country in the world; and that it can remove the barriers limiting the participation and achievement of all learners, respect diverse needs, abilities and characteristics and that eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment. Inclusion is a broader philosophy and covers different physical, socio-cultural, economic and psychological contexts. Though inclusion can be of different forms, including the disadvantaged children (SC, ST, Minorities, and Girls etc.) this study deals with the inclusion of children with special needs (CWSN) only for their education due to their disabilities.

Inclusive education for the *Children with Special Needs (CWSNs)* was the main focus of this research work. Inclusive education for CWSNs aimed at the

integration of children with special needs and children without special needs in the mainstream schooling. Inclusive education becomes an imperative in the scenario where one in five children globally are not given any access to education (UNESCO, 2023). Opportunities are still dictated and limited by several characteristics, including poverty, location, gender, language, disability, race, religion, migrant status, and status of displacement. It is estimated that 40% of children do not receive instruction in a language they can understand, and children with disabilities are still disproportionately excluded from school (UNESCO, 2023).

A lot of experiments and research have been conducted by experts and educationists to come up with the best way to provide inclusive education. The old systems have been modified, and numerous new policies have come up. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 (as modified in 1992) has rightly emphasized the integration of children with disability with other groups for enabling them to socialize and develop in them courage, confidence, security and protect their rights according to the laws and constitutions. Besides, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in its Curriculum Framework for School Education have added:

“Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with disability nor for general learners without disability” (NCERT, 2000).

By the above mentions it can be understood easily that inclusion of CWSN is not only a focus at present whereas it has been the component of national policy in India from around last fifty years. Also continued to the latest National Education Policy, 2020 in which inclusion of CWSN is recommended by inclusion in the mainstream school. NEP 2020 emphasizes that children with disabilities should fully participate in the regular schooling process from pre-primary to higher education (Sarkar, 2020).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

A total of 77 previous studies related to the present work were reviewed. The different kinds of literature included were thesis, dissertations, research papers, reviewed articles, policy documents and blogs within a year span of 2004 to 2024. The identified literature related to the present study were broadly classified into the following themes:

- i. Reviews on Status of Inclusive education in India.
- ii. Reviews on Problems and Prospects of Inclusive Education.
- iii. Reviews on Attitude of teachers towards Inclusive education.
- iv. Reviews related to Policy Reviews on Inclusive Education.
- v. Study related to social inclusion of special needs children.

After analysing the related literatures, it can be said that there have been various challenges and problems that hindered the effective implementation of inclusive education. In India, the most common problems were lack of trained personnel, lack of infrastructural support, attitudinal barrier of both teachers and parents of CWSNs and low levels of teacher training on inclusive education practices. Policies and schemes like SSA, RMSA, IEDC, IEDSS, RTE Act 2009, PwD Act 1995 and RPwD Act 2016, RCI Act 1992 and NEP 2020 were more stressed upon by other researchers.

Rationale of the Study:

Inclusive education is an essential educational concept for catering the diverse needs of students ensuring equal educational opportunities for all. It is true that the differently abled children require specific education tailored to support their special needs for their optimum development (Rao, 2017). Since education is the '*right*' of every child as mentioned in the Indian Constitution, the differently abled children are also on the equal platform with the other students where they will be included in a normal classroom. All children have the right to learn together and deserve the best in life (Govt. of India, 2009). They have the right to live in a world where they have hope and opportunity. The right to education and inclusive education are integral concepts in promoting equitable access to learning for all children, particularly those with disabilities. The government has initiated various programs, such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, to address these gaps and promote inclusive practices within the educational system. In India, while the RTE Act aims to facilitate inclusive education, challenges remain in its implementation. Many schools still lack the necessary infrastructure and trained personnel to effectively support students with disabilities (Bhargava, 2018; Sikdar, 2023). And despite the importance of inclusive education, our educational systems still face issues and challenges in the

implementation of an inclusive educational environment leading to segregation and unequal distribution of required resources (Fatima & Johri, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the policy and practices of Inclusive Education in the elementary schools of Mizoram with special reference to CWSN and to highlight their status, problems and prospects. A mixed-methods research approach will be used to gather both quantitative data and qualitative insights into the experiences of students, teachers and experts in the field.

The elementary schools in Mizoram have been selected to conduct this study which will help to highlight the major practices of schools in the field of inclusive set up. Previously, the researcher has conducted a critical study on 'Support Services provided in Special Education Centres in Aizawl'. From this study, it was found out that the special support services provided in Special Education Centres in Aizawl were not sufficient for the CWSN admitted in the Special Schools. So, from the result of that study, there is an inner urge to know more about the reality and the actual practices of Elementary schools of Mizoram with special reference to CWSNs. The review of related literatures also showed the different scenario of inclusive education in and outside India. It revealed that there were a lot of things to find out and to explore in the field of inclusive settings particularly in Mizoram. There are numerous policies and laws enacted by the government to provide equal platform for the CWSNs in the normal schools where they can benefit and develop along with the other students. The question lies whether these laws and policies were practiced in the actual field. Thus, the researcher wanted to know and highlight the reality of Inclusive Education set up in Mizoram. There have been limited research found on the actual implementation of inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram. This study aimed to fill this research gap, and the results of this study were expected to serve as a useful purpose to understand the status of Inclusive Education in Mizoram. The findings of the study will also be helpful in improving the infrastructure, teacher training, parental involvement and overall support for CWSNs in the elementary schools of Mizoram. The study will also contribute to long-term improvements, such as creating more inclusive communities and strengthening the education system to accommodate all types of learners in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

Research Questions

- i. What are the national policies regarding inclusive education in India?
- ii. To what extent have the policies been implemented in Mizoram?
- iii. What are the contents of textbooks in elementary schools of Mizoram to accommodate CWSNs?
- iv. How well are the elementary schools of Mizoram equipped for imparting inclusive education?
- v. How many CWSN are enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- vi. What type of disabilities exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- vii. What is the level of social inclusion of CWSN in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- viii. What are the problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram as perceived by their peers and teachers?
- ix. What are the problems in effective implementation of inclusive education policies in Mizoram?
- x. What are the prospects of inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram?
- xi. What are the suggestions that can be made for future planning and improvement of inclusive education in Mizoram?

Statement of the Problem:

The problem of the research study is stated as:

‘Inclusive Education in Mizoram with Special Reference to Children with Special Needs: Status, Problems and Prospects’

Operational Definition of Key Terms:

Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is a model where students with special needs are taught in classrooms alongside their peers without special needs. It is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together. In this study, inclusive education is a model of practices meant to provide education to CWSNs at the elementary level adopted by the government of Mizoram.

CWSN: The full form of CWSN is Children with Special Needs. They are children who have a disability or disabilities for which they require special support and needs for their education. Here, the term refers to those disabled students who are admitted to elementary schools and enlisted as CWSN by department of School Education, Govt. of Mizoram.

Status: Status is general term in descriptive research which meant a situation where one stands at a particular time. In this study, the status of Inclusive education with respect to CWSN was studied.

Problems: Problems are a matter or situation which are regarded as unwelcoming or harmful and needed to be dealt with or overcome by using some means. In this study, the problem faced in the implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram were studied.

Prospects: It is a way of looking ahead and expect good things. In this study the term prospects have been used to describe the future of inclusive education in Mizoram, with reference to education of CWSN.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To analyse the existing Acts and Policies for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in India and to highlight the implementation in Mizoram.
- ii. To find out the number of CWSN enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- iii. To find out the type of disabilities that exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram.
- iv. To find out the schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- v. To find out the level of social inclusion of CWSN in elementary schools of Mizoram.
- vi. To analyse the elementary school textbooks for accommodating CWSNs in Mizoram.

- vii. To find out the problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSN) in the elementary schools of Mizoram as perceived by their peers and teachers.
- viii. To find out the problems in effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.
- ix. To find out the prospects of inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- x. To formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram

Delimitations of the Study

- i. Geographically, the present study is delimited to Aizawl and Lunglei districts of Mizoram only.
- ii. Conceptually, the present study is delimited to the inclusion of children with special needs under disability category only.
- iii. This study was confined to the survey of government elementary schools only.
- iv. The present study was delimited to responses from students without disability.

Methodology:

Research methodology is a structured and scientific approach to collect, analyse and interpret qualitative or quantitative data to answer research questions or test hypothesis (Sreekumar, 2023).

Research design:

To achieve the objectives of the study, mixed method research was used. Mixed method research uses both qualitative and quantitative data to answer research questions (George, 2021). This method was used when quantitative or qualitative data alone will not sufficiently answer a research question. Employing a mixed techniques approach contributes to providing a more thorough interpretation of the data (Skidmore, 2023). It also gives credibility because when qualitative and quantitative data converge, it strengthens the validity of research conclusions (George, 2021). The purpose of using mixed research design is to build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research

methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either qualitative or quantitative methods alone (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2019).

Among the mixed research design, convergent parallel design (Plano-Clark & Creswell, 2018) was used in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time and were separately analysed. This design was used to provide a comprehensive understanding of research problems by leveraging the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The research design of the present study can be symbolized as a QUAL + quan model which was categorized by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011). In this model, qualitative data and quantitative data were integrated to produce a more complete picture to come up with comprehensive findings (Bryman, 2012). The upper case 'QUAL' indicates that the qualitative component was the main data-collection approach; lower case 'quan' indicates a more subsidiary role (Bryman, 2012). The symbol '+' simply means that the qualitative and quantitative data were collected more or less concurrently. In this way, the study was intended to find out the most reliable findings by combining both qualitative and quantitative data.

Population:

In this study, the focus was on different stakeholders like teachers, students (classmates of the CWSNs) & parents of the CWSNs, experts in the field of inclusive education and administrative officers for their suggestions. The population of the study comprised of all the Government elementary schools where CWSNs were admitted. Teachers, parents & classmates of the CWSNs admitted to these schools become the part of the population automatically. Besides experts in the field of inclusive education and the administrative officers within Aizawl and Lunglei District were also the part of population.

There was a total of 172 schools with CWSNs in Lunglei district and 171 schools with CWSNs in Aizawl district (Govt. of Mizoram, 2020).

In Aizawl district, there were 4 BRCs: Aizawl East, Aizawl West, Darlawn and Aibawk. In Lunglei district, there were 3 BRCs, namely: Tlabung Block, Station block and Bunghmun Block. The BRCs were headed by Block Resource Centre Co-ordinator (BRCC).

Sample and Sampling technique:

The researcher employed a Purposive sampling technique (Nikolopoulou, 2022; Dovetail, 2023; Singh & Jadhav, 2024) by selecting schools where CWSNs were admitted. Purposive sampling, as outlined by Alan Bryman, is a non-probability sampling technique primarily utilized in qualitative research. This method emphasizes selecting participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research question, thus ensuring that the sample is informative and rich in data (Bryman, 2012).

Fifty (50) schools were purposefully selected where CWSNs were admitted. The researcher selected 25 schools each from the district to collect the necessary data. From those schools 100 teachers, 50 students, 50 parents were selected to respond on the tools of the study. Administrative officers of each Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and experts in the field of IE within Aizawl and Lunglei Districts were selected as samples for collecting required data.

Table 1: Selected sample of the study

Total No. of schools=50					
No. of teachers		No. of students	No. of parents	No. of Administrative Officers	No. of experts in the field of inclusive education
Aizawl District	50	25	25	4	30
Lunglei District	50	25	25	3	20
Total	100	50	50	7	50

Table 1 showed the selected sample of the study. 50 elementary schools where CWSNs were admitted were purposefully selected. 2 teachers were selected from each school which makes it a total of 100 teachers. 50 classmates of the CWSNs were selected with the help of the teacher: researcher's observation and input from

students. Generally, those students were the bench mate of the CWSNs who had been knowing the CWSNs better than any other classmates. 50 parents of the CWSNs were also selected. 7 Administrative officers of each BRCs and 50 experts in the field of inclusive education like Resource teachers who have been working in the field and have rich experiences in teaching the CWSNs were also selected as samples for this study.

Tools and Techniques used for the study:

The following tools were developed by the researcher for gathering data.

- **Questionnaire: *Teachers Questionnaire*** was developed by the researcher to find out the schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram. The questionnaire comprised of three parts-

Part-A: Information of the respondent

Part-B: Information regarding Physical support

Part-C: Information regarding Academic support

- **Interview schedules:** Interview schedules for different type of respondents were developed by the researcher.
 - i) Interview Schedule for Parents of CWSNs to find out the Level of Social Inclusion and their Problems
 - ii) Interview Schedule for Classmates of CWSNs to find out the Level of Social Inclusion and their Problems
 - iii) Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Teachers and Administrative Officers to find out the Problems and Prospects of Inclusive Education in Elementary Schools of Mizoram.
 - iv) Semi-structured Interview Schedule for Experts in the field of Inclusive Education to formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that combines elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. This approach involves a predetermined set of open-ended questions but allows for flexibility in the order and phrasing of those questions. This flexibility enables the interviewer to explore topics in greater depth

based on the participant's responses, fostering a more conversational atmosphere.

- **Observation:** An observation schedule for physical verification of CWSNs and the selected schools were developed by the researcher.
- **Parameters of Content Analysis:** This analysis was used to analyse different acts and policies for CWSNs in India. Textbooks were also analyzed keeping in mind factors like the text's structure, the author's focus, and the value of the learning aids to aid in instruction can be used.
- **Problem Tree Analysis:** This technique was used to draw the main problems, along with their causes and effects to identify clear and manageable goals and strategies of how to achieve them (Dillon, 2020). The key Components of problem tree analysis in this study are:

Trunk: Represents the **core problem** or focal issue.

Roots: Illustrate the **causes** of the core problem.

Branches: Depict the **effects** or **impacts** stemming from the core problem.

Reliability and validity of the tools:

After formulation of the items, draft of the tools was sent to five experts from the field of education having expertise in research and particularly in Inclusive Education. The tools were finalized after incorporating various suggestions from the experts.

To establish the reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach's Alpha was used value of which was .709. Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient that measures internal consistency, indicating how closely related a set of items are as a group. A commonly accepted threshold for reliability is an alpha value of 0.70 or higher (Frost, 2024). Thus, the test scale can be claimed to be reliable.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small population of 20 respondents to a selected population of Elementary school teachers in Aizawl district through online mode. The pilot study was conducted to enable the researcher to:

(i) ascertain whether the questionnaire's items would yield information from which conclusions could be made to address research issues.

(ii) provide data that could be used for improving the questionnaire and ensure the respondents would accept it in its entirety.

Both written and verbal feedback were provided by the pilot group. Suggestions made by the pilot group were considered and necessary changes were made in the questionnaire. After making necessary modifications, the tools were finalised.

Procedures of Data Collection

The researcher collected the required data from the teachers, classmates of the CWSNs, experts and administrative officers by personally visiting the schools and Block Resource Centres within Aizawl and Lunglei for the present study. The data from parents was collected through telephonic interviews.

Data Analysis:

The major data obtained were analysed using qualitative data analysis techniques. This involved the act of arranging, evaluating, and interpreting non-numeric, conceptual data, and user feedback for the purpose of identifying themes and patterns and responding to research questions. Part of the data which was quantitative was analyzed with Microsoft Excel and presented in frequency and percentages.

Major findings of the study and discussion:

A. Findings related to analysis of Acts and Policies and their implementation in Mizoram:

- i. Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992:
 - The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) was set up as a registered society in the year 1986. It became a statutory body on 22nd June 1993 by an act of the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 passed by the Parliament of India.
 - The main role/ target given to RCI was to regulate and monitor services given to the persons with disability (PwDs), to standardise the syllabus and maintain a 'Central Rehabilitation Register' of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- According to the information booklet made by RCI, by the year 2021, there were 1,712 professionals registered under the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) in Mizoram (Govt. of India, 2021).
 - In Mizoram, several departments have organized Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programs to enhance the skills of professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education. Notable departments include Department of Clinical Psychology and Department of Social Work, Mizoram University and SCERT, Mizoram.
 - These departments were involved in providing ongoing training to ensure that professionals are well-equipped to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.
 - Each department conducts programs based on RCI guidelines, contributing to the professional development of practitioners in the region.
 - The Govt. of Mizoram has recently hired 50 special educators to enhance the educational support for children with disabilities. This recruitment is part of ongoing efforts to fill vacant teaching positions and improve the availability of qualified professionals in the state's educational system. The hiring process is currently underway and is expected to be completed shortly, addressing the need for more specialized educators in schools across Mizoram (Govt. of India, 2023).
 - Thus, it was evident from the above-mentioned ground realities that RCI has contributed towards the promotion of inclusive education. Through these initiatives, RCI aimed to create a more inclusive educational environment in Mizoram, ensuring that children with disabilities receive quality education and support services.
- ii. Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Act, 1995:
- The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PwD Act 1995) is a significant piece of legislation in India aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and rights for individuals with disabilities.
 - The Act came into force on February 7, 1996.
 - The focus of the act was towards the rights and education of persons with disabilities.

- The act tries to provide prevention and early detection of disabilities; provide education and paves the way for their employment.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The Govt. of Mizoram offered different schemes for disability which can be grouped into two: Schemes which are funded under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), Schemes funded by the Ministry of Rural Development and schemes funded under the Govt. of Mizoram.
- Despite its progressive provisions, ongoing challenges remain in the effective implementation of the Act and the realization of its objectives.
- The allowances and stipends given to disabled students were insufficient to cover their basic needs and educational needs. The current stipend amounts may not keep pace with rising living costs and inflation, limiting their effectiveness. Thus, the stipends must be regularly reviewed and adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living and the specific needs of disabled individuals.

iii. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016:

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, was enacted in the year 2016 by the Indian Parliament to enhance the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities across various domains of life, including education, employment, and social participation.
- It became operational on 15th June 2017.
- The Bill replaced the existing PwD Act 1995, which was enacted 21 years back.
- The importance of this act for the CWSN is that *the Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education.*
- 21 types of disabilities are recognized under this Act.
- 4% reservation which applies to all groups of posts-Group A, B, C, and D in government and public sector undertakings.
- 5% reservation for persons with benchmark disabilities in all government and government-aided higher educational institutions

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The government of Mizoram has also adopted the changes made under the RPwD Act, 2016. It made a notification that the government that with the commencement of the RPwD Act, 2016, i.e. 19th April, 2017 (the date from which the RPwD Act, 2016 came into force), the reservation of identified posts within the direct recruitment quota for Persons with Disabilities shall be as per the Act [Govt. of Mizoram Notification No. A. 12027/1/2011-P&AR(GSW), 2018].
- The rules were mainly concerned within the fields of education, jobs where 4% seats of government jobs were reserved for PwDs; accessibility in terms of transportation, physical environment, information & communication; and issue of disability certificate.
- The RPwD Act, 2016 represents a shift towards a more inclusive society, recognizing the rights and potential of individuals with disabilities. However, despite these advancements, challenges remain in the effective implementation of the Act across different regions.
- Issues such as societal attitudes, lack of awareness, and inadequate resources continue to hinder full inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in various aspects of life (Barman, 2023).
- From the findings of the study, there were different problems found which impacted the effective implementation of inclusive education in elementary schools of Mizoram. Problems such as untrained teachers, lack of awareness about inclusive education, impracticability, lack of school infrastructure to accommodate the CWSNs and attitudinal barriers were found. Regarding physical infrastructure, 68% of the schools did not have functional ramps, 84% did not provide structural building changes for the CWSNs, 68% did not provide special toilets and 96% of the schools did not provide special desks and benches for the CWSNs.
- Thus, even in the state of Mizoram, there are many challenges which need to be tackled to promote an inclusive environment in the schools. Thus, measures must be taken by the concerned authorities to put policies and acts into practice and provide an inclusive environment for all.

iv. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006

- The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities was formulated by the Government of India in the year 2006 to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the society.
- This policy stressed on provision of barrier free environment in schools and public places for easy access for persons with disabilities, prevention of disabilities and rehabilitation.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- Community based awareness programs were held in various communities and in schools of different stages.
- Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programs were also utilised in such a manner that professionals in the field of special education were trained.
- Under the National Institute of Locomotor Development (NILD), aids and appliances like hearing aids, crutches, walking sticks, spectacles, prosthetics like limbs were disseminated to PwDs having disability certificate free of cost.
- In collaboration with Social Welfare Department, NILD also hosted free Health camps in certain communities and schools for diagnosing and this also aid in the early identification of disabilities.
- ALIMCO has set up an apex centre named Pradhan Mantri Divyasha (PMDK) Aizawl; this centre run in July 2023 under Zoram Medical College. PMDK-Aizawl started disseminating aids and appliances for persons with disabilities from April 2024.
- It has made services available for PwDs by producing different aids and appliances like wheelchairs, rollator, walking stick, tripod, tetrapod, spinal support, knee brace, braille kit, blind stick, smartphone for the blind, hearing aid and crutch.
- There have been 1000 beneficiaries under the PMDK-Aizawl, 2372 items have been disseminated till now.

v. Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009:

- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4th August 2009.

- The main aim or focus of the act is towards the provision of free and compulsory education for all children between the age of 6 and 14 years.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The Government of Mizoram adopted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and based on it has enacted its own Mizoram Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011.
- The rules demand compulsory schooling for children aged between 6 and 14 years, special training for children in need of special development, provision of free textbooks and writing materials, and free uniforms for Below Poverty Line (BPL) children.

- Some key points about the Mizoram RTE Rules 2011 are as follows:

The rules apply to conferment of rights on children to free and compulsory education, subject to the provisions of articles 21A of the Constitution

They define "child with special needs" to include children with disabilities and children living with or affected by HIV/AIDS (Section 3(2) & Section 35)

The rules reserve 25% of seats for economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups which also include children with disabilities for admission in schools within this framework (Section 12(1)(c)).

- According to Census 2011, Mizoram had the lowest percentage of disability in India which is 1.38%. Looking into the statistics, the number of seats reserved were adequate to include the CWSNs in the mainstream school in Mizoram.
- The Mizoram RTE Rules 2011 aims to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the state in accordance with the National RTE Act 2009.
- Under Part-III, Duties of State Government, Local Authorities, it was stated that for children with disabilities if their disabilities prevent them from accessing the schools, the Govt./local authority shall make appropriate and safe transportation arrangements for them to attend school and finish elementary education (Clause No. 4(7)).
- A child with disabilities shall also be provided with free special learning and support material, which is given under inclusive education in schools (Clause No. 5(1)).

- In conclusion, the Mizoram RTE Rules followed a "zero rejection policy", ensuring that no child with special needs is deprived of the right to education. The focus is on inclusion and mainstreaming CWSNs into regular schools with adequate resource support.

vi. National Education Policy, 2020:

- The new National Education Policy 2020 is built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability.
- To promote inclusion, the policy aimed towards ensuring universal access to school education at all levels, i.e. from pre-school to secondary education.
- The policy also advocates for early identification of learning disabilities and the provision of continuous support.

Implementation in Mizoram:

- The state government of Mizoram has taken different steps towards the implementation of NEP 2020. It was reported that almost 25% task has been completed in the implementation of this new policy.
- As of now, there are only few steps taken towards the promotion and development of a more inclusive educational environment especially for the CWSNs.
- As reported by the SCERT, Mizoram, 2673 teachers have been given trainings under the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (Diksha) which is a digital platform for teachers, students, and parents in India that provides access to educational resources. This portal will be made useful for the teachers to improve their digital skills which will be helpful in teaching the CWSNs by using certain audio-visual aids to foster effective learning.
- Braille construction have been developed for the blind students. However, this has not been released till now. This Braille construction was not developed based on the school textbooks but will serve as a guide for gaining information and knowledge for the blind students.
- Large print textbooks of elementary section (classes I to VIII) were also made available for low vision students developed by SCERT Mizoram.

Discussion on Policy Analysis:

The focus of a policy review encompasses several critical aspects aimed at evaluating and improving existing policies. This review aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of current policies for inclusive education for Children with Special Needs (CWSNs) in India. After carefully examining the acts and policies for inclusion of CWSNs in India, it can be concluded that it highlights a comprehensive framework aimed at ensuring equitable access to quality education. This framework is shaped by various legislative measures, schemes, and educational policies that collectively strive to create an inclusive environment for CWSNs. Numerous actions have been made for the inclusion of CWSNs in the mainstream education such as reservation of seats in schools, provision of stipends, provision of aids and appliances free of cost, providing training of teachers to accommodate CWSNs in the class, developing trained professionals, providing non-discrimination and provision of barrier free access to schools.

The promotion of free and equitable access to education has long been acknowledged. However, problems and challenges have always been encountered in the implementation process. The analysis revealed significant gaps in implementation, particularly concerning infrastructure and teacher training. These findings suggest that without addressing these gaps, the goal of inclusive education may remain unattainable.

Policymakers should prioritize funding for training programs and accessible infrastructure to support CWSNs. If implemented with appropriate planning, these educational policies will serve as an agent for promoting inclusive education. Further research is needed to explore innovative practices in inclusive education that can be scaled nationally. Ultimately, ensuring equitable education for all children is not just a policy goal but a moral imperative that reflects our commitment to an inclusive society.

B. Findings related to the number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools of Mizoram

- The total number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools (Class I-VIII) of Mizoram during the academic year 2021-2022 (UDISE) was 2609.

- There were 115 CWSNs enrolled in the 50 sampled schools: 67 CWSNs in Lunglei district and 48 CWSNs in Aizawl district.
- Govt. Primary School-I, Pukpui in Lunglei district has the highest admission of CWSN. There were 8 students with special needs and the types of disabilities found were VI, ID and Specific Learning Disabilities.

Discussion on number of CWSNs enrolled in the Elementary schools of Mizoram:

From the visited schools, 115 children with special needs were found out. 67 CWSNs were found out in Lunglei district and 48 CWSNs in Aizawl district. Comparing between the two districts, Lunglei has a higher number of CWSNs enrolled in the elementary schools than Aizawl. This may be due to the fact that there are more special schools in Aizawl than in Lunglei district. More CWSNs were enrolled in the mainstream school in Lunglei while the CWSNs have more options to be enrolled in either special school or mainstream school. Therefore, more CWSNs were found in Lunglei district and a smaller number of CWSNs were found in Aizawl district.

C. Findings related to the type of disabilities that exists among the children with special needs (CWSN) enrolled in elementary schools of Mizoram

- According to the office records of Samagra Shiksha Mizoram, there exist 14 types of disabilities in the elementary schools of Mizoram.
- The researcher found out 12 types of disabilities from the visited schools.
- Types of disability existed in the schools were – visual impairment, low vision, hearing impairment, special learning disabilities, learning disability, speech and language impairment, mental illness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy and autism spectrum disorder.
- The most common type of disability found out from the study was Intellectual Disability (ID) which was 23.47%. Dwarfism and autism being the least common type of disability detected with 0.86% each.

Discussion on the type of disability that exist among the Elementary schools of Mizoram:

The most common type of disability found out from the study was Intellectual Disability (ID). Dwarfism and autism being the least common type of disability detected. As per the report of respondents, the mode of assessment used were functional assessment. In functional assessment, the schools were made to report any signs of disability of their students. The suspected students were carefully analysed at the times of doctor visit to the school. The doctors then underwent several tests after which the type of disabilities was diagnosed and declared. Some students were also referred to other private doctors for screening and identification of their disability.

As mentioned earlier, the largest number of CWSN falls under the category of Intellectual Disability. In Mizoram, there is only one institution where B.Ed. special education was imparted, i.e. SCERT, Mizoram. The institution offered two programs, B. Ed. Special education (HI) and B.Ed. Special education (VI) only till 2024. From the session 2024 SCERT, Mizoram offered B.Ed. Spl. Ed. H. I. only. Whereas the number of students with visual disability is the second largest group after intellectual disability which needs teacher with specific competencies. There was no program offered for B. Ed. Special education (I.D.), rather it was the most needed program looking into the types of disabilities found in the elementary schools. Thus, it was highly needed to open and offer more programs for B. Ed. Special education (ID) so that students having intellectual disability will benefit as they occupy the largest number of disability types in the schools.

D. Findings related to schools that are equipped for imparting inclusive education in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

Physical support:

- Majority of the schools (68%) did not provide ramps for wheel-chair users.
- Majority of the schools (92%) did not make any structural changes for the easy movement of the CWSNs in and around the schools.
- Majority of the schools (84%) did not provide railings at the stairs.
- Majority of the schools (68%) did not have separate toilet for the CWSNs.

- Majority of the schools (96%) did not have bench nor desk specially made for the CWSNs.
- Thus, elementary schools in Mizoram were not equipped for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to physical infrastructure provided in the schools.

Academic support

- Majority (96%) of the teachers agreed that all the CWSNs who seek admission in their schools were admitted.
- Majority of the teachers (83%) consider the needs of the CWSNs while preparing their lesson plan for teaching in the class.
- Majority of the teachers (83%) always tried to create opportunities for the CWSNs to make them learn with the other students in their class.
- Half (50%) of the respondents always provide materials for the CWSNs, 17% usually provide materials, 10% provide materials sometimes, 9% seldomly provide and 14% never provide materials.
- Majority (56%) of the respondents always devoted their time in tutorials for the CWSNs, 22% usually devote their time, 13% devoted their time sometimes, 2% seldomly devoted their time and 7% never devoted their time.
- Majority (75%) of the respondents always tried to accommodate the CWSNs, for easy understanding.
- Majority (75%) of the teachers always encourage the students to learn together.
- 32% of the respondents always use audio-visual aids, 19% usually use, 14% use audio-visual aids sometimes, 9% seldomly use and 26% never utilise audio-visual aids to foster learning.
- Majority (75%) of the teachers always received support from the school administrators to deal with/ teach CWSNs.
- Majority (57%) of the respondents responded that the CWSNs were always supported by their peers in their learning and other activities, 28% responded 'usually' against this statement, 6% responded 'sometimes' against this statement, 6% responded as 'seldom' and 3% responded as 'never' against this statement.
- Majority (75%) of the respondents gave differentiated assignments in their class according to the ability of the students.

- Majority (91%) of the teachers support the rights of the special needs children to learn in the regular classes with other students.

Thus, it can be said that elementary schools in Mizoram were equipped/ready for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to academic support provided by the teachers.

Discussion on the findings related to schools that are equipped for imparting IE:

Looking into the trend of the findings, it can be said that Elementary schools in Mizoram were not equipped for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to physical infrastructure provided in the schools. With reference to the various criteria and assessment made by the researcher, this conclusion can be made.

However, it was reported by the respondents that due to lack of financial aid, these special services were not met. Since the schools were functioned under the provisions of the Govt. of Mizoram, it was the role of the government authorities and local bodies to provide these services to the CWSNs.

Looking into the trend of the responses on academic support provided by the elementary schools of Mizoram, there were more positive responses in each of the statements. It can be concluded by saying that Elementary schools in Mizoram were equipped/ready for imparting Inclusive Education with reference to academic support provided by the teachers.

However, there were negative responses being observed against the statements as following:

- It was reported that some teachers felt it difficult to deal with some special needs children during their class. Some students did not want to comply with the norms and rules laid by the teachers, they sometimes provoke and did not want to obey the teachers' orders. There were also instances that teachers could not devote their time solely to the CWSNs as they need to look after the others as well. They could not give individualised care and support as per their needs. Therefore, due to inadequacy of teachers and time constrain, teachers could not give undivided attention to the CWSNs which thus sometimes hampered the classroom teaching.
- It was also observed that there were equal number of teachers who used audio-visual aids and who did not use in the class to foster learning. These audio-visual learning aids were beneficial for diverse learners to make the explanation clear and

understandable in an easy way. But these aids were mostly absent in the schools visited. The aids that were commonly used were smart phones and laptops which were brought by the teachers from home since the school did not own any of these. Therefore, schools should be equipped with these audio-visual aids to foster effective learning for diverse learners.

E. Findings related to level of social inclusion faced by the children with special needs (CWSNs) in the elementary schools of Mizoram.

i) Responses of peers:

Social participation

- Majority of the peers (98%) were excited to go to school with the CWSNs.
- Majority (96%) of the peers can easily get along with the CWSNs during their free period like short break and tiffin break.
- Majority (72%) of the peers responded that their classmates does not refuse to socialize with the CWSNs in their class.

Academic participation

- Majority (90%) of the respondents agreed that extra support was given by their teachers apart from the classroom. The teachers were available for the CWSNs in times of need and address to them when they face any difficulty academically.
- All the respondents agreed that teachers encourage the CWSNs whenever they raise questions and accordingly helped them even outside their classroom in case of any academic problem they have; and the headmaster cooperated the teachers in solving any problems faced by the CWSNs academically.

Participation in co-curricular activities

- All of the respondents agreed that their teachers allowed the CWSNs to take part in the co-curricular activities with no hesitation.
- As reported by the peers, majority (80%) of the CWSNs were willing to participate in the co-curricular activities while 20% hesitate to do so.

Physical Access:

- Majority (86%) of the respondents reported that there was no barrier free access in the school.

ii) Responses of parents:

Social participation

- All the respondents agreed that students were excited and were comfortable to get along with the CWSNs in the school.
- Majority (88%) responded that the classmates of their children were not refusing to socialize with them.

Academic participation

- All the respondents agreed that support was given to their children with disability within and out of the school.
- Reading, explaining, carrying their bags and helping them with home assignments were the kind of support provided to their CWSN classmates.
- All the respondents responded that adequate support was given in and outside the school academically.
- All the parents were satisfactory regarding the academic support given by the schools.

Participation in co-curricular activities

- All the parents agreed that their teachers allowed the CWSNs to take part in the co-curricular activities with no hesitation.
- All the CWSNs were willing to participate in the co-curricular activities conducted in the school.

Physical access

- Majority (90%) of the respondents reported that there was no barrier free access in the school.

Observation:

- The researcher observed the excitement of the students to learn and play together in the school campus. At the times of observation, no such behaviour was seen where CWSNs were socially excluded.
- The non-disabled students were easily getting along with the CWSNs during their free periods. They played together and learn together in the class.

- All the schools visited promoted a place where CWSNs could actively take part in the co-curricular activities. The students were also willing to participate with the CWSNs in these activities.
- There was no barrier free access provided in the visited schools.

Overall findings:

- Level of social inclusion was found to be high on parameters like social participation, academic participation and in participation in co-curricular activities.
- There was no barrier free access in majority of the schools.

Discussion on level of social inclusion:

On the grounds of philosophy and pragmatism, inclusive education is primarily about belonging, membership and acceptance (Soodak, 2003). This means that for a school to be inclusive, all learners should have a feeling of belongingness, we-feeling in the school community and acceptance of all members. Looking into the trend of the above analysis, level of social inclusion was found to be high in parameters like social environment, academic environment and in co-curricular activities. The data showed that all the respondents, classmates, teachers and parents of CWSNs reported positively about their social inclusion socially, academically and in co-curricular activities done in the schools. On the contrary, schools were found to be un-equipped to include the CWSNs in terms of physical infrastructure. Barrier free infrastructure which was one the most important criteria for inclusion of CWSNs, was not met in all the schools visited.

Thus, we can conclude from the findings that the level of social inclusion was found to be high and satisfactory in terms of social environment, academic and in co-curricular activities done in the school; but was found to be low and unsatisfactory in terms of physical infrastructure.

F. Findings related to analysis of elementary school textbooks for accommodating CWSNs in Mizoram.

Physical Aspect (PA) of the Textbooks

- There are no images relating to disability in the textbooks analyzed. Including disability-related images in textbooks can have several benefits like promotion of inclusion and awareness, enhancing empathy and acceptance,

supporting students with disabilities and compliance with educational policies. Thus, it was recommended to include disability related images in the textbooks.

- Braille versions of the textbooks were not available for the VI students. Hence, it was suggested to prescribe Braille textbooks for the VI students so that they will be able to read and learn from their own textbooks.
- However, large print textbooks were also developed by SCERT which were distributed among different schools according to their demands. These textbooks will serve useful purpose for the low vision students.

Content Sensitivity (CS) of the Textbooks

- It was found out that the textbooks provide a limited amount of information about disability.
- Out of the four textbooks, there were only two contents relating to disability. There were no other contents highlighting about their disability, their ability and their capability.
- It was suggested that the contents of the textbook should provide a more comprehensive portrayal of persons with disabilities, highlighting about their disability as well as their ability and capacities. This will aware students about the CWSNs by learning how to respect and value disability.
- The world is full of motivating success stories of person with disabilities such as Sudha Chandran, Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller etc. It is required to give place for famous personalities with disabilities in the textbook of Mizo language which will not only motivate person with disability but also create a positive environment in the school and society for them.

Objectives cited (OB) in the Textbooks

- None of the textbooks clearly cited objectives to be attained for making the CWSNs learn.
- Some textbook added remedial class for the slow learners, while some mentioned to adapt their teaching methodologies as per the needs of the students.

- It was suggested that textbooks should clearly have goals and objectives for the CWSNs to learn in the mainstream classroom teaching.
- The goals and objectives should be well defined and highlighted in the textbooks for the teachers to read and adopt while teaching them.

Exercises and Activities (EA) in the Textbooks

- There were no disability-related activity or tasks found in the textbook analysed.
- Proper guidance and help from the teachers will be needed to complete the tasks to be performed.
- In case the CWSNs were not able to perform the activities, teachers should be flexible by giving alternate exercises to be done by the special needs students while keeping their abilities in mind.

Digital Content (DC) in the Textbooks

- All the textbooks provided QR code which can be scanned and easily accessed using digital systems under the Diksha initiative.
- These QR codes and digital technology enhance students' engagement and adaptation to modern educational needs. It was found out that QR codes in textbooks enhance student engagement by 40% (Chakrabarty, 2024). Thus, the digital content in the textbooks served a useful purpose for all types of learners catering their individual learning needs.

Based on the assessment of the entire textbook, it can be concluded that disability is rarely represented in the Mizo textbooks in the elementary schools of Mizoram. Textbooks need to sensitively address and challenge the highlighted concerns and cater to the needs of all the learners. It is also important to consider how well or not the teacher educators and teachers can be flexible in preparing and adapting to the teaching learning resources for providing equal learning opportunities to all.

Discussion on textbook analysis:

Teaching and learning resources played a significant role in educating learners for effective teaching-learning to happen. Among the different teaching learning resources, textbooks are the most essential tools, providing numerous knowledge that

significantly enhance students' learning experiences (Scholarly, 2023). Textbooks thus need to address disabilities, gender bias and discrimination against the socially disadvantaged groups of the society. It needs to cater the diverse needs of the children and address the barriers that exist in minds as well. Moreover, textbooks have direct impact on children's attitude, behaviour and academic achievement (Ahuja & Middleton, 2016). Keeping in mind the importance of textbooks, there was a need to analyse the textbook from an inclusive education perspective. Several research done in different country highlighted limited representation of disabled people in the school textbooks (Ahuja & Middleton, 2016).

The textbook analysed were of different edition since the researcher selected textbooks which were used during the academic year 2023-2024. Regarding the physical aspect of the textbooks, SCERT fixed the font size, the topic headings were written in larger fonts, which were easily visible for the readers. Although the textbooks were convenient to read for healthy students, children with visual impairments may find it to be difficult because of their disability. Braille versions of the textbooks were not available for the students with visual disability. Hence, it was suggested to prescribe Braille textbooks such students so that they would be able to read and learn from their own textbooks. However, large print textbooks were also developed by SCERT which were distributed among different schools who needed them. These textbooks would serve useful purpose for the low vision students in different schools.

Regarding the content of the textbooks, it was found out that they provide a limited amount of information about disability. Out of the four textbooks, there were only two contents about disabled people about having positive attitude towards them. There were no other contents highlighting about their disability, their ability and their capability. It was suggested that the contents of the textbook should provide a more comprehensive portrayal of persons with disabilities, highlighting about their disability as well as their ability and capacities. This would aware students about the CWSNs by learning how to respect and value disability. The world is full of motivating success stories of person with disabilities such as Sudha Chandran, Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller etc. It was required to give place to stories of some famous personalities with disabilities in the textbook of Mizo language which would

not only motivate person with disability but also create a positive environment in the school and society for them.

Regarding the objectives cited in the textbook, none of the textbooks clearly cited objectives to be attained for making the CWSNs learn. Some textbook added remedial class for the slow learners, while some mentioned to adapt their teaching methodologies as per the needs of the students. It was suggested that textbooks should clearly have goals and objectives for the CWSNs to learn in the mainstream classroom teaching. The goals and objectives should be well defined and highlighted in the textbooks for the teachers to read and adopt while teaching them.

Regarding the exercises and activities, there were manifold activities and exercises to be done mentioned in the textbooks. The activities and exercises in the textbook were found to be able to accommodate the CWSNs. However, proper guidance and help from the teachers would be needed. In case the CWSNs were not able to perform the activities, teachers should be flexible by giving alternate exercises to be done by the special needs students keeping in mind their abilities. Looking to the variety of the activities it was assumed that some of them could be done by students with disabilities. But there was no clear-cut plan or instruction to the teachers to address the assessment of the students with disabilities.

The Diksha initiative in India, officially known as the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing, is a national platform aimed at enhancing school education through digital learning. Launched on September 5, 2017, by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) under the Ministry of Education, it serves as a comprehensive resource for teachers and students across the country. Diksha is designed to be inclusive, offering resources in multiple languages and formats to cater to diverse learning needs, including materials for Children with Special Needs (CWSNs). Regarding the digital contents of the textbook, all the textbooks provided QR code which could be scanned and easily accessed using digital systems under the Diksha initiative. These QR codes and digital tech enhance students' engagement and adaptation to modern educational needs. It was found out that QR codes in textbooks enhance student engagement by 40% (Chakrabarty, 2024). Thus, the digital content in the textbooks served a useful purpose for all types of learners catering their individual learning needs.

There have been findings that many textbooks often fail to consider the lived realities of many children and issues such as non-discrimination and stereotyping (Ahuja & Middleton, 2016). Textbooks need to sensitively address and challenge the highlighted concerns and cater to the needs of all the learners. It is also important to consider how well or not the teacher educators and teachers can be flexible in preparing and adapting to the teaching learning resources for providing equal learning opportunities to all.

G. Findings related to problems faced by the children with special needs (CWSNs) in the elementary schools of Mizoram as perceived by their peers and teachers

- The schools were not properly equipped with special modification regarding physical infrastructure like ramps, special toilets, railings, etc. required for CWSNs.
- Lack of financial assistance to build special infrastructure: Majority (89%) of teachers reported that due to lack of financial assistance, no special infrastructure and modifications can be made as per the needs of the CWSNs.
- Rigid curriculum: Due to rigid curriculum, the teachers cannot modify the curriculum according to the needs of the CWSNs. This problem was reported by majority (67%) of the teachers.
- Fixed assessment system: Absence of IEP for the CWSN and fixed assessment system followed, the capabilities of the CWSNs were not recognized in the formal assessment system. This makes them stay behind the non-disabled students academically.

Discussion on problems faced by CWSNs:

From the findings of the objective, the problems faced by the CWSNs physically and academically were lack of physical infrastructure and modifications to accommodate the CWSNs, lack of financial assistance to build special infrastructure, rigid curriculum and fixed assessment system. If barrier free infrastructure were provided in the schools, the CWSNs will benefit the most and special needs children who were not enrolled in the mainstream school would admit themselves as the schools would be able to accommodate them.

Other physical support like ramps, special toilets, railings were hardly seen, and the existing ones were also not in good condition. When the researcher asked the

teachers and Headmasters why they had poor physical infrastructure, they responded by saying that they did not receive regular funds from the Government. Thus, appropriate action are needed to be taken by the concerned authorities to provided financial aid to build and modify physical infrastructure to accommodate the CWSNs.

The teachers sometimes found it hard to teach CWSNs due to rigid curriculum. They cannot modify the curriculum according to the needs of the CWSNs as they must follow the system maintained by Mizoram Board of School Education (MBSE). This problem was reported by majority (67%) of the teachers. Besides, they cannot confine their time to CWSNs only as they need to look after the other students as well. A teacher from Aizawl School 2 said, “We need more time and more support to make the CWSNs learn, but we must complete the syllabus within the stipulated time, due to time constraints, we cannot give the required attention to the CWSN. If an individual education plan (IEP) can be made for the CWSN, and a flexible curriculum and assessment system for them, it will be very helpful for them”.

Thus, due to fixed curriculum and fixed assessment system, the teachers faced problems in providing effecting teaching learning for the CWSNs in the schools. This make them stay behind the non-disabled students academically as it was difficult to keep track of the formal system due to their different ability and capacities.

It was observed that the teachers were helpful, dedicated and passionate in their teaching. They were understanding and were ready to help the students with special needs to academic problems they faced. They tried their best to help them achieve better position academically. It can be concluded that there was a good academic environment between the teachers and the students, and the teachers tried their best to provide better academic environment to promote inclusive education.

H. Findings related to problems in effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

Problem 1: Attitudinal barrier

The root cause here lies in the lack of awareness about the abilities and capacities of special needs children (reported by 71.43% of respondents). Due to this negative attitude, inclusive education has become ineffective in some schools.

Causes:

- i. Lack of awareness about the ability and capacity of the CWSNs.
- ii. Lack of inclusive mindset.
- iii. Not accepting the CWSNs as they are.
- iv. CWSNs are regarded as not educable and incapable to learn.

Impacts:

- i. Negative attitude towards IE.
- ii. Difficulty in the implementation of IE
- iii. IE becomes ineffective
- iv. Teaching of CWSNs was regarded as a trouble.

Suggestion:

Awareness about the abilities and capabilities of the CWSNs should be given to teachers and parents so that they will have a positive attitude, and IE will be more effective.

Problem 2: Infrastructural barrier

The main reason for this problem was inadequate funds to meet the infrastructural needs. Another reason can be negligence or ignorance about the importance of physical modifications for special needs children. Another reason that was reported by 54% of the schools was that there were no special needs children who needed this special infrastructure, as students who sought admission had a moderate level of disability. In addition, due to the geographical conditions of Mizoram, it was almost impossible for every school to provide physical infrastructure for CWSNs because most schools were in isolated hilly areas where ramps could not be installed.

Causes:

- i. Inadequate funds for structural building
- ii. Negligence about the need of special infrastructure
- iii. Ignorance about the need of barrier free school building
- iv. In some schools there were no CWSNs who required such infrastructural modifications.

Impacts:

- i. Inclusion of CWSNs becomes a challenge
- ii. Require physical assistance by their care givers which sometimes creates trouble to take them to school.
- iii. Posed safety risks for the CWSNs which can lead to accidents due to infrastructural barriers.

Suggestion:

The concerned authorities from the government should take necessary actions to provide infrastructural modifications in the Elementary schools of Mizoram to accommodate the CWSNs and promote an inclusive environment.

Problem 3: Untrained teacher

Majority (62%) of the teachers have not received any type on inclusive education, thus creating a problem where teachers lacked skills in taking care of the CWSNs in the classroom. Another problem being reported was that whenever trainings were conducted, the same teacher who had already attended the training was made to attend by the school authorities.

Causes:

- i. No knowledge on the importance of IE trainings
- ii. Negligence of IE training
- iii. Poor attendance on IE trainings
- iv. No strict rules laid by the school authorities to attend the trainings
- v. No credit for promotion in their service

Impacts:

- i. Negatively impacted the teaching-learning process
- ii. Low percentage of teacher training
- iii. Lack of awareness towards IE
- iv. No knowledge of teaching the CWSNs in their class
- v. Hinders the academic performance of the CWSNs

Suggestion:

Strict rules should be laid down by the authorities so that all teachers attend IE trainings and use them practically in the classroom to teach all students effectively.

Problem 4: Impracticability

There were cases when teachers who had attended the training did not disseminate the important information they had learned in the training to their colleagues. And there were also certain cases where the colleagues did not give support to practically impose on the lessons learned while training. They regarded IE as a theoretical basis, while it must be implemented on a practical basis.

Causes:

- i. Failure to disseminate necessary information for educating the CWSNs
- ii. Regarding IE as a theory and failure to implement practically
- iii. Negligence on the needs of CWSNs
- iv. Lack of awareness about the importance of information dissemination.

Impacts:

- i. Hindered progress of CWSNs academically
- ii. Ignorance of other teachers towards IE
- iii. No inclusive practices in the classroom
- iv. Creating barrier between the CWSNs and the non-disabled students.

Suggestion:

Measures should be taken to make teachers put the theories of IE into practice while teaching the CWSNs in the class.

Problem 5: Unacceptance of disability by the parents

Another problem found in this study was that some of the parents did not want to accept the disability of their child. They were afraid that their child would have no future possibility of progressing academically, which made them unaccepted their disability. Parents unacceptance of disability often creates problems for the special needs child to get appropriate treatment due to delayed identification of their disability.

Causes:

- i. Lack of awareness on IE
- ii. Afraid of their child's future having a thought of no hope of progress academically
- iii. Afraid that their child will be humiliated because of their disability
- iv. Ignorance about their child's different ability
- v. Very less amount of financial assistance or privilege given to the CWSNs.

Impacts:

- i. Cynical attitude towards teachers
- ii. Negligence towards their child's disability
- iii. Delayed identification of disability
- iv. Delayed treatment and care

Suggestion:

Parents should be given awareness to accept the disability that their child has so that they can get proper treatment and support at the earliest and that their child will enjoy the rights and benefits that are rightfully theirs. Parents should try to find their child's capabilities and encourage them to do activities of their interest.

Discussion on problems in effective implementation of IE:

The findings of the study revealed that there were different problems in the implementation process of inclusive education in Mizoram. Problems such as inadequately trained teachers (Bhat & Geelani, 2017), negative attitudes of parents and teachers (Hoque, 2022), inadequate infrastructure (Sarao, 2016), and lack of awareness about inclusive education (Singh & Aggarwal, 2015) were also found in other studies conducted in India.

As common problems were found out from different studies, nationwide changes would be helpful to tackle the problems therein. Regarding the inadequacy of trained teachers, the concerned authorities for taking up IE trainings should stand firm making sure all permanent teachers working in elementary schools in Mizoram should attend. Besides, IE trainings should be made mandatory to be attended by all teachers, as IE is the newest approach to educating all learners, which had been

implemented in all government schools in the country (Govt. of Mizoram, 2020). As untrained teachers negatively impacted the academic performance of the CWSNs, which was found out from this research, this matter was to be taken seriously. Thus, effort should be made for all teachers to attend the required training in inclusive education for educating all learners.

The attitudinal barrier found among teachers and parents should also be taken care of by the provision of community-based awareness towards inclusive education. This would be helpful to all parents to have knowledge about IE and would be able to give moral support to the parents of the disabled, which would foster cooperation to work together to have an inclusive environment. With the knowledge of the abilities and capabilities of the CWSNs, parents and teachers can also collaborate and work together to bring about progress and development. Teachers played a pivotal role in creating an inclusive classroom environment where every student felt welcomed, respected, and valued. The role of teachers in inclusive education is very important, as they are the ones who can control the whole classroom environment directly. Thus, it is a necessity to have a positive attitude towards IE to make all children learn. But this is possible only when teachers realize the importance of IE. Therefore, it can be suggested that teachers have awareness about the needs and importance of promoting inclusive classrooms and attend trainings on IE to have knowledge on how to deal with all kinds of children admitted to the school.

Regarding the inadequacy of physical infrastructure, it was imperative for school headmasters and other higher authorities to have knowledge about the needs and importance of structural modifications for the CWSNs in the school. Given that inclusive schools and classrooms must cater to a diverse range of learners, it was essential to implement structural modifications or changes to accommodate those with special needs. It was discovered that many schools did not have functional materials for the CWSNs because they did not receive financial assistance from the government. It was imperative to have an assessment from the government by personally visiting each school to find out the needs therein. Since infrastructural changes require a lot of financial assistance, the concerned authorities from the government therefore must inquire about them and take the necessary actions so that

all schools were equipped with the necessary infrastructure to accommodate learners with special needs.

Impracticability and unacceptance of disability by the parents were the two findings that were rarely found out in other studies. IE had been regarded as only a theoretical aspect that does not need practical implementation. There were diverse learners in the school/classroom, but some teachers did not try to adapt to all the needs of the learners. Teachers need to have flexibility in their teaching methods and approaches to accommodate all learners in their class. Besides, IE is not only a theoretical concept but a practical aspect to be utilized in every class, including all learners, adapting to the needs of all learners. Thus, inclusion should function under the principle of 'equity' and must be implemented practically in the classroom.

As it was reported earlier, 24.32% of the parents did not accept the disability of their children. The reason found out from this study was that parents were afraid of their child's future, thinking negative thoughts like they would not receive the same education or treatment as the non-disabled children. Another reason was that they were afraid that their child would be disrespected and treated badly by others because of their disability. The main problem was ignorance about the abilities of their children. This hindered early identification and led to delayed treatment of their disability. Parents also developed a cynical attitude towards the teachers, which disrupted the relationship between teachers and parents. Thus, proper awareness should be given to the parents of the CWSNs, teaching them about the abilities of their children despite their disabilities, the possibilities they have in the future, their value, and that they can learn best in an inclusive classroom with their classmates.

I. Findings related to prospects of Inclusive education in Mizoram

Looking into the ground reality of IE in Mizoram, there has been many barriers to implement it effectively. Different problems which this study found out were attitudinal barrier of parents and teachers, inadequate trained teachers, impracticability, infrastructural barrier and unacceptance of disability by the parents. These problems need to be tackled so that inclusive education will become effective and that all the students will benefit from the inclusive education system.

As per the findings on the objective no. 7 and 8 and triangulating the information with experts interviewed, it can be concluded that the inclusive education in Mizoram is having several challenges in its implementation. As such it cannot be visualized as having bright prospects. If inclusion is to be successful in Mizoram, the following matters/concern need to be taken care of:

- i. Training conducted under inclusive education needs to be attended by all the teachers at Elementary schools of Mizoram.
- ii. The ideology of IE to be used practically to educate the CWSNs.
- iii. The schools and the office authorities (Eg. BRCs and Samagra Shiksha) should coordinate more and move onto a more co-operative approach towards a better provision of IE in practice.
- iv. The government to look more into matters concerning IE, act more towards making the schools equipped to provide IE.
- v. The attitudinal barriers of the teachers and the parents to be shifted towards positive attitude regarding the ability and capabilities of the CWSNs and give more priorities to their education. To think more of their ability rather than their disability.

Discussion on Prospects of IE in Mizoram:

In view of the status of IE in Mizoram from the findings of the study, it is important to stress on the above matters or concern so that the CWSNs will have a bright future ahead and reach their full potential. The students themselves as well as their parents and teachers should develop more positive outlook towards the ability of the CWSNs and find ways to uplift and develop their ability to achieve more and have a better prospect. This holistic approach will ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive in an inclusive educational environment. The problems therein should be tackled by the concerned authorities for IE to have a bright prospect in Mizoram.

J. Findings related to formulate suggestions for effective implementation of inclusive education in Mizoram.

The suggestions of fifty experts in the field of inclusive education in Mizoram were as follows.

- **Identification and assessment:** For easy and early identification of any type of disability, medical assessment camp should be organized twice every year. The assessment must be done in collaboration with health care professionals from Health Department at each Block level. From the results of the medical assessment, disability certificate must be issued at the earliest accordingly to the identified CWSN.
- **Provision of special educator:** It was recommended to have one special educator or trained special teacher for each school. This will be helpful in attending the problems of CWSNs in the school and promote inclusive education more effectively.
- **Peer-tutoring:** Since there were problems of inadequacy of teachers, ‘peer-tutoring’ should be promoted. It was reported by the experts that students benefitted from their peers thus recommended teachers to promote peer tutoring.
- **Teacher training:** It was also recommended that whenever trainings were conducted, it should be attended by all teachers in alternation. Attendance should be strictly maintained by each school headmaster.
- **Opening of a new course of Special B.Ed. in ID:** From the research findings, majority of the disability in the elementary schools of Mizoram were Intellectual Disability (ID). Therefore, it was suggested to open a new course of Special B.Ed. in ID. Since B.Ed. Spl. Ed. V.I. has been discontinued at SCERT, Mizoram in 2024, the government should restart the programme either at SCERT or the other institution like under the state government; or may write to Mizoram University to start such programmes.
- **Vocational education:** Vocational education should be introduced right before they finish elementary schooling. Many of the CWSNs cannot attend school after elementary stage because of their disability. Therefore, certain kind of vocational and skill development programs should be enhanced during this stage so that they will be able to earn a living and not be dependent solely on others during their lifetime.

- **Resource rooms:** Resource rooms should be established in schools where CWSNs were admitted promoting vocational/skill enhancement courses.

Discussion on suggestions made by experts:

The above suggestions were made by experts in the field of inclusive education. They have great experiences regarding inclusive education in practical field. They wanted to improve the situation of IE in Mizoram to have a brighter prospect so that the CWSNs will have a better-quality education as per their rights. They have suggested that frequent and more systematic identification and assessment for different types of disabilities as early identification was so important as it can, to a certain extent minimise the impact of disability. They also suggested to provide resource teacher in each school and resource rooms in schools where CWSNs are admitted. This will also help to cater the specific needs of the CWSNs and meet their needs academically. It was also suggested to practice peer-tutoring in the class as it has a positive impact in their learning. Knowing the importance of teacher training and the lack of teacher training received in the elementary schools of Mizoram, they also suggested all teachers to attend training on IE so that they will be able to address the immediate needs of the CWSNs. Vocational education was also suggested to be imparted in schools as they understand the abilities of the CWSNs, this was suggested with an intention to promote independence. Lastly, it was felt the need to open a teacher training course on Special B.Ed. in Intellectual disability. As per the findings, majority of the disability types found in the visited schools were having Intellectual disability. It was also recommended by the experts to start up this course so that students having ID will benefit from the trained teachers and will receive the right type of education. Thus, these suggestions were made by experts with strong determination and if these suggestions are fulfilled, IE will be implemented effectively in Mizoram.

Recommendations:

- i. Policymakers should prioritize funding for conducting training programs and provision of barrier free infrastructure in schools to support CWSNs.
- ii. There was no program offered for B. Ed. Special education (I.D.) in Mizoram, rather it was the most needed program looking into the types of disabilities found in the elementary schools. Thus, it was highly recommended to open and offer

programs for B. Ed. Special education (ID) so that students having intellectual disability will benefit as they occupy the largest number of disability types in the Elementary schools.

iii. All Elementary Schools of Mizoram must be ensured to be physically accessible with functional ramps, specialized toilets and barrier free environment.

iv. School-wide Inclusive Awareness Programs should be conducted to promote positive attitudes and support from the non-disabled students towards CWSNs.

v. Assistive technologies: Provide necessary tools like screen readers, hearing aids and customised learning aids for CWSNs.

vi. Curriculum should be adapted to allow differentiated instruction based on the abilities and learning pace of the CWSNs. Curricular adaptations should also be made in the textbooks of Elementary schools of Mizoram, providing a more flexible curriculum.

vii. It was suggested to prescribe Braille textbooks for the VI students so that they will be able to read and learn from their own textbooks.

viii. The contents of the textbook should provide a more comprehensive portrayal of persons with disabilities, highlighting about their disability as well as their ability and capacities. It is required to give place to stories of some famous personalities with disabilities in the textbook of Mizo language which will not only motivate person with disability but also create a positive environment in the school and society for them.

ix. Textbooks should clearly have goals and objectives for the CWSNs to learn in the mainstream classroom teaching. The goals and objectives should be well defined and highlighted in the textbooks for the teachers to read and adopt while teaching them.

x. Teachers should adapt and modify their ways of teaching to meet the needs and abilities of the CWSNs in their classroom teachings.

xi. Teachers in schools along with parents at home should together try to identify and understand the limitations of the learner and help them to overcome the difficulties.

xii. Teachers should foster cooperative learning by encouraging peer tutoring so that the CWSNs benefit the classroom teaching and learn from their peers.

xiii. It is necessary to ensure the presence of resource teachers and special need students' friendly classrooms for the promotion of collaborative teaching and learning. Thus, appointment of a special teacher in each school is recommended.

xiv. CWSN may be given opportunities to participate in all the classroom activities along with normal children.

xv. Regular counselling programs for parents of CWSNs should be conducted to help them understand and support their child's abilities which is crucial for successful inclusion.

xvi. Community participation: The Mizo society is characterized by its close-knit structure, communal living, and strong kinship ties. To get the advantage of this social organization, community participation and collaboration should be advocated to promote inclusive nature in the community.

Suggestion for Further Studies:

In the light of the present study, the researcher come up with the following suggestions for further studies.

- i. Further research is needed to explore innovative practices in inclusive education that can be scaled nationally.
- ii. The status and problems of inclusive education in private institutions in Mizoram may be studied.
- iii. The inclusionary practices in other state may be compared to Mizoram to highlight their strengths and weaknesses.
- iv. A Longitudinal study may be conducted to find out the impact of providing vocational education to CWSNs.
- v. A study on how inclusive education affects non-disabled students' attitudes towards diversity and their social skills development may be studied.
- vi. Evaluate different models of inclusive education like cooperative teaching, peer-tutoring, etc. to determine their effectiveness in promoting an inclusive environment for all students.

Educational Implications of the study:

- i. The present study will have implications for Government authorities. It will provide insights to take necessary measures to improve the inclusive education of CWSN by providing the schools physically accessible with functional ramps, specialized toilets, barrier free environment, assistive technologies like screen readers, hearing aids and customised learning aids and appointments of resource teachers in schools where CWSNs are admitted.
- ii. This present study will have implications for textbook developers and curriculum planners to include contents to provide a more comprehensive portrayal of persons with disabilities in the textbooks.
- iii. The present study will give awareness to the teachers at government elementary schools in Mizoram that they play crucial roles in nurturing the CWSNs. It will also enlighten them that their trainings are vital to accommodate the CWSNs in the classroom for effective teaching and learning.
- iv. This study will be helpful in providing knowledge to teachers and parents in identifying and understanding the strengths and limitations of the CWSNs and help them to overcome the difficulties in the school and at home.
- v. The present study will be helpful for the parents of CWSNs to realize their strengths despite their disability. By fostering a positive attitude, collaborating with schools, providing emotional support, and advocating for their rights, parents can significantly enhance their children's educational experiences and outcomes.

Limitations:

- i. The researcher had intended to conduct the pilot testing of the questionnaires to the teachers by personally visiting the schools. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the test was administered online using Google Forms.
- ii. The researcher could not get the exact required data on district wise analysis of disability and their types from the office records.

iii. Face-to-face interview of the parents of CWSNs was not feasible, thus data were collected through telephonic interview.

Conclusion:

“If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way that they learn.” - Ignacio Estrada

This quote denotes the inclusive nature of educating different types of learners by teaching them the way they learn best. As it is the right of every child to learn, there must be a system wherein it includes all learners to receive education the way they benefit the most. From the findings of this research study, there have been many grounds where improvements need to be made. The infrastructure of the school were not feasible for accommodating the special needs children, teachers training were not adequate to cater the needs of the CWSNs, due to lack of awareness there have been attitudinal barrier among the parents and teachers to include the CWSNs in the mainstream schools, our textbooks also have to include different kinds of disability in the contents so as to aware the children of the types, their abilities and capacities to reduce the social stigma one can have. All these problems need to be tackled by the concerned authorities to provide the type of education everyone is expected to receive.

However, with regard to social inclusion, with the teachings of Christianity have shaped the minds of the Mizo locals where there were teachings that no type of disability should not be mocked or looked down upon. These teachings and practices were also evident in the contents of the Mizo textbooks which were analyzed in this study. Moreover, CWSNs were also found to be socially included in the Mizo community, which were depicted in and around the campus by the non-disabled students as well as the teachers. Teachers were also found to be academically supportive of the CWSNs. They support the rights of the special needs children to learn in the mainstream school and always lend a helping hand in times of need.

Thus, this study highlighted the positive and negative aspects of the status of inclusive education in the elementary schools in Mizoram.