

**STATUS AND STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES ACT 2016 IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF
MIZORAM**

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LALMUANKIMI

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**STATUS AND STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION
OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016 IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF MIZORAM**

By

LALMUANKIMI

Department of Education

Supervisor

Dr. ABHA SHREE

Submitted

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Education of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**



Dr. Abha Shree
M.Sc. (Zoology), M.Ed., Ph.D.
Department of Education
9532985395

Email: **abhashree16@gmail.com**
mzut217@mzu.edu.in
Mobile: **8974300924,**

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify the thesis entitled '**Status and Stakeholders' Perceptions on Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram**' submitted by Lalmuankimi, Ph.D., Scholar, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Regn No. MZU/Ph.D./1650 of 21.10.2020 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education of the Mizoram University, Aizawl, India embodies the record of original investigations carried out by her under my supervision. She has been duly registered and the thesis presented is worthy of being considered for the award of Ph.D. Degree. The research work has not been submitted for any degree of any other university.

Dated:

(DR. ABHA SHREE)

Place: Aizawl

Supervisor

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**AIZAWL - 7696004, MIZORAM****Month:****Year: 2024****DECLARATION**

I **LALMUANKIMI**, 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.

(LALMUANKIMI)

Scholar

(PROF. LOKANATH MISHRA)

(DR. ABHA SHREE)

Head

Supervisor

Department of Education

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Date:
Place: Aizawl

(LALMUANKIMI)
Department of Education
Mizoram University

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Abbreviations

ADIP	Assistance to Disabled Persons
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CAI	Computer Assisted Instruction
CwSEN	Children with Special Educational Needs
CwSN	Children with Special Needs
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DEPwD	Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
DI	Differentiated Instruction
DIET	District Institute of Educational Training
DIKSHA	Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing
EAHCA	Education for All Handicapped Children Act
HBE	Home-Based Education
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEDC	Integrated Education for Disabled Children
IEDSS	Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage
IEP	Inclusive Education Programme

ILO	International Labour Organization
ITEP	Integrated Teacher Education Program
LIG	Low-Income Group
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MDGSs	Millennium Development Goals
MS	Multiple sclerosis
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NEP 2020	National Education Policy
NIOH	National Institute of the Orthopedically Handicapped
NISHTHA	National Initiatives for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement
OPEs	Out-of-Pocket Expenses
PARAKH	Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development
PIED	Project Integrated Education for Disabled
POA	Programme of Action
PwD Act 1995	Persons with Disabilities Act 1995
RCI	Rehabilitation Council of India
RMSA	Rashtrya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
RO	Registered Organisations
RPwD Act 2016	Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016
RTE	Right to Education

SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SEZs	Special Educational Zones
SJ&E	Social Justice and Empowerment
SS	Samagra Shiksha
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
SwD	Students with Disabilities
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Theoretical Background of the Study

The acceptance of variety, in general, is the critical factor that underpins the achievement of inclusion. The backgrounds of today's children are more varied than ever before. This includes differences in language, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and academic skills (Salend, 2008). Two essential elements for inclusion are efficient administration and training; inclusion will not be achieved if the stakeholders lack expertise in these fields. Successful classroom management, good teaching strategies, effective accommodation practises, and instructional flexibility are the four components of successful inclusion.

Classrooms that foster learning are defined by well-designed organizational and management frameworks. Effective classroom management, encompassing physical, procedural, instructional and behavioural aspects, establishes the foundation for efficient instruction delivery. Effective classroom management is required if students are to benefit from any form of instruction, especially in inclusive classrooms where students display a wide range of diversity (Jones & Jones, 2007). Any student's learning will not be at its best without efficient organization and management of the classroom. Certain modifications to the physical environment, the curriculum, the delivery of education, or the assignments given to some pupils are necessary. Many disabled students are capable of succeeding academically, but only with suitable accommodations. They can be interventions tailored specifically for children with disabilities or broad accommodations that are suitable for all students.

1.1.1 History of Special Education

The education of CwSN was not given much thought until the 1900s. But as the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity spread throughout France and America. Political reformers, as well as influential figures in the fields of education and

medicine, were interested in the direction of meeting these people's educational demands. As a result, France started as a leader in special education. In this take, in 1985, Valentine Huay established a school for blind students in Paris and created a preliminary form of finger spelling for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and a case study in the field of mental retardation education. A quick look at how society has perceived people with disabilities over the previous few decades makes it evident how essential attitudes are and how they affect these people's lives; after all, attitudes affect the services that are offered to people with various types of disabilities. The survival of individuals without disabilities was valued more highly in prehistoric and early historical civilizations, and those who had disabilities were frequently allowed to pass away at birth or in infancy in order to relieve others of the responsibility for their care. Superstitious beliefs decided the destiny of the crippled during the middle ages.

Either they were respected as endowed with supernatural powers and treated well or viewed as demons and punished brutally. People began to sympathize with them and were subsequently placed in isolated areas for their protection. In recent times, there has been a notable decrease in disability and an improvement in functional abilities due to the development of scientific knowledge and the accessibility of treatments for a range of impairments. Increased understanding has caused society to place more emphasis on granting people equal rights by integrating them into all facets of life and society. It has also demonstrated the benefits of inclusion in their development instead of segregation and specialized care. Special schools for individuals with impairments have emerged in India as well as other regions of the world. In 1883, Amritsar hosted the first school for the blind. After that, the number of these institutions quickly increased. In all of India, there are currently 3200 special schools.

The earliest schools for children with disabilities were founded in the early 20th century when special education in India began. However, the government did not formally acknowledge the value of educating children with impairments until the disability act was passed in 1995. Children with impairments have frequently been ostracised and kept out of mainstream education before this. This resulted from a

lack of knowledge and resources to meet their particular requirements. But once the disability act was passed, the government promised to educate all children, including those who have disabilities.

In the last several years, significant progress has been made in India's special education sector. More inclusive schools have been built by the government, and inclusive education which integrates students with disabilities into regular classrooms, is becoming more popular. This has promoted social inclusion by enabling children to engage with their peers who are not impaired and acquire a well-rounded education. In order to meet the requirements of children with disabilities, new teaching strategies and resources have been developed, and the number of special education programmes has increased. This has raised awareness of the value of inclusive education and enhanced the quality of education for children with disabilities. However, despite these improvements, India's special education system faces numerous obstacles. A proper education for children with disabilities remains mostly impeded by a lack of government financing, a shortage of qualified teachers and restricted resources.

In conclusion, special education in India has progressed significantly over the years, but much more needs to be done to guarantee that all children with disabilities receive an excellent education. India can ensure that children with disabilities have the same possibilities for success as their classmates without disabilities by tackling the obstacles and persistently advocating for inclusive education.

1.1.2 Disability

As per the UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development (2018), disability is defined as “a limitation in a functional domain that arises from the interaction between a person's intrinsic capacity and environmental and personal factors.” The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1992 describes a disabled individual as someone with a physical or mental impairment that significantly and persistently hinders their ability to perform everyday tasks. The preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006) recognizes that disability is ‘an evolving concept’ and emphasizes that it arises from the

interaction between individuals with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers, which prevent uninhibited participation in society on an equal footing with others. Addressing the challenges encountered by individuals with disabilities necessitates interventions aimed at eliminating environmental and social obstacles (WHO, 2011). Over the last forty years, the understanding of disability has evolved from being seen purely as an individual impairment to being recognized as a broader social issue. People with disabilities are viewed as facing limitations in their daily activities due to a complex interplay of various factors, including personal attributes and environmental and social/political contexts, wherein the social model of disability suggests that societal barriers, whether physical or attitudinal, significantly impact individuals with disabilities (Chandrashekar et al., 2010). Even young children have fallen prey to social exclusion and other negative behaviours due to their disabilities. (Huckstadt & Shutts, 2014).

The 2011 Census of India recorded 26,20,974 children and young adults aged 0-19 years; however, the fact reality is that most children with disabilities do not have access to education. Alur (2003) noted that in India, there is a discrepancy between policy and practice, where the government advocates for an “inclusionist” philosophy through its programmes while simultaneously supporting a “segregationist” approach by endorsing special schools via their aid to voluntary organization schemes. The preceding discussion on societal reactions to individuals with disabilities and various perspectives on disability lead us to the concept of inclusive education for children with disabilities: understanding what constitutes inclusive practice and what does not. Inclusive Education (IE) is described as a process that addresses the diverse needs of all learners by minimizing barriers to and within the academic milieu, which involves children attending their age-appropriate classes at their local schools with personalized support (UNICEF 2007). Promoting inclusion in schools and workplaces emphasizes that the objective should not be to ‘cure’ individuals with different brain functioning but to accept them as part of the mainstream, where they will receive the necessary support to ensure their full participation as community members (Rosen 2019). Teachers have successfully begun using technology to enhance the skills of students with and without

intellectual disabilities. This includes using iPads, calculators, laptops for students, smart boards, and computer-assisted instruction (CAI) in the classroom. However, these practices are not yet widespread across the country. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) are strategies that have been shown to meet the diverse learning needs of children, including those with disabilities (Tomlinson 1999).

Similarly, teaching children with autism requires an in-depth understanding of autism spectrum conditions, how autism may influence learning, and how it affects each individual specifically, including highly individualized programs, taking into account the strengths and challenges of each child to maximize their skills and potential. As our understanding of autism and its varied effects on children grows and deepens, teaching methods also evolve to incorporate this knowledge, adapting to their unique learning styles (Barua et al., 2019). India adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, which advocates for free, quality, inclusive education as the fundamental human right of every child with a disability. Consistent with the UNCRPD, ensuring that the NEP drives increased budgetary allocations, a systemic approach with coordination across government departments, cessation of segregation of disabled children, and a concentration on sustainable pathways to higher education and employment (Sarkar, 2020).

A convergence has been established between the ADIP (Assistance to Disabled Persons) and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan schemes on a cost-sharing basis, with a 60:40 ratio between the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) and the Ministry of HRD, effective until March 31, 2020, as per the 14th Finance Commission. Under the ADIP scheme, the DEPwD has successfully extended program benefits to numerous individuals over the past twenty years. While the scheme's efforts to improve the quality of life for Persons with Disabilities are commendable, the number of beneficiaries is still inadequate given the scale of investments.

1.1.3 National Perspective on Disability

Disability is often viewed as a punishment for sins committed in previous lives by the individual or their family members (Schlossar, 2004), where families perceive their children as “cursed” and burdensome, which can result in negligence and rejection. Earlier families were even seen to hide their children from the community out of fear of social rejection (Girimaji et al., 2001), further reiterating their belief in a ‘just world,’ where divine retribution explains life's events and survival depends on continuous care and family protection. (Ghai, 2020). The majority of persons with disabilities in India, accounting for 69% (GOI 2016), live in rural areas and lack sufficient education or employment, where their concerns and needs are not directly expressed by themselves but are communicated by other actors and stakeholders. There exists a lacuna in developing a political awareness necessary to critically analyze their situations and causes to address their concerns as a collective agency from the grassroots to international forums.

Among India’s 1.21 billion population, approximately 26.8 million people are disabled, making up 2.21% of the total population. This population consists of 623.2 million males and 587.6 million females. Around 69% of disabled individuals reside in rural areas, while 8.1 million live in urban areas. In India, 20% of disabilities are related to locomotion, 19% to vision, and another 19% to hearing. Additionally, 8% of disabled individuals report having multiple disabilities. Statistics indicate that there are more disabled males than females. Among disabled males, 22% have mobility issues, 18% have vision or hearing impairments, and 8% report multiple disabilities. For disabled females, 20% have vision or hearing impairments, 18% have mobility issues, and 8% have multiple disabilities. The highest number of disability cases is in the 10-19 age groups, accounting for approximately 4.62 million individuals. Among those aged 5-19, about 61% attend educational institutions, with 57% of these being male children. Overall, 55% of the disabled population is literate, amounting to approximately 14.6 million individuals, while 45% are illiterate. Among disabled males, 62% are literate compared to 45% of disabled females. Of the total disabled population, 13% have completed secondary education, with 16% of disabled males and 5% of disabled individuals holding graduate degrees or higher.

Among disabled males, 6% are graduates. The illiteracy rate among disabled males is 38%, while 55% of disabled females are illiterate. Among literate disabled females, only 9% have completed secondary education, and 3% are graduates or higher. Comparing educational levels, urban areas outperform rural areas for both males and females. In urban areas, 67% of the disabled population is literate, compared to 49% in rural areas. Additionally, 20% of the disabled population in urban areas have secondary education, and 10% are graduates or higher. In rural areas, 10% have completed secondary education, and 2% hold a graduate degree or higher.

Furthermore, according to the 2011 Census, the workforce participation rate of persons with disabilities is as low as 36.34% (constituting 26.04% of primary workers and 10.30% of marginal workers); that is, a total of 97, 44,386 disabled persons are employed out of a total of 26,810,557 disabled persons. There is a 2.68% (a rise from 1.87% in 2001) of the total workforce, which is a sad reflection since even by governmental estimates, 2.21% of the total population of India is disabled, a low workforce rate of participation reflects higher levels of unemployment among disabled persons. Disabled people are receptive to the countless hindrances they defy, ending what will redeem the likelihood of all these people who have a mighty capacity to hold out to the world (Johnstone et al., 2019). A diverse approach is crucial for successful inclusion in the teaching-learning process. Today's students bring unprecedented diversity in terms of their backgrounds. They come from various linguistic, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic backgrounds, and sexual orientations while striving to enhance their academic skills (Salend, 2008). NITI Aayog, the successor to the Planning Commission (however), has offered minimal support to the disability sector. The only relevant aspect falls under one of the 'verticals'—social justice and empowerment (SJ&E)—which is a key division of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, along with the Ministries of Tribal Affairs and Minority Affairs. NITI Aayog, the successor to the Planning Commission, has offered minimal support to the disability sector. The only relevant aspect falls under one of the 'verticals'—social justice and empowerment (SJ&E)—which is a key division of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, along with the Ministries of Tribal Affairs and Minority Affairs (Bhattacharya, 2020). However, Tamil Nadu is seen to

surpass all other states and union territories in India in the number of disability schemes, scholarships, and early intervention centres (Vasanthi, 2020). Advancing beyond uniform sensory interpretations of the social world, it is essential to establish a social order that embraces diversity and reflects a range of abilities (Reddy, 2011). In this context, Rao (2007) argues that applying the capability approach in Disability Studies merely serves as a right-affirming endorsement of social Darwinist contractualism.

1.1.4 International Perspective on Disability

It is estimated that between 110 million and 190 million people worldwide have some form of disability, with nearly one-fifth experiencing significant disabilities. In a collaborative effort to better understand disability worldwide, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank released the World Report on Disability in 2011. This report, based on nationally representative data from 59 countries, estimated that about 15% of the global population—over a billion people—live with some form of disability. These figures are expected to rise, given that the world population was 7 billion in 2011, reached 7.5 billion in 2017, and is projected to be around 10 billion by 2050 (United Nations, Populations Division, 2017). Analyzing global demographic data reveals that one in seven individuals worldwide has some form of disability. Despite making up a substantial portion of the population, persons with disabilities often lead very challenging lives, where their 'disability' is frequently discerned as their 'inability'. Miles (2000) explored the historical, cultural, and heritage foundations of disability services in South Asia over the past thousand years, imagining an ideal world without disabled individuals. This vision aligns with the dominance of 'normality' in societies where differences are marginalized. The effects of industrial capitalism on the majority of the world were especially harsh for disabled individuals, where the chances of implementing initial changes were slim due to the widespread and deeply rooted disabling barriers. In addition to this, the shortage of funding to address these sources of impairment is worsened by the policies of international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which compel governments to reduce public services to manage substantial international debts (Barnes & Mercer, 2005).

Negative treatment and social exclusion of people with disabilities have been observed even in young children (Huckstadt & Shutts, 2014). Negative biases and exclusion, when guided by one's medical condition or physical limitations, further emphasize discrimination and ostracism against people with disabilities (Dunn & Brody, 2008; Watermeyer & Gorgens, 2014). Viewing disability as a medical condition lays the groundwork for 'prejudice and discrimination', as it becomes intimidating to separate disability from the individuals who endure it (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017). In a global economy, labour force disability in one region incurs losses in productivity and significantly strains welfare systems throughout worldwide production and distribution chains (Gifford, 2017). In fostering equitable learning environments and opportunities for students with disabilities (SWD), Connor (2016) emphasized the pertinence of educators being aware of the history of individuals with disabilities, their experiences with ableism, their fight for citizenship rights, and so on. School leaders reinforce and support IEP goals that are centred on student deficits, focusing on individual intervention outcomes rather than a societal approach (Klang et al., 2016). A social interpretation of disability buoys up organisations that perhaps perceive disability as an organisational drawback and, in turn, come up with a prudent outlook to recognize and take off common disabling barriers. Culturally relevant disability pedagogy has the potential to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in a manner similar to how culturally relevant pedagogy has effectively supported the outcomes of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups. A unified definition of disability incorporates both social and medical perspectives that will facilitate cross-disciplinary research, enabling simultaneous conclusions from various viewpoints. However, diverse approaches within and across different disciplines (such as social science, medical science, and critical theory) can help develop paradigms and theories. A single field must establish shared concepts to foster field-building and contribute to a robust body of high-quality research evidence (Ahram et al., 2021).

Disability emerged as a critical focus in movements promoting healthy living, sports and physical activity, as well as daily activities like walking and stair climbing (Rimmer & Marques, 2012). Activists and human rights advocates rallied around the

slogan “Nothing About Us, Without Us.” Their efforts aimed at “breaking down barriers” to attain full societal inclusion. This included mainstreaming students in classrooms, ensuring rights to work and earn, having children cast their opinions, and modifying the physical environment with features like power-assisted doors, curb cuts, ramps instead of stairs, and bathrooms and kitchens that are accessible (Linton, 2007). The Disability Employment Quota between Social Policy and Anti-Discrimination was designed to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and is implemented in over 100 countries worldwide (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2019), emphasizing the importance of global social policy and research in advocating for the policy rights of disabled individuals who are excluded from social programs and services.

Thus, what was once understood as a socially constructed concept, influenced by limitations in activity and participation, and heavily shaped by an individual's physical, social, economic, and political environment is now viewed as the outcome of the interaction between individuals and their physical, social, economic, and cultural environments, encompassing all their characteristics. The rights of individuals with disabilities necessitate all policies to entreat their inclusion through a human rights approach. Adopting rights-based policy frameworks and making amends in their implementation by raising awareness and training will change attitudes to help address some of the environmental barriers. This further reiterates the belief that Grasping the “why” behind inclusive education and equality can guide educators in determining “how” to progress (Gomez & McKee, 2020).

1.2. The Disability Rights and Government Intervention in India: A Historical Account

Several projects and programmes were established and implemented by the government of India to support the education and welfare of people with disabilities. The following were some of the initiatives and programmes by the Indian government:

1.2.1 Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC)

The central government's Ministry of Welfare introduced the IEDC in 1982 under the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. It seeks to include physically and intellectually challenged individuals in society as equal citizens and to integrate underprivileged children into the mainstream educational system. States and UTs receive full assistance for using normal aids, incentives and specially trained teachers to educate students with certain mild disabilities in regular classroom settings. In 1992, the IEDC programme underwent revision; as per the updated programme, schools that participated in the "integration" of children with impairments were eligible for aids and appliances. Also, a number of NGOs have received total funding to carry out the initiative.

1.2.2 Project Integrated Education for Disabled (PIED)

This project was emulated to meet the special needs of differently-abled children with physical and intellectual disabilities. In the final quarter of 1987, it was introduced in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. During the latter part of 1988, it was expanded to include the states of Mizoram and Haryana. The primary goals of PIED were to improve the fulfilment of the needs of differently-abled children in the demonstration sites, to build acceptance for the needs of these children in the classroom and to prepare the general education system to meet the goal of education for the differently-abled children.

1.2.3 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The SSA is India's main flagship programme to make basic education accessible. It is implemented by following the Children's Right to Free and Compulsory Act 2009. The scheme aims to provide useful elementary education for all children 6-14 years of age. It also aims to bridge gender, social and regional gaps through community involvement in school management. Children from ST/SC, minority groups, urban poor children, children from other disadvantaged groups, and children with disabilities receive special attention when it comes to their inclusion and engagement in the educational process. The framework for implementing special education

emphasizes that providing education to all differently-abled children in mainstream schools is the programme's main focus. It guarantees that all children with special needs, regardless of their type, classification, or severity, get high-quality, inclusive education. While mainstreaming all CwSN in neighbourhood schools is the ultimate objective, SSA also supports a variety of methods, choices and strategies for CwSN education, including home-based learning and community-based rehabilitation. In SSA, quality, social and physical access are considered inclusion components. Physical access entails CwSN mapping, identification, assessment for need mapping, educational placement, appliances and assistance and architectural barrier removal.

1.2.4 Samagra Shiksha (SS)

Inclusive education for CwSN has been one of the main initiatives of the former SSA, RTE, and RMSA schemes. Samagra Shiksha (SS) concentrated on improving standards for all students, including those with disabilities in classes I through XII, from 2018 - 2019. It strongly emphasises raising the standard of instruction for all pupils, especially CwSN. As a result, this intervention is crucial to SS. The component offers assistance for a range of student-focussed activities such as identifying and evaluating CwSN, supplying appliances, aids, corrective surgeries, braille books, large print books, uniforms, therapeutic services, creating teaching-learning materials, assistive devices and equipment, establishing an environment and conducting orientation programme to foster awareness of the needs and nature of CwSN, developing and purchasing instructional materials, stipends for girls with special needs. The needs of CwSN inside the school, additional independent resource support is also made available.

The main objectives of SS were the identification and assessment of differently-abled children at the school depending on their needs, providing aids and appliances, medical facilities, vocational training support, guidance and counselling services, therapeutic services for the students' requirements, eliminating obstacles accessing classrooms, laboratories, libraries, play/recreational area and toilets for the differently-abled students. In order to teach and involve differently-abled students in the classroom, general teachers should receive training and awareness-raising

activities. Additionally, a capacity development programme will be implemented for special educators.

1.2.5 National & International Policies and Programmes for Persons with Disability

The earliest documentation of counting individuals with disabilities in India dates back to the beginning of the modern Indian Census in 1872. This census included questions about both physical and mental impairments, as well as leprosy. Subsequent decadal censuses continued to collect data on infirmities until 1931 (MOSPI, 2012). Sargent Report (1944), or CAGE report, is considered a significant milestone in the efforts to integrate children with disabilities into regular schools in British India while still recommending special schools (when necessary) based on the type and severity of the disability. Articles 1, 2, 22, and 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN) (1948) are pertinent to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Education Commission (1966) stressed that the education of children with disabilities should be “integrated into the general education system,” which was reinstated in the National Policy of Education (1968). NPE 1968 suggested expanding educational facilities and initiating a program integrating disabled children into mainstream schools, enabling them to study alongside their peers.

Eight years later, in 1974, the Welfare Ministry of India initiated a programme called the Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme to provide financial assistance to cover expenses such as books, stationery, school uniforms, transportation, special equipment, and aids for children with disabilities. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975 granted individuals with disabilities the right to education along with necessary support (Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Pub. L., 1975). Acknowledging the shortcomings of the medical and social models, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH) in the 1980s (WHO, 1980). This classification emphasized the social repercussions of impairment and disability, described as ‘handicap.’ It defined

handicap as a disadvantage arising from an impairment or disability that obstructs an individual's ability to fulfil societal roles. The proclamation of 1981 as the "International Year for the Disabled" led to the inclusion of a question on disability in censuses conducted globally (thereafter). The World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (1982) came up the following year as an international strategy to improve disability prevention and rehabilitation, to equalize opportunities, and to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities, thereby promoting national development. Significant national milestones, like the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, came before similar international legal rights were established. In 1990, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) was revised to become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provided further educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Despite the belief that IDEA was a fair law, it soon became evident that segregation and inequities persisted in the education system through special education (Gomez & McKee, 2020). The UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) came up as a significant resolution to enhance the educational scenario for individuals with disabilities.

Conversely, the Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992) set standards for delivering services to persons with disabilities and assigned the Council the responsibility of standardizing and regulating the training of professionals and personnel in rehabilitation and special education. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), which came up a couple of years later, suggested schools should adopt an inclusive approach to address biased mindsets, foster an inclusive society, and attain universal education. After the Persons with Disabilities Act or Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation (1995), a national body for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Mental Retardation, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities was constituted under National Trust Act (1999). In the same year, the Organization of American States introduced the first international ban on disability discrimination with the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.

The International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH-2) describes impairment as the loss or abnormality of a body structure or physiological/psychological function, whereby the terms “disability” and “handicap” have been updated to “activity limitation” and “participation.” It is further anticipated that the ICIDH classification for disability and the ICD classification for the diagnosis will be used together to improve predictions regarding healthcare utilization, needs, outcomes, and the costs induced in healthcare services (Pal et al., 2000). Education for All (Flagship): Right to Education for Persons with Disabilities (2001) was a flagship program under UNESCO that further emphasized the Dakar statement (2000) and clarified that without proactively including children with disabilities and other minority groups, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) cannot be achieved. The UNCRPD recognized accessibility as a fundamental right and urged governments to implement reasonable accommodations, that is, necessary and appropriate modifications/adjustments that do not place an excessive or undue burden, thus ensuring that individuals with disabilities can enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others (UNCRPD, 2006). The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities presents its principles which consist of:

- a) Valuing inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the ability to make personal choices and independence
- b) Ensuring non-discrimination.
- c) Facilitating full and active participation and integration into society.
- d) Recognizing and embracing diversity, including persons with disabilities, as part of human diversity.
- e) Promoting equality of opportunity.
- f) Ensuring accessibility.
- g) Upholding gender equality.

In the same year, the National Policy for Persons with Disability (2006) acknowledged individuals with disabilities (in India) as a valuable human resource for the nation and aimed to establish an inclusive environment that guaranteed them equal opportunities, safeguarded their rights, and facilitated their complete

integration into society. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, is widely recognized as a pivotal legislation aimed at reshaping the education system to ensure inclusivity, which granted children with severe and multiple disabilities the option of home-based education. RTE Amendment Act (2012) granted children with severe and multiple disabilities the option to choose home-based education. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, expands upon the previous 1995 PwD Act by encompassing 21 categories of disabilities, up from the last 7. This new legislation underscores various rights of persons with disabilities, including rights to equality, opportunity, property ownership and inheritance, home and family life, safe and secure living conditions, access to medical care, and reproductive rights. Another significant aspect of this Act is the enhancement of reservation for persons with disabilities in government jobs, increasing it from 3% to 4%.

UNESCO's General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among these, some goals uninhibitedly cater to the education, growth and employment of persons with disabilities. Goal 4 focuses on inclusive, equitable, quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities. Goal 8 aims to foster sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, along with full and productive employment and decent work for all, including people with disabilities. Goal 10 seeks to reduce inequality by promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of everyone, including those with disabilities. Goal 11 emphasizes providing universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green and public spaces, particularly for individuals with disabilities. Lastly, Goal 17 highlights the importance of revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development and substantially enhancing the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable data broken down by disability.

1.2.6 The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act 1992

The RCI Act was passed by parliament in September 1992 and was established as a statutory body on 22nd June 1993. In 2000, parliament made amendments to the act to expand its scope. Standardizing curricula, maintaining a single rehabilitation

registry of all licensed professionals and employees operating in the rehabilitation and special education domains, and overseeing and regulating services rendered to individuals are among the responsibilities delegated to RCI. According to the act, rehabilitation professionals include speech and audiologists, clinical psychologists, technicians for hearing aids and ear moulds, rehabilitation engineers and technicians, special educators for the education and training of the disabled, vocational counsellors, employment officers and placement officers who work with the disabled, multi-purpose rehabilitation therapists, and any other category of professionals that the central government may from time to time notify the council about. The act also establishes penalties for unfit individuals who provide services to persons with disabilities. Rights of individuals holding qualifications listed in the schedule to enrol:

- a) Shall hold a position as a rehabilitation professional in the government or any institution run by a local or other authority;
- b) Shall practice as a rehabilitation professional anywhere in India;
- c) Shall have the entitlement to sign or authenticate any certificate required by law to be signed or authenticated by a rehabilitation professional;
- d) Shall have the entitlement to provide expert testimony in any court under section 45 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (1 of 1872), on any matter related to persons with disabilities.

1.2.7 Person with Disability Act 1995

Person with Disabilities Act, 1995 was brought into the front by the Lok Sabha on 12th December 1995 and became operative on 7th February 1996. The Act covers the entire of India, saving the states of Jammu and Kashmir. For the upliftment of differently-abled persons in the country, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, supplanted the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, when the United Nations General Assembly approved its Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 13th December 2006.

The Lok Sabha passed the Person with Disabilities Act of 1995 on December 12, 1995, and it came into effect on February 7, 1996. Except for the state of Jammu

& Kashmir, the Act is pertinent to all of India. When the United Nations General Assembly enacted the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities on 13th December 2006, it superseded the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995 to improve the lives of those differently abled. The passage of the 1995 Act set out the most favourable classification and systematization of disabilities within the Government of India, which set out individuals enduring ‘not below 40% of any permanent disability as verified by a healthcare professional’ to be defined as disabled.

This Act was popularly considered one of the most extensive pieces of disability law in the peripheral area. The Act had notably enlisted seven conditions of disabilities, namely a) blindness, b) low vision, c) leprosy cured, d) hearing impairment, e) locomotor disability, f) mental retardation and g) mental illness. As per the PwD Act’s (1995) definition of Mental Retardation, it is a constrain caused by interrupted or unaccomplished mental development of a person, which is especially pervaded by below-par intelligence, whereby Mental illness was unambiguously explicated as any breed of mental disorder except for mental retardation. It encompassed directives on non-discrimination when it comes to constructing designs and government jobs. A 3% job reservation policy is formally discerned for police, educational organizations, and other government institutions. A 1% reserve is imperative for all three conjoined areas of impairment: auditory, sight, and locomotion (Kumar & Dwivedi, 2017).

In all likelihood, the year 1995 became a year with a point of reference for the DRM, which situates the commencement of an out-and-out new era, where people opted out of the distress from disability by finding resolution in educational institutions and government services.

PwD Act 1995 (Chapter 5) secures:

- Accessibility of free education in a conducive environment to every child with a disability until he reaches the age of 18 years.
- Initiate furtherance and consolidation of pupils with disability in regular schools.

- Stimulation of laying out special schools in both public and private sectors across demographic divides of the country for those necessitating special education, such that children with disabilities can find schools for themselves, be it in whichever part of the country.
- These special schools should inculcate vocational training facilities to equip the children with disability, making them eligible for a comprehensive job market.
- Part-time classes are to be conducted for those children with disabilities who believe that attending classes on a whole-time basis after completion of 5th standard is a tough task.
- An initiative to provide functional literacy via special part-time classes for children with a disability beyond 16 years of age.
- Appropriate orientation is to be given to children with disability in rural areas while importing non-formal education, thus availing whatever manpower is available to its brim.
- Initiation of open schools or open universities to pass on education through them.
- Conducting classes or interactive discourses with the help of different sources of communicative media, namely electronic media.
- Free-of-cost books are to be made accessible along with the availability of other equipment that is needed to provide education to every child with a disability.

Research initiatives are to be taken by government and non-governmental agencies in order to cater to the purpose of delineating and developing special teaching learning materials, teaching aids, assistive devices, and other necessary items that will help in giving equal opportunities in education to children with disability.

The government should initiate the development of a reasonable number of teacher training institutions, National institutions and other voluntary agencies or organizations that specialize in training the disabled. This is done to provide trained

manpower for special integrity or inclusive schools to accommodate children with disabilities in a holistic manner.

Assigned governments, without being biased, should arrange for an all-inclusive education scheme which shall provide for the following:

- Provide appropriate transportation facilities or alternate financial incentives to children with a disability so that they can be present at school without hassle.
- Paying heed to and deconstructing architectural barriers that discourage students from enrolling in schools, colleges, or other educational institutions, as well as the accessibility of vocational and professional training programs to impart hands-on training.
- Supply of books, educational stationery, uniforms, etc., to the children with disability who are attending school.
- Allowance of scholarships for children with disabilities.
- Creation of a felicitous forum for the atonement of parents' resentments concerning how their children are to be placed in jobs or positioned in life.
- Amendments to the system of evaluation should be made to stamp out wholly mathematical questions while keeping in mind the convenience of blind students and those with low vision.
- Reform the curriculum in a way that allows children with disabilities to thrive and make use of the maximum.
- Reorganizing the curriculum so that students with hearing impairment will be given the upper hand to choose only one language as part of their curriculum.

Provisions shall be made for all educational institutions to hand over amanuensis to visually impaired students, that is, blind students and students with low vision.

It lays out the foundational principles for the emancipation of people with disabilities, namely, regard for one's integrity and dignity, autonomy of self, the

prerogative to make decisions autonomously, practice power without external influence, free from biases or prejudices, stressing effective and implicit participation, inclusion, high opinion for diversity and affirmative participation of people with disabilities, uniformity in distribution of opportunity to live up to the spirits of equality between sexes, multiplicity, humanity, and respect for the rights of people with disabilities. India endorsed the aforementioned convention and became a signatory on 1st October 2007. It is deemed essential to put into effect the convention mentioned above that Parliament passed.

1.2.8 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006)

On 13th December 2006, the UN headquarters in New York adopted the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, and its optional protocol (A/RES/61/106) became available for signature on 30th March 2007. There were 44 parties to the optional protocol, 82 parties to the convention and one ratification of the convention (United Nations [UN], n.d.)

Some of the articles of the UNCRPD have been mentioned as follows:

Article 1: Purpose

The current convention aims to uphold the intrinsic dignity of all people with disabilities and to guarantee that they can fully and equally enjoy all human rights and basic freedoms. Individuals classified as disabled may have chronic physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, when combined with additional obstacles, may prevent them from fully and equally participating in society.

Article 3: General principles

The following will be the guiding principles of the current Convention: respect for people's independence, autonomy, and inherent dignity, including the right to make one's own decisions; non-discrimination; complete and successful involvement, as well as integration into society. Respect for individual differences and acceptance of people with disabilities as valuable

members of society; equality of opportunity; accessibility; parity between sexes. Respect for children with impairments and their right to maintain their identities, as well as for their developing capacities.

Article 4: General obligations

1. States parties commit to ensuring and advancing the full enjoyment of all fundamental freedoms and human rights for all individuals with disabilities, free from any form of disability-based discrimination.
2. Without affecting the obligations outlined in the current convention that are immediately applicable under international law, each state party agrees to take action concerning economic, social and cultural rights to the fullest extent possible within the framework of international cooperation and, where necessary, to the fullest extent possible.
3. Through their representative organizations, state parties shall closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, in developing and implementing laws and policies to carry out the present convention and other decision-making processes pertaining to persons with disabilities.

Article 7: Children with disabilities

1. States parties commit to taking all necessary measures to ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to and enjoyment of all fundamental freedoms and human rights, just like other children.
2. The best interests of the child must always be the primary consideration in decisions involving children with disabilities.
3. States parties shall guarantee that children with disabilities have the right to freely express their views on any matters that affect them, taking into account their age and maturity, on an equal basis with other children, and shall provide appropriate assistance tailored to their disability and age to help them exercise this right.

Article 24: Education

1. States parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. They shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and promote lifelong learning with the goal of: Maximizing human potential and fostering a sense of dignity and self-worth; Promoting respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the diversity of humanity. Helping people with disabilities reach their full potential in terms of personality, talents, and creativity; and Encouraging people with disabilities to engage fully in society.
2. State parties are obligated to ensure the following to fulfill this right. Individuals with disabilities should mandatorily have access to the general education system, while children with disabilities should be given free and compulsory primary or secondary education due to their disability. People with disabilities must have equal access to inclusive, high-quality, free primary and secondary education within their communities, just like everyone else. Their needs should be met fairly and appropriately. Within the general education system, individuals with disabilities should receive the necessary support to ensure their educational success. Education-customized assistance programmes are offered in settings that optimize learning and interpersonal growth, aligning with the objective of complete integration.
3. In order to support people with disabilities' full and equal participation in school and community life, State parties must provide them with opportunities to learn life and social development skills. States Parties will thereby take the necessary actions such as promoting peer support and mentorship, acquisition of Braille, alternate script, orientation, mobility abilities and communication for the blind, deaf or deaf-blind.

1.2.9 RTE 2009 & RTE 2012 amendment with special reference to Inclusive Education and Children with Special Needs

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 guarantees all children, including those with disabilities, the right to free and

compulsory elementary education, ensuring they have access to schools without any barriers, regardless of their ‘caste’, ‘religion’, or ‘ability’. By banning discrimination and ensuring the provision of necessary resources, the Act establishes the groundwork for creating inclusive learning environments. Inclusive education under the Right to Education (RTE) Act is carried out through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) for all children with disabilities (CwDs), following a zero-rejection policy. Under the RTE Act, parents of children with severe disabilities have the option to provide home-based education. However, this provision should not be used by institutions as a means to deny admission to students with disabilities. The Act has also set up mechanisms, like monitoring systems and grievance redressal processes, to ensure authorities are held accountable for the effective implementation of inclusive education policies.

RTE admits to inclusive education through the following submissions:

1. It emphasizes the need to establish connections between ‘special schools’ and ‘inclusive education’ practices and bridge ‘community-based rehabilitation programs’ with inclusive education initiatives.
2. Promoting inclusion entails ensuring that general schools have suitable infrastructure that enhances accessibility for children with disabilities, including the elimination of architectural barriers within school premises to create a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).
3. Raising awareness among parents, communities, and civil society about promoting inclusive education and understanding the ‘no detention policy’, which advocates for continuous evaluation such as formative assessment like ‘CCE’ based on student performance indicators.
4. Curriculum materials should be accessible and include value education, with specialist teachers utilizing the Itinerant Model available to support mainstream education.
5. Continuous professional development programs for general teachers, both during their initial training and throughout their careers, should be regularly integrated. This will ensure that teachers are better equipped to thrive in inclusive educational settings.

6. Routine data collection and monitoring systems should be set up to evaluate advancements toward inclusive education objectives and pinpoint areas needing enhancement.
7. Allowing provisions for alternative question formats for students who cannot answer questions based on visuals like pictures and graphs, allowing blind and low-vision students to use special devices and equipment during exams, and offering extra time for students with disabilities during examinations.

As a result of the RTE Act 2009, there has been a notable effort to incorporate assistive technology into inclusive education practices in India, and special education training programs are being designed to provide educators with specialized skills to effectively support students with various learning needs. Although the RTE Act requires the inclusion of children with special needs (CWSN), some may still be unable to attend school even with targeted interventions. The August 2012 amendment to the RTE Act included CWSN in defining disadvantaged groups. This amendment allows children with severe and multiple disabilities the option of Home-Based Education (HBE), fostering an inclusive environment for all children. In 2012, the “Draft Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill” was introduced, encompassing eighteen disabilities such as thalassemia, muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis. This bill marked the first time that the specific issues faced by women and girls with disabilities were addressed.

1.3 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) out-turns the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It was created to address the shortcomings of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995. Made up of 17 chapters and 102 sections, it safeguards and elevates the integrity and dignity of persons with disabilities in distinct demeanours of life, namely, educational, recreational, rehabilitation, ordained to skill development, employability, social security, health, etc. It offers special provisions to persons with benchmark disabilities, informs about the liabilities and obligations of appropriate governments, registers persons with

disabilities into certification programs and grants, and prepares the population with specified disabilities legally, financially, socio-culturally and politically. It has a bearing on government, non-government and private organizations. The disabilities encased under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 were Blindness, low vision, leprosy cured persons, hearing Impairment, Locomotor disability, Dwarfism, Intellectual Disability, Mental illness, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Chronic Neurological Conditions, Specific Learning Disabilities, Multiple Sclerosis, Speech and Language Disability, Thalassemia, Haemophilia, Sickle Cell Disease, Multiple Disabilities including deaf-blindness, Acid Attack victims and Parkinson's Diseases. By expanding the list of recognized disabilities, establishing benchmarks for reservations in various sectors, and creating legal mechanisms, the RPWD Act effectively addressed many of the limitations of the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995.

The Act injuncts all educational institutions endorsed or acknowledged to provide inclusive education to those children with disabilities. This is the government's and local government's goal. It placed emphasis on the responsibilities of educational institutions, such as enrolling students without prejudice, offering opportunities for sports and relaxation and ensuring that buildings, campuses and other facilities are accessible in accordance with individual needs. The RPwD Act, 2016, leans on a few conveniences: reservation of seats in higher education, opportunities in government jobs, issuance of land, and poverty mitigation schemes for persons ranging from benchmark disabilities to high support needs. It decrees 4 per cent retention of the disabled in higher education institutions as well as other schemes offered by the government. Children with benchmark disability, falling between the age group of 6 to 18, are entitled to have free education. Both respectable governmental institutions and the ones capitalized or identified by the government will mandatorily have to accommodate inclusive education. The RPwD Act, includes provisions offering various benefits to persons with disabilities under Sections 34, 37, and 41. Section 34 stipulates a 4% reservation of positions for individuals with benchmark disabilities in all government organizations. Section 37 mandates a 5% reservation for individuals with disabilities in the allocation of

agricultural land and housing under relevant schemes and development programs, with particular emphasis on women with disabilities. It also requires a 5% reservation in all poverty alleviation and development schemes and a 5% reservation for land allocated at concessional rates. Section 41 of the RPwD Act, 2016, obligates the government to develop schemes and programs that enhance the personal mobility of persons with disabilities (Vasanthi, 2020). Along with the establishment of teacher training institutes and resource centres to train and employ teachers, the use of appropriate, assertive, and radical modes, which includes means and formats of communication, the purveying of books, learning materials and appropriate assistants are among the specific measures to be taken up by the government or local authority (in power) to stimulate and expedite inclusive education.

The UNCRPD and other things incidental or linked thereto are affected by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. There are 102 sections in 17 chapters in the acts. The rights and dignity of people with disabilities are safeguarded and promoted in a variety of spheres of life, including education, career development and employment, social security, health, rehabilitation and leisure. It also covers special provisions for people with benchmark disabilities, the obligations of relevant governments, the registration of institutions that provide services to people with disabilities, grants to those who qualify for them, and legal, economic, cultural and political aspects. It is applicable to private, public and non-governmental organizations. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 identified 21 disabilities.

The disabilities that are included under the act may be as follows:

1. **Blindness:** It is the inability to see or lack of vision. In the worst cases, there is absolutely no light visible. It also suggests that vision correction with surgery, medication, contact lenses, eye drops or glasses is not possible. Blindness consists of different types- partial blindness, complete blindness, congenital blindness, legal blindness and nutritional blindness. Injuries, infections and medical conditions were the main causes of blindness.

2. **Low vision:** It is a significant visual impairment that cannot be fully corrected by glasses, contact lenses, medication or eye surgery. It is caused by eye diseases or conditions such as cataracts, muscular degeneration, diabetic rhinopathy, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, eye injuries, congenital cataracts and childhood glaucoma.
3. **Leprosy-cured person:** It is an infectious disease that damages nerves in the arms, legs and other areas of the body, which causes pain and disfiguring skin sores. Leprosy has occurred since antiquity. However, leprosy is not very contagious. Only if a person repeatedly and in close contact with mouth and nose droplets from someone with untreated leprosy can they contract it. It is more common in children than in adults.
4. **Hearing impairment:** The inability to hear, as well as that of someone with normal hearing with thresholds of 20 dB or better in both ears, is known as hearing impairment. Hearing loss can be minimal, moderate, severe or profound. It can affect one or both ears and makes it difficult to hear loud noises or conversational speech.
5. **Locomotor disability:** It refers to limb movement constraint. In medical terminology, a locomotor disability refers to an inability to move from one location to another, such as a disability in the legs. However, it's often understood to be a disability involving the bones, muscles and joints. It impairs a person's ability to move, including their ability to pick up and grasp objects and walk.
6. **Dwarfism:** A hereditary or medical disease that makes a person noticeably shorter than the usual man or woman known as dwarfism. Adults with dwarfism typically stand four feet tall, while the term can also refer to adults who are four feet ten inches or shorter. It is common to use the phrase "short stature" instead of "dwarfism" or "dwarf". It is also common to refer to "little people" or "little persons". Dwarfisms were classified into two categories- disproportionate dwarfism and proportionate dwarfism.
7. **Intellectual disabilities:** The word "intellectual disabilities" is well- suited to characterize a functioning level that is markedly below average. This word is a modern substitute for mental retardation, which was the most widely used

term by experts up to the last ten years. The term ‘intellectual disability’ attempts to describe a broad concept encompassing deficiencies in various cognitive and adaptive skill domains.

8. ***Mental illness:*** It is a broad spectrum of mental health illnesses that impact mood, thoughts and behaviour. Anxiety disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, depression and addictive behaviour are a few examples of mental illnesses. Many people occasionally experience mental health issues. However, persistent symptoms that impair the ability to perform and cause frequent stress turn a mental health concern into a mental disorder. A mental disease can lead to misery and interfere with day-to-day functioning, including relationship education.
9. ***Autism spectrum disorder:*** Autism spectrum disorders are widespread developmental disorders that mainly impact behaviour, language and social interactions. Children with autism vary significantly; some individuals are able to assimilate into community settings and activities, whereas others have major difficulties achieving that goal (Scheuermann & Webber. 2002). Needless to say, “Children and youth with autism spectrum disorder are a particularly unique group, even when compared with other children with disabilities” (Simpson, 2001, p.68).
10. ***Cerebral palsy:*** Movement and posture are impacted by a collection of diseases known as cerebral palsy. It is brought on by harm to the developing brain, which usually happens before birth. Symptoms might range from extremely minor to significant during infancy or pre-school years. Reflexes in children with cerebral palsy may be heightened. The trunks, legs and arms could all seem floppy. Alternatively, their muscles might be spastic or rigid. Additionally, uncontrollably moving, shaky walking, asymmetry in posture or any combination of these can be symptoms.
11. ***Muscular dystrophy:*** The term “muscular dystrophy” describes a collection of over thirty hereditary disorders that impair muscle function. Muscular dystrophy symptoms typically get worse over time. These ailments fall under the category of myopathies or disorders of the skeletal muscles. Muscular dystrophy can impair the capacity to walk and carry out daily tasks,

depending on the type. It may also impact the muscles that support the function of the heart and lungs. There are more than ten types of muscular dystrophy.

12. *Chronic neurological conditions:* Chronic neurological conditions include-

- i) Multiple sclerosis, an inflammatory nervous system disease in which damage to the myelin sheaths surrounding the axons of brain and spinal cord nerve cells results in demyelination and impairs the ability of brain and spinal cord nerve cells to communicate with one another;
- ii) Parkinson's disease is a progressive nervous system disease characterized by tremors, muscular rigidity, and slow, imprecise movement, primarily affecting middle-aged and elderly people and linked to degeneration of the brain's basal ganglia and a deficiency of the neurotransmitter dopamine.

13. *Specific learning disabilities:* A learning disability is a cognitive disability; it is a disorder of thinking and reasoning. Children with learning disabilities look like other students in their age group and grade. They can perform like other students in some areas but not in others. Specific learning disabilities means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia.

14. *Multiple sclerosis:* The debilitating illness known as multiple sclerosis (MS) affects the central nervous system. It prevents information from moving freely both inside the brain and between the brain and different bodily parts. As of yet, the cause of MS is unknown. Compared to men, women are more likely to experience MS symptoms. While there is currently no known cure for MS, therapy can help manage symptoms but doesn't pose a threat to life.

15. *Speech and language disability:* It refers to a lifelong impairment brought on by diseases like aphasia or laryngectomy that impair one or more aspects of speech and language for neurological or biological reasons. Conditions that

impact speech components and for which a speech disability certificate may be granted include- laryngectomy, glossectomy, bilateral vocal cord paralysis, maxillofacial anomalies, dysarthria and apraxia of speech.

- 16. *Thalassemia*:** Less or aberrant haemoglobin production is the hallmark of thalassemia, a genetically transmitted blood condition. Haemoglobin is a protein that is known to be present in red blood cells. The oxygen that circulates throughout the body is carried by haemoglobin. Anaemia is caused by thalassemia, which causes a significant amount of red blood cells to be destroyed. Individuals with thalassemia will have weariness, pale complexion and black urine due to anaemia. Less or aberrant haemoglobin production is the hallmark of the disease, a genetically transmitted blood condition. Haemoglobin is a protein that is known to be present in red blood cells. The oxygen that circulates throughout the body is carried by haemoglobin.
- 17. *Haemophilia*:** The absence of blood clotting proteins is a blood condition known as haemophilia. The duration of bleeding is prolonged compared to usual when these proteins are missing. Males are nearly invariably affected by haemophilia, which they inherit from their mothers. Rarely do females suffer from haemophilia.
- 18. *Sickle cell disease*:** A class of blood diseases known as sickle cell disease results in the deformation, disintegration and sickle-shaped red blood cells (RBCs). These deformed RBCs have a much lower oxygen-carrying capability. It is an illness caused by genetic transmission. Haemoglobin is a protein found in red blood cells. This protein is responsible for binding oxygen and transporting it throughout the body. Autosomal recessive inheritance is the pattern of inheritance in which the sickle cell gene is passed down from one generation to the next. This implies that for a kid to be impacted, the faulty form of the gene must be passed on by both the mother and the father.
- 19. *Multiple disabilities, including deaf-blindness*:** The concurrent occurrence of two or more incapacitating conditions that impair learning or other critical living functions is known as multiple disabilities. Under the rights of RPwD Act 2016, deafness and blindness were not given their own categorization.

Therefore, deaf-blindness falls under the category of multiple disabilities in India.

20. *Acid attack victims:* The persons who were the victims of the crime of hurling acid are known as Acid attack survivors, and most of the victims were women. India is one of the nations with the greatest rate of acid attacks. The victim of these accidents frequently has facial and other bodily parts deformed. The Indian government has included acid attack survivors to the list of disabilities recognized under the RPwD Act 2016. India recorded 283 incidents of acid attacks, according to the National Crimes Record Bureau annual report for 2016. The 307 survivors were impacted by these tragedies. West Bengal topped the list among these states. The country with the greatest rate of acid attacks per person was the United Kingdom.

21. *Parkinson's disease:* It is a movement-related central nervous system condition. The hallmarks of Parkinson's disease (PD) are rigidity and tremors. There is currently no treatment since the illness is progressive; it gets worse with time. Symptoms of PD include- bradykinesia, tremor, rigidity and postural instability.

The act mandates that all educational institutions supported or recognized by the act provide inclusive education to children with disabilities. This is the governments and local government's goal. It placed emphasis on the responsibilities of educational institutions, such as enrolling students without prejudice, offering opportunities for sports and relaxation and ensuring that buildings, campuses and other facilities are accessible in accordance with individual needs. The establishment of teacher training institutes and resource centres to train and employ teachers, the promotion of the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, including means and formats of communication, and the provision of books, learning materials and appropriate assistants are all specific measures that the appropriate government and local authorities should take to promote and facilitate inclusive education.

1.4 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in School Education

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 covers all children with disabilities who are studying in government, government-aided, and local body schools. From pre-nursery to Class XII, the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha, which was introduced in 2018-2019, is working on inclusive education for the education of students with special needs, wherein the main aim of these programmes is to make inclusive education an easier and a more convenient option for the children with disabilities. The programme is working towards improving their enrolment, retention and academic performance. It identifies differently-abled children at the school and evaluates their educational requirements. The scheme aims to give children with disabilities access to aids, appliances, assistive gadgets, ICT resources, transportation, allowances, etc., remove obstacles in the school setting, use teaching-learning materials, medical facilities, vocational educational training, guidance and counselling services and the therapeutic services needed for the children and training of school teachers to accommodate skills to teach children with special needs in an inclusive classroom setup.

Provisions made in the RPwD Act, 2016, exclusively for children with disabilities include the conscious attentiveness of classroom teachers, special teachers, and other informed and qualified professionals to make education of such children engaging and effective on a regular basis.

- **Section 3** of the act intends to direct the competent authority to ensure that persons with disabilities benefit from their right to equality, are respected, and are provided to lead a dignified life by upholding their integrity equally alongside others. This provision is made fundamentally appropriate and pertinent to the school administration associating with children with disabilities.

- **Section 4(2)** holds the competent government or local authority responsible for ensuring equal rights to children with disabilities regarding expressing their views on issues raising their concern and affecting them, thus making provisions for allocating support while keeping in mind their age and nature of disability.

This further elucidates the fact that the school administration is closely responsible for including students with disabilities in determining or making decisions, thus effectuating resolutions that include their sitting arrangements, scheming and the implementation of Individualized Educational Programmes, etc.

- **Section 7(1)** provides for legal redressals against the occurrence of unfavourable incidents, which includes the chances of abuse, violence, and protection of children with disabilities in the face of exploitation in special, integrated, and inclusive school settings.

- Chapter III of the act is allocated to the educational provisions for children with disabilities. Section 16 of the chapter concedes the inclusion of both public and privately recognized educational institutions to incorporate children with disability in an inclusive setup.

It becomes imperative for an institution to do the following in order to meet this objective:

- a) Admit children with disabilities without discrimination;
- b) Make provisions to facilitate sports and recreation for them;
- c) Construct buildings and campuses that are disability-friendly and make other necessary facilities accessible;
- d) Come up with support services that would maximize both their social and academic development;
- e) Make sure that the most pertinent languages, modes, and means of communication are put to practice that is beneficial for the blind, deaf, and deaf-blind individuals;
- f) Ensures intervention and early identification for children with typical learning disabilities;
- g) Keep track of the participation, progress and levels attained by children with disabilities;
- h) Meet the need to provide children with disabilities with transportation facilities along with attendants for children who require high support needs.

There have been incidents that convey resistance of private schools in implementing the RTE Act 2009 on the subject of giving admission to children from

the weaker sections or margins of society but portraying an uncooperative attitude towards the idea of creating an inclusive school for students irrespective of their diversity.

- **Section 17** talks about the preventive steps that can be undertaken to reinforce Section 16 of the act:

- a) A survey of the children who are school-goers to be conducted every five years in order to keep track of the children with disabilities;

- b) A reasonable number of teacher training institutions are to be established;

- c) Professionals and staff are to be adequately trained such that they are capable of supporting and initiating inclusive education;

- d) A suitable number of resource centres are to be laid as a foundation to subsidize inclusive education;

- e) Books, appropriate assistive devices, and other learning resources are to be imparted free of cost to students with benchmark disabilities up to eighteen years of age;

- f) Scholarships are to be granted to students with benchmark disability;

- g) Fitful modifications are to be made in the curriculum as well as the examination system;

- h) Due to financial restraints, it may become difficult for several states to discharge the provisions concerning inclusive education as stated in sections 16 and 17.

- The provisions mentioned in **section 19** of chapter IV of the Act are associated with skill development and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. An insight into these provisions becomes imperative for both special teachers and rehabilitation workers going in not only for guidance & counselling but also for vocational training for students with disabilities. It comprises of:

- a. the inclusion of persons with disabilities in not only mainstream but also non-formal vocational and skill training schemes and programmes;

- b. to ensure adequate aid and facilities required by a person with the disability to resort to specific training;

c. make sure about skill training programmes that are exclusive for persons with disabilities, providing live links concerning the market;

d. provide loans at a concessional rate that includes the provision of microcredit and

e. manufacturing and marketing of products made by persons with disabilities.

- **Section 31** of the act states that every child between the ages of six and eighteen years who has a benchmark disability has the right to access free education in an inclusive school in their neighbourhood or a special school as per their choice in a conducive environment.

- **Section 32 (1)** provides persons with benchmark disabilities with a five percent reservation in both Governments and Aided higher education institutions. Along with this, they are also given a relaxation time of five years in the upper age limit concerning their admission to one such institution.

In State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) and District Institutes of Education Training (DIETs), Samagra Shiksha supports training teachers, principals and teacher educators. Through an integrated teacher training programme called NISHTHA for elementary teachers and DIKSHA for high school and higher secondary school teachers, the Department of School Education and Literacy of the Ministry of Education has undertaken a national mission to escalate learning outcomes at the primary level.

1.5 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in Mizoram

Mizoram began implementing the People with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, on 2nd February, 1996. The Rights of People with Disabilities Act, 2016, which took effect on 19th April 2017, repealed the Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995 on 28th December 2016. The Rights of People with Disabilities Act of 2016 has been in effect for three years. The commissioner's office for people with disabilities prioritised raising cognizance of disabled people's rights and the protections at one's disposal to safeguard them during the reporting period. The commissioner has toured each of Mizoram's eleven (11) districts to conduct awareness-raising programmes, including workshops and

seminars in various universities and schools. Moreover, awareness-raising initiatives have been carried out.

The Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities was established on June 1, 2012, under the Social Welfare Department's administrative control. The office's leading role is to monitor and supervise the implementation of assorted provisions under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 & The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and to see that grievances are redressed. Mizoram makes up only 0.09% of the country's total population and holds the 29th rank (in population) among all States and UTs. However, in terms of literacy, it ranks 3rd in the country with 91.33%. As per the 2011 Census, Mizoram's population is 10 97,206, and the total number of Persons with Disabilities sums up to 15,160 (1.38%). Research believes 1181 disabled students were enrolled in secondary schools in 2020-2021.

On 1st June 2012, the Social Welfare Department established the Commissioner for People with Disabilities under its administrative jurisdiction. The office's primary responsibilities include keeping an eye on and supervising how various aspects of the People with Disabilities Act, 1995 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, are being put into practice and making sure that complaints are resolved. Only 0.09% of all Indians live in Mizoram, which has the 29th-highest population among all States and UTs and the third-highest literacy rate in the nation at 91.33%. There are 11 districts and 21081 sq km of land in Mizoram State. According to the 2011 Census, there are 10,976,206 people living in Mizoram, and there are 15,160 (1.38 %) people with disabilities overall. In secondary schools, 1,018 pupils with diverse abilities were enrolled in 2020-2021.

Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, by various State Government Departments. Rights and Entitlements (Section 3-15): The Commissioner for People with Disabilities has been designated as the Nodal Officer for inclusive and accessible electoral processes. With effect from 2009, the Director of the Social Welfare Department was appointed as a limited guardian. In collaboration with the Health Department, SCERT, NIOH, SSA, and Social Welfare Department, mobile assessment and certification camps were regularly held in

districts, sub-divisional headquarters, blocks, and other specific locations throughout the United States. 10,134 ID cards and disability certificates were granted in the state on 10.11.2016. The State Advisory Board, State Committee for Research on Disability, State Level Co-Ordination Committee, State Level Assessment, Certification & Monitoring, Expert Committee, Rehabilitation Home for Mental Patients, District Level Committee on Disability and Advisory Committee are just a few of the committees that the Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has.

To implement the 2016 amendments to the Rights of People with Disabilities Act relating to school education for students with disabilities, the School Education Department has appointed all District Education Officers as Nodal Officers. The Mizoram State Government implements inclusive education for students with disabilities (IEDSS). In 1985, the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) programme was launched in Mizoram to ensure free education among every child with a disability. Special Part-Time classes are not offered, nevertheless. Children with special needs who struggle to participate in regular courses prefer home-based education.

The School Education Department has designated all District Education Officers as Nodal Officers to carry out the 2016 revisions to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act pertaining to school education for students with disabilities. IEDSS, or inclusive education for students with disabilities, is implemented by the Mizoram State Government. To corroborate that every child with a disability has access to a free education, Mizoram started the federally funded Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) initiative in 1985. However, no specialised part-time classes are provided. Home-based education is provided to special needs children who are not able to attend conventional classes because of severe disability.

According to the Ministry of Human Resource Development's suggestion, each district should have one resource teacher. Hearing-impaired children are seated in the front row of the classroom, to the teacher's left. The front row is likewise reserved for kids with visual impairments. 199 secondary schools (under government administration), 92 schools (under RMSA) and 21 higher secondary schools (under

government control) implemented IEP (Individualised Education Plans) for CwSEnS (Children with Special Educational Needs).

1.6 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 and Teacher Education

The NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from different levels and regions, expert organisations in teacher preparation, and the development of higher education institutions will coordinate the creation of a common set of national professional standards for teachers by 2022, gratitude to the efforts of the national council for teacher education and NCERT. The NEP 2020 called for more special educators in specific subject areas in school. Some instances of these specialised needs include topic instruction for “*divyang*” children and children with disabilities at middle and secondary school levels, including teaching for certain learning difficulties. Such teachers would need to have the appropriate abilities and comprehension of such particular requirements for children, subject-teaching expertise, and an understanding of subject-related educational goals. Therefore, such areas could be created as secondary specialisations for subject teachers or general instructors during or after pre-service teacher preparation. They will be provided at multidisciplinary colleges or universities as certificate programmes in both pre-service and in-service modes, as well as in full-time, part-time, or blended formats.

Since 1985, SCERT’s special education cell has taught children with disabilities in Mizoram. Since its founding, SCERT has served as a resource centre for inclusive education and has expanded in both size and prestige. The RCI, the highest legislative body created by parliamentary legislation, oversees training programmes and initiatives targeted at underprivileged, disabled, and special needs groups. Only the statutory council in India is required to maintain the central rehabilitation register, which principally comprises data about all trained professionals who oversee and carry out training and educational programmes for the targeted communities. Following a thorough inspection by the RCI, the SCERT Mizoram was granted permission to run the B.Ed. special education for hearing impairment & visual impairment courses from the academic session 2018-2020. It should be noted that SCERT Mizoram is the only state-level organisation in the northeast states that offers these programmes.

In the coming era of information technology, revolution and globalisation, the goal of B.Ed. special education is to develop professionals in the field of special education within a broad definition of education. The programme goal is to gain participants' necessary knowledge, understanding, attitude, and skill to become change agents and teaching professionals. The B.Ed. special education programme goals are to equip special educators with the information and skills necessary to work with disabilities in inclusive and special education settings. It also provides training in a variety of teaching pedagogies. The B.Ed. degree in special education will prepare human resources to successfully teach and train all students, including those with impairment, by fostering their knowledge, competencies and skills. There are 60 places available for the two B.Ed. special education courses- hearing impairment and visual impairment. Students who complete the B.Ed. special education programme successfully will:

- Gain knowledge and skills in human development, modern Indian education, the pedagogy of different school subjects and learning assessment.
- Acquired knowledge and expertise regarding the nature, needs, and educational requirements of children with disabilities and a few particular disabilities.
- Gain knowledge of educational options and expertise working with students who have different disabilities in special and inclusive education.
- Acquire improved knowledge and abilities for career advancement.
- According to RCI policy, graduates of the B.Ed. special education programme are eligible to apply for and receive a “Registered Professional Certificate” from RCI, which allows them to work as special education teachers.

1.7 NEP 2020 and special needs children (curriculum, infrastructure, incentives, teachers' qualifications, pre-service teacher training and in-service training, any other special features in NEP)

The most significant triumph for disability rights in the NEP is the acknowledgement of the 2016 legislation, The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, coupled with a firm commitment to its enforcement. Aligning with the RPwD Act, 2016 goals, Chapter VI of the NEP emphasizes providing equitable and “inclusive” education. The policy acknowledges children with special needs and supports their inclusion in mainstream education systems.

The new education policy mandates that children with special needs (CWSN) be integrated into regular schools, mainstreaming them from the foundational stage through to grade 12, preferably in nearby schools. It also recognizes neighbourhood schools, special schools, and home-based education as viable options for educating children with disabilities, thereby clarifying the ambiguities around school choice posed by the 2009 Right to Education Act (RTE), 2012 RTE amendment, and RPwD Act, 2016. The NEP 2020 highlights the significance of ECCE, which can benefit individuals with disabilities by offering early interventions and support. NEP 2020 aims for universal access to education, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to access education. This involves providing essential infrastructure, support services, and trained teachers to meet diverse learning needs.

Special educators will be recruited for all school complexes, and skilled home-schooling educators will be provided for children with benchmark disabilities. This ensures that these children can choose homeschooling while still accessing quality educational opportunities. NEP 2020 underscores the importance of ongoing teacher training and professional development, thereby enhancing one's understanding and implementation of inclusive teaching methods and leveraging students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. These options encompass short-term specialization courses for teaching children with disabilities and modules integrated into existing programs. They offer increased autonomy in selecting pedagogical tools that are relevant to their specific classroom situations.

The Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP), proposed by the NEP-2020, offers a comprehensive solution to challenges in inclusive education within teacher training. Additionally, the NEP-2020 introduced new recommendations, including a two-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) course in Special Education. The NEP 2020 also mandates that B.Ed. programmes will now include training for teachers on educating children with disabilities or those with special inclinations and talents. Additionally, if teachers exhibit a particular interest in special education, a shorter post-B.Ed. certification course will be made available.

The policy led to changes in the availability of educational resources, effective communication, and the exchange of instructions through the use of various instrumental and digital devices, utilizing appropriate strategies, thereby generating opportunities for the creation of support services, such as special educators, counsellors, and assistive technologies, to meet the distinct needs of students with disabilities. A notable recommendation of the NEP is the proposal to establish Special Educational Zones (SEZs) in aspirational regions with significant populations of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups. The primary goal is to extend education to India's most remote areas by allocating extra resources and coordinating various central and state government schemes and programs to transform these underdeveloped regions.

Under the NEP, the RCI must now work together with the NCTE to develop the curriculum for educators. Likewise, the NCERT has been instructed to consult with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities before creating a student curriculum to ensure its recommendations are incorporated. The NEP focuses on accountability standards that prioritize learning outcomes rather than inputs. This involves monitoring learning outcomes through a National Assessment Centre called PARAKH, which aims to evaluate student progress. Students will undergo grades 3, 5, and 8 assessments, with the grade 3 exams playing a crucial role in measuring the mission's success in achieving foundational literacy and numeracy.

The NEP advocates for a flexible and multidisciplinary approach to education. This adaptability can benefit students with disabilities by enabling

personalized learning plans and assessment methods tailored to their specific needs. The NEP acknowledges the role of technology in education, which can greatly benefit individuals with disabilities by offering tools and resources to support their learning and participation in the education system. Integration of assistive technology encompasses tools and devices that help individuals with disabilities to reach educational materials, engage in class activities, and finish assignments on time. The NEP 2020 seems promising in terms of assisting individuals with disabilities in transitioning from school to higher education or employment. This could entail counselling, skill development programs, and partnerships with employers to establish inclusive workplaces.

Social barriers can be reduced by fostering an inclusive environment and encouraging the acceptance and support of children with special needs through motivation from teachers and authorities. This approach helps them feel secure and integrated with their peers. Additionally, the policy promotes community participation in the educational process, which is vital for individuals with disabilities, as it can foster greater awareness, acceptance, and support for inclusive education. In simpler words, NEP 2020 lays a highly ambitious including- open schooling, proper infrastructure, effective use of technology to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities, ensuring their safety, hiring educators with cross-disability training, providing textbooks in large print and braille, and implementing PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development).

1.8 Government initiatives for the education of Persons with Disability

Main laws and policies on disability and education in India (as enlisted by UNICEF, 2021, office of Chief Commission for Persons with Disability 2021) include:

Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992 Persons with Disabilities

(Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995

The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental

Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act 1999 National Charter for Children 2003

National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 Samagra Shiksha 2018 National Education Policy 2020

1. Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act- 1995
2. The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation & Multiple Disabilities Act- 1999
3. National Charter for Children- 2003
4. National Policy for Persons with Disability- 2006
5. Right of Children with Free and Compulsory Education Act- 2009
6. Samagra Siksha- 2018
7. National Education Policy- 2020

The National Trust, which is a statutory organization under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Government of India), runs several schemes with the aim of promoting equal opportunities, protecting rights, and ensuring full participation for people with disabilities, thus empowering and supporting individuals with disabilities to live as independently.

1. **DISHA (Early Intervention and School Readiness Scheme)** focuses on early intervention and school readiness for children aged 0-10 years with the four disabilities recognized under the National Trust Act. It aims to establish Disha Centres to provide early intervention through therapies, training, and support for family members. The Registered Organization (RO) must offer daycare facilities for persons with disabilities (PwD) for a minimum of 4 hours daily (between 8 am and 6 pm), including age-appropriate activities. Each centre should have a special educator or early intervention therapist, a physiotherapist or occupational therapist, a counsellor, caregivers, and Aayas.
2. **VIKAAS (Day Care)**- This day care scheme aims to expand opportunities for persons with disabilities to develop interpersonal and vocational skills as they transition to older age groups. The centre will provide caregiving

support to persons with disabilities (PwDs) while they are at the Vikaas Centre. It will also offer family members of PwDs some respite to attend to other responsibilities. The Registered Organization (RO) must provide daycare facilities for PwDs for at least 6 hours daily (between 8 am and 6 pm), including age-appropriate activities. The daycare should be operational for at least 21 days a month.

3. **SAMARTH (Respite Care)**- The Samarth scheme aims to provide respite homes for orphans, abandoned individuals, families in crisis, and persons with disabilities (PwDs) from Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Low-Income Group (LIG) families, including destitute individuals with at least one of the four disabilities covered under the National Trust Act. It also seeks to offer family members respite time to attend to other responsibilities. The scheme focuses on establishing Samarth Centres to provide group home facilities for all age groups, ensuring adequate and quality care services, acceptable living standards, and basic medical care from professional doctors.
4. **GHARAUNDA (Group Home for Adults)**- The Gharaunda scheme aims to provide a secure home and minimum-quality care services for the lifetime of individuals with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities. It ensures adequate and quality care services, acceptable living standards, and basic medical care from professional doctors. Gharaunda Centres should also offer vocational and pre-vocational activities and assistance for further training.
5. **GYAN PRABHA (Educational Support)**- The Gyan Prabha scheme aims to bolster individuals with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities to take up educational or vocational courses, including graduation, professional courses, and vocational training that will lead to employment or self-employment. The National Trust will provide a specific amount per course to a person with a disability, which generally covers fees, transportation, books, and out-of-pocket expenses (OPEs).

6. **SAMBHAV (Aids and Assistive Devices)**- The Sambhav scheme aims to establish additional resource centres in each city of India with a population greater than 5 million (according to the 2011 census). These centres will collect and showcase aids, software, and other assistive devices, offering demonstrations of these devices. The scheme includes maintaining information about the aids and assistive devices available at the Sambhav centres on the National Trust website. These centres are designed to provide information and easy access to devices, appliances, aids, and software to enhance and empower persons with disabilities (PwDs) covered under the National Trust. There will also be provisions for displaying and demonstrating the devices to relevant stakeholders.
7. **BADHTE KADAM (Awareness and Community Interaction)**- This scheme supports Registered Organisations (RO) of The National Trust in conducting activities to raise awareness about The National Trust disabilities. The scheme aims to promote community awareness, sensitization, social integration, and mainstreaming of Persons with Disabilities. The National Trust will sponsor up to 4 events per year for each RO. Each RO must organize at least one event annually, targeting either the community, educational institutes, or medical institutes.

1.9 Rationale of the Study

The RPwD Act, 2016 describes inclusive education as an educational system where students with and without disabilities learn together, with teaching and learning methods adapted to accommodate the diverse needs of students with disabilities. According to the RTE Act, 2009, every child has the right to free and compulsory education up to the elementary level. The idea that every child should attend school is the foundation of the right to education. Children are excluded from schools worldwide for various reasons, including poverty, gender, race, language, and religion. Nevertheless, every child has the right to early growth, learning, and development from their parents and community. When they reach school age, they also have the right to feel welcomed and included by teachers and peers. The core

principle of inclusive education is that everyone benefits when students from diverse backgrounds receive their education together.

In the words of Loreman and Deppeler (2001), Inclusion means full inclusion of children with diverse abilities (i.e., both giftedness and disability) in all aspects of schooling that other children can access and enjoy. It entails regular schools and classrooms making authentic adjustments and changes to address the needs of all children while celebrating and valuing differences. Lindsay (2003) rightly stated that inclusive education is championed as a means to remove barriers, improve outcomes and remove discrimination. Inclusion is a complex and debated concept, with many different interpretations and implementations in practice. Students benefit greatly from inclusion in general education courses because it allows them to develop lifelong friendships and practice social skills in authentic settings. On the other hand, inclusion also comes with significant behavioural and learning obstacles. In order to achieve the aims of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the state government is allocated the responsibility of implementing the act. What programmes have been taken by the state government to implement the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016? What provisions have been allocated for implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016?

In Mizoram, there are 1,181 secondary students with special needs. Although there has been some progress in raising awareness, the needs of students with disabilities have received less attention. Parents, educators and students must all be familiar with the act. For many of us in India, the act may sound familiar but is still ambiguous. The RPwD Act, 2016 has not been the subject of any research among Mizoram's secondary pupils. It presents a challenging opportunity to assess how the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, has been implemented among students, teachers and parents in secondary schools in Mizoram. The study also seeks to identify any disparities in gender, educational attainment and training. This study will provide an overview of Mizoram's current position with regard to the application of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and identify what efforts should be made to improve its application.

Given the significance of the RPwD Act, 2016 and the lack of research in this area in Mizoram, an in-depth study is required to uncover many perspectives and features of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram. In addition, the current study seeks to identify the issues that schools and children in inclusive settings confront. Understanding the issue is only the beginning of research; this study aims to recommend the best course of action for Mizoram's implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016.

Besides the rationale described above of the study, the researcher is also interested in answering the following research questions:

1.10 Research Questions

The following research questions motivated the researcher to conduct the present research:

1. What is the implementation status of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram?
2. What are the challenges faced by the headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents of secondary schools in Mizoram about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016?
4. Do secondary school teachers' perceptions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, differ with respect to gender, educational qualification and teaching experience?
5. Do the differently-abled secondary school students' perceptions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, differ with respect to gender?
6. Do parents' perceptions of differently abled secondary school students regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 differ with respect to their gender?

7. How can the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, be effectively implemented in secondary schools of Mizoram?

1.11 Statement of the Problem:

In the context of the above rationale and quest to find answers to quantitative and qualitative research questions, the title of the study is framed as “Status and Stakeholders’ Perceptions on Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram.”

1.12 Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the implementation status of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.
2. To analyse the challenges faced by the secondary school headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in Mizoram.
3. To explore the perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.
4. To compare secondary school teachers’ perceptions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender, educational qualifications, and teaching experience.
5. To compare the perceptions of differently-abled students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram with respect to their gender.
6. To compare the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.
7. To propose viable mechanisms for effectively implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.

1.13 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were framed to test the objectives of the present study, which were tested at a 0.05 level of significance

H04a: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

H04b: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their educational qualifications.

H04c: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their teaching experience.

H05: There is no significant difference in the perception of students of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

H06: There is no significant difference in the perception of parents of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

1.14 Operational Definitions of the Key Terms

The key terms used in this study are given below:

Status: In the present study, it refers to the present condition of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Stakeholders: Stakeholders in the present study refer to the teachers, differently-abled students, parents, headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities.

Perceptions: Perceptions in this study refer to how different stakeholders view and respond to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in the secondary schools of Mizoram.

Implementation: In the present study, it refers to the enactment and execution of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in the secondary schools of Mizoram.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016: This study refers to the provisions given in Chapter 3 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Secondary Schools: It refers to schools with 9th and 10th standards operationalized under the Mizoram Board of Secondary Education (MBSE).

1.15 Delimitation of the Study

The present has been delimited to the government secondary schools of Mizoram. This research includes only those government secondary schools where at least one differently-abled student is being studied.

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**CHAPTER II**  
**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter reviews different research studies related to status and stakeholders' perceptions on implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in various levels of education. In every research, reviewing related literature provides a deeper understanding of the study. It is an attempt to find the relevant literature that has been done and what is needed for the present study. The review was collected from journals, dissertations, theses, books, etc., which reveals that most of the study has been conducted among parents, students, teachers and heads of the institutions. The reviews are presented in three sections- studies conducted abroad, studies conducted within India and studies conducted within Mizoram.

Beyene and Tizaz (2010) conducted a study on "Attitudes of Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Ethiopia", in which they found teacher's attitudes about education can be both positive and negative at different periods and places, which shows the need for more research in inclusive education. A bad attitude indicates the need for intervention to promote a better attitude. It was discovered that factors such as lack of training, modified curricula, accessibility to resources, materials and equipment, among others, consistently influenced teacher's attitudes towards implementing inclusive education. The research was conducted mainly via teacher interviews, focus groups, classroom observations, etc.

Ahmmed et al. (2012), in their study of variables affecting teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Bangladesh, found no significant correlation between teachers' views towards including students with disabilities and their prior training in inclusive education. A significant positive correlation was found between attitudes and training variables, suggesting that a high level of past success was related to positive attitudes towards inclusion. A significant positive correlation existed between attitudes and perceived school support for inclusion.

Opoku et al. (2015) investigated a study of perceptions of persons with disabilities on access to education in Buea Municipality, Cameroon, and found that

due to several socio-economic issues, the majority of the disabled people in Cameron's Buea Municipality lacked a formal education. They identified obstacles that were primarily related to lack family support regarding financial matters, disability as a barrier, a social stigma associated with educating a disabled child, travel time and unfavourable terrain, learning facilities, a lack of educational infrastructure and a shortage of qualified teachers. The Cameroonian government must demonstrate a more substantial commitment to the education of children with disabilities by providing financial support, educational initiatives, teacher training, and the facilities and infrastructures required to further general education ubiquitous to students with disabilities.

Mphongoshe et al. (2015) researched the stakeholders' perception and experience of inclusive education: A case of a further education and training college in Africa. The investigation revealed that the institution did not possess the managerial skills and resources necessary to implement inclusive educational programmes that cater to all shades' requirements. The study makes additional recommendations, including the need for adequate funding for the adaptation of the physical environment, teaching and learning strategies, and the professional growth of lecturers, as well as the need to capacitate institutional management and monitoring in order to remediate the concept of integration and co-existence without discreteness or discrimination.

Chimhenga (2016) found that in Zimbabwe, regular teachers' furthering the adoption of inclusive education for students with learning disabilities was met with hostility from secondary school students, teachers and parents. The negative attitudes of regular high school instructors made it unlikely that inclusive education for children with learning difficulties would be implemented successfully. The study discovered that no mandatory policy or regulation required secondary schools to provide inclusive education for students with learning difficulties. The study suggested cultivating a favourable attitude among stakeholders, such as students, instructors and parents, by providing inclusive education for students with learning difficulties. Secondary school students, teachers and parents had a negative attitude toward the regular teachers in bolstering inclusive education for students with learning disabilities in Zimbabwe. The antagonistic outlook of the regular teachers in



secondary schools rarely contributes to the emphatic carrying out of inclusive education for students with learning disabilities. The study found that secondary schools lacked mandatory policies and legislation for inclusive education for children with learning disabilities.

Nizejimana (2016), in her study “Impact of Inclusive Education to Children with Special Needs: An Educational Survey in Selected Inclusive Primary Schools of Uganda”, found that while the school lacked scientific labs, dining halls, and computer labs, physical amenities including classrooms, restrooms, libraries, desks, seats, and tables were accessible to 50% of the respondents. It was found that children with special needs participate freely in an inclusive school. For educating children with special needs, class discussion, small-group discussion, and storytelling were the most effective teaching strategies. It was discovered that while the school lacked a scientific laboratory, dining halls, computer labs, and physical amenities, including classrooms, restrooms, libraries, desks, seats, and tables, 50% of the respondents were accessible to them. It was discovered that children with special needs engage in unrestricted participation in inclusive settings. Both students and teachers dispense optimistic outlooks towards inclusive education. There are many students per teacher in inclusive schools, and some teachers fall short of competence in getting along with students with special needs.

Zvoleyko et al. (2016), in their study “Socialisation of students with disabilities in an inclusive educational environment”, investigated the material and technical constituents of the environment recreational spaces inside and outside school, health and hygiene standards, sanitary conditions, special training equipment, special computer training software etc were available for special students. In terms of the physical and technological aspects of the environment, there were areas for leisure both inside and outside of the school, hygienic standards, sanitary conditions, specific training tools, computer training software, etc., for children with special needs for the advancement of inclusive education, research and expansion of experience in the area of education, organisation of instructional materials, etc. were done with regard to the organisational and pedagogical component of the environment. The organisation of psychological and pedagogical stands includes the

planning of work in the form of the environment's psychological, medical, and pedagogical components.

Asare (2019), in her study, found that regular teachers in Ghana's Tano South District of the Brong Ahafo Region are aware of inclusive education but have only a vague recognition of how the concepts set off an operation. Regular teachers are unable to provide suitable educational accommodations for students with disabilities in their classrooms due to a lack of awareness of the issues related to impairments. Government support for improving teacher training, in-service training, and integration of inclusive education is strongly advised.

Geleta (2019) found that school principals and teachers had a positive attitude toward implementing inclusive education in Sebeta Town Primary School, Sebeta, Ethiopia. Due to the shortage of accessible educational resources and inappropriate school buildings, inclusive education was extremely low. There were no significant differences among teachers from other schools in terms of their perspectives of inclusive education, regardless of their gender, amount of teaching experience, education or subject of graduation. It was strongly recommended that teachers receive training and that collaborative efforts be implemented while connecting schools and other stakeholders to promote inclusive education in general schools. The study suggested that cultivating a favourable attitude among stakeholders, including students, instructors, and parents, will ameliorate the fulfilment of inclusive education for children with learning difficulties.

Aldabas (2020), in his study "Special education teacher's perceptions of their preparedness to teach students with severe disabilities in inclusive classrooms- A Saudi Arabian perspective", revealed that no remarkable distinctness could be established among the male and female special education teachers of Saudi Arabia regarding their levels of confidence to teach students with severe disabilities. A noticeable difference was found in the thick of teachers' perceptions vis-a-vis their preparedness to teach students with severe disabilities in inclusive education based on their teaching experience, disability type of students taught, and the kind of classroom taught. Teachers who are identified with higher degrees endured higher confidence in their preparedness to teach students with severe disability in inclusive education as opposed to teachers with lower degrees. Regarding their degrees of

confidence in educating pupils with severe impairments, Saudi Arabian special education instructors of both genders showed no discernible difference. Based on their teaching experience, the types of impairments their students had, and the classrooms they were in, teachers' evaluations of their competence to teach children with severe disabilities in inclusive education varied significantly. Compared to instructors with lesser degrees, teachers with higher degrees felt a strong sense of confidence in their capacity to educate children with severe disabilities in inclusive settings.

San Martin et al. (2021) in their study "Chilean Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education, Intention, and Self-Efficacy to Implement Inclusive Practices". They investigated the significant relationship between teachers' attitudes towards self-efficacy and inclusion in inclusive practices. The teacher's qualifications do not affect attitudes toward inclusion but have disadvantageous repercussions on self-efficacy for inclusive practices. Secondary school teachers have lower self-efficacy for inclusive practices than pre-school, primary and special educators. Teachers were hesitant to take in students with severe disabilities in social activities in their school.

Singh (2005) found that male and female teachers in Chhatisgarh's primary schools share the same favourable observations concerning inclusive education. Teachers in both rural and urban settings have positive attitudes about inclusive education. Administrators, parents, teachers, and kids all benefit from the intensive training of instructors, enrolment campaigns, and the development of a more supportive environment for mainstreaming impaired children. In the prevailing study, a rise in the enrolment of children with disabilities is seen as a positive trend. Organisations and societal contributors are sought out by the headteachers of the few inclusive schools to assist impaired students. The way that classrooms are set up in school is not satisfactory. Children with disabilities are encouraged to play a role actively in general education classes through a variety of activities. Few headmasters of inclusive schools do not seek the assistance of NGOs and societal benefactors to support disabled students. Still, all of these parties have positive connections for inclusive education, including special resource teachers, parents, guardians and others. The special resource teachers organise and attend parent-teacher conferences, discuss disabilities with parents, VEC members, and other social workers, and assist

teachers in creating Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) and utilising resources, aids and other materials.

Subban and Sharma (2005) conducted a study on “Understanding Educator Attitudes towards the Implementation of Inclusive Education”, and they found that the study revealed that members who have disabilities or have worked closely with people who do imply the need for teaching programmes for inclusive educators and knowledge of the necessity to include kids with disabilities in normal schools. All of the respondents were adamant about the need for greater information, knowledge, and competence in their endeavours to include kids with disabilities in classes alongside typically developing pupils. The findings indicate that teachers in Victorian schools have positive attitudes regarding students with disabilities in mainstream education, and these positive views may be due to a rise in the count of students with disabilities who are becoming more well-known.

Sunardi et al. (2011) conducted research on “The Implementation of Inclusive Education for Students with Special Needs in Indonesia” and found that 12.94 % of students were in special needs education. The majority of schools have created special education plans for their kids. The curriculum was changed in 50% of the schools to improve student performance. Just 58% of the schools reported adjusting the curriculum to meet the pupils’ requirements, and most instructors lacked specialised training for working with children with disabilities.

Unianu (2011), in her study “Teacher’s attitude towards inclusive education,” found a significant difference regarding prejudices towards autistic children. There was a crucial difference in attitudes towards children with autism. There were no appreciable significant differences between instructors who work with students from various ethnic backgrounds, which is found to have significant variances. The majority of respondents were confused about their understanding of inclusive and integrated education.

Baker et al. (2012) investigated “A Campus Survey of Faculty and Student Perceptions of Persons with Disabilities” through an online survey for faculty and students. Questions consist of five sections, including the overall college climate for students with disabilities, accommodations, inclusion in the classroom, capabilities and population. Most faculty members found that they had a positive climatic

condition for students with disabilities in their college. Regarding accommodation, the faculty believes that all students receive accommodation according to their needs, while students are not satisfied with the accommodation they receive. Both faculty and students found that students with disabilities were treated differently by themselves. Some faculty and students assumed that students with disabilities have an unfair advantage in inclusion. A quarter of both faculty and students consider that students with disabilities were satisfied with the campus experience, and three-quarters of faculty and students believe that students with disabilities are capable of meeting their demanding programs and jobs.

Prakash (2012) conducted a study on “Inclusion of Children with Hearing Impairment in Schools: A Survey on Teachers’ Attitudes” and found that teachers working in Government institutions have markedly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education. Female instructors in ordinary schools support inclusive teaching for students with hearing impairment more than male teachers. Primary school teachers favoured inclusive education more than secondary school teachers. Compared to instructors with less working experience, teachers with more than ten years of experience had a positive approach towards inclusive education. Compared to teachers with fewer degrees, those with higher qualifications strongly preferred inclusive education.

Kalita and Swarjiary (2013), in their study “A study of inclusive education program for disabled children under SSA mission in Assam”, found that 99003 CWSNs have been identified, and 78420 students in the age range of 6 to 14 have been registered. Two hundred fifty-five resource instructors and 2545 volunteers have been involved in the study throughout all 23 districts of Assam. Throughout the study, 12027 aids and appliances have been distributed (hearing aids, wheelchairs, and tricycles are the main items). The enrolment of special children rises as a result of the distribution of support and equipment. SSA has provided residential training through the IE component and state-level training for IE resource teachers, IE volunteers, and block-level parents. Moreover, 2048 awareness campaigns were launched in various areas.

Unianu (2013), in her study “Teachers’ Perception, Knowledge and Behaviour in Inclusive Education”, revealed that teachers are confused between

inclusive education and integrated education. The majority of instructors acknowledged working with school counsellors. Teachers' insufficient initial or ongoing training, their colleagues' rejection of students with special needs and stereotypes and prejudice against students with special needs were the main challenges they encountered while implementing inclusive education. Participants propose effective initial or ongoing teacher training to address the issue of instructors. Keeping and developing a solid relationship with children is crucial for fostering an inclusive community.

Rajani and Raju (2013) conducted a study on "Implementation of inclusive education in primary and secondary schools of Vishakapatnam identification of barriers to learning" and found that according to the majority of the instructors, schools welcome children with disabilities and offer them the same opportunity and treatment as other students. Most teachers opined that there were no issues among the children. Teachers mention that children with disabilities are motivated and encouraged as they study alongside typical classmates, so they never perceive their handicap as a hindrance. The majority of the teachers concurred that there are cognitive differences between typically developing people and people with disabilities, which might disrupt a class's physical and psychological balance. By permitting the differently-abled pupils to attend regular classrooms, problems from parents of typical children develop. Where inclusive education is practised, teachers require specialised instructional tactics. There were significant differences between rural and urban teachers' carrying out inclusive education as well as between residential and non-residential teachers' attitudes on teaching conditions and learning impediments. There was no remarkable difference between male and female teachers on the many aspects of implementing inclusive education in Vishakapatnam's elementary and secondary schools.

Pathy and Dash (2013) conducted a study on "A study of inclusive education practices for the students with special needs at primary level in Orissa". This study revealed that 1128 children with special needs (1007 children attending school and 121 out-of-school children) were identified by teachers during the period from 2000 to 2009. The study disclosed that teachers identified 1128 children with special needs during the study. Most schools removed infrastructural barriers on the school

campus, but no other environmental modifications were found in any school during the study. Regarding the administration, the study revealed that administrative interventions have a remarkable impact on changing the attitude of administrators and teachers. It also showed that inclusive schools did not receive financial assistance from the government or other agencies. The study also revealed that inclusive education programs have not been evaluated since their implementation by any external academic agency.

Hunter-Johnson et al. (2014) conducted research on “What does teachers’ perception have to do with inclusive education: A Bahamian context.” The study found that Ninety per cent of the interviewed teachers intimated negative perceptions of inclusive education. The most determining considerations of the teacher’s negative perceptions were the dearth of resources and lack of training in inclusive and special education. Twenty per cent of the teachers expressed positive perceptions and stated that the triumph of inclusive education rests upon numerous elements.

Kaur et al. (2015) conducted research on the “Perception of People with Disability in Creating Sustainable Public Policy”. Half of the respondents in a survey of 130 disabled people between the ages of 20 and 30 who participated in it were employed. The majority of the respondents were unhappy with the amenities that were offered. They discovered that public transportation, transport and government support were inadequate and unfriendly to disabled people. They believed that they did not receive the same treatment as those with disabilities. People with impairments believed that others had a poor opinion of them, avoided them, teased them, and reacted harshly to them. To augment the perspective of disabilities and their engagement in society, the researcher advises Malaysian authorities to develop policies for bettering education and providing suitable facilities.

Limaye (2016) conducted a study on “Factors influencing the accessibility of education for children with disabilities in India.” She perceived that due to obstacles such as humiliation and poor or absent vocational training facilities, children with disabilities have many challenges in realising their full potential—lack of understanding, weak physical infrastructure, support systems and government policies. According to the report, there is still a significant need to make it possible for kids with impairments to acquire educational facilities and education in general.

Gaines and Barnes (2017) investigated a specific group of regular classroom teachers' attitudes and perceptions on inclusion for the better performance of professional programs. Teachers were divided by experience level and school level. It was discovered that the secondary grade-level group had a better mean score than the middle- and elementary-level groups. A significant difference was found between the three grade-level groups by using one-way ANOVA. Another critical difference between the primary and middle-level groups and the elementary and secondary groups was discovered, demonstrating unequivocally that teachers at lower grade levels have a more positive approach toward inclusion than teachers at higher grade levels. Compared to less experienced teachers, who showed no significant differences, the more experienced teachers have a positive outlook toward inclusion.

Chandra and Bhadoria (2017), in their study "Perception of educational administrators and PRI's members about inclusive education", found that compared to PRI members, educational administrators had a more favourable opinion of inclusive education. Female administrators in the education domain demonstrated better perception than male administrators. There were notable differences in how school administrators and PRI participants perceived inclusive education. Urban educational administrators and members have a better reputation than rural education managers and PRI members. There were notable regional differences in how school administrators and PRIs [articipants perceived inclusive education. Compared to PRI members, educational administrators demonstrated a higher degree of perception based on the category. A significant difference was found among educational administrators and PRI members regarding inclusive education, as claimed in their category.

Parasher et al. (2017), in their study "Study of measures adopted by schools for implementing inclusive and special education in Delhi NCR Region", found that the governance of administrative aspects, student progression, knowledge assimilation, teacher quality and enrichment, and quality aspects of the school's infrastructure with innovative tools were all found to be unsatisfactory to the disabled students. Students with disabilities were found to be unsatisfactory to the disabled students. Students with disabilities were found to be happy with the quality of the teamwork and coordination. The school teachers were found to be satisfied



with the governance, student progression, teamwork and coordination, knowledge assimilation, faculty quality and enrichment aspects of the school but not with the infrastructure or the school's innovative resources. At the same time, teachers were dissatisfied with the school's infrastructure and innovative resources. The administrators working there were satisfied with the aspects of governance, teamwork and coordination, knowledge assimilation, faculty quality and enrichment, even though the school's administrators were only partially pleased with the infrastructure and innovative tools for student advancement.

Zahra and Bajpai (2019) conducted a study on "Preparedness for Inclusive Education: A Study of Primary School Teachers" and found that most primary school teachers poorly understand inclusive education. There are no crucial divulgements between men and women, undergraduates and PhDs, or undergraduates and post-graduates in their understanding of the fundamentals and operations of inclusive education regarding educational background. Primary school teachers' understanding of policies, fundamental facts concerning impairments, skills and competencies, and infrastructure varies significantly.

Pillai and Shaji (2016) conducted a study on the effectiveness of Vocational Training for Students with Disabilities- A case study from Kerala, India. Most parents who took part in the study were unaware of the other VHSE courses, believed that their kids received more individualised attention than other kids, and preferred that their kids pursue higher education over vocational training to improve their future prospects. Students in VHSS schools do not receive any equipment or support systems, and the majority of impaired children do not even receive average skill development. Most schools do not receive the assistance of resource teachers, and even special schools do not have qualified teachers. The majority of the teachers said the curriculum isn't flexible enough to congregate with the requirements of kids with disabilities. The department's pre-service and in-service teachers and other employees did not receive any specialised training, but they believe that carrying out an inclusive education program would require curricular changes as well as the prevalence of ICT and human, technological and support services.

Wadegaonkar and Uplane (2017), in their study "Socialisation of visually impaired students for inclusion", revealed that in the areas of expressing feelings,

using appropriate body language, taking the initiative, coordinating, persuading, participating, maintaining self-control, defending one's rights, managing emotions, accepting differences and being confident. There were significant differences in the mean scores for overall social skills between male and female students as well as between sighted and visually impaired students. For VI students' social abilities in expressing sentiments, taking the initiative, coordinating, retaining self-control, tolerating differences and managing emotions, a significant difference was discovered between mean scores on the pre-test and post-test. A significant positive association between social skills and inclusion was found, indicating that socialisation and inclusion are positively correlated and that as social skills improve, so does the inclusion of children with visual impairments.

Sukumaran and Shimmy (2018) studied the attitude of parents of persons with intellectual disability towards rehabilitation programmes and found that parents of persons with intellectual disability have a neutral attitude towards rehabilitation programmes in general. Parents of persons with intellectual disability have a neutral attitude towards rehabilitation programmes with respect to the sex of their children and concerning the age of their children. No significant difference was found in the age of children when deciding the attitude of parents towards rehabilitation programmes.

Stepanov et al. (2018), in their study "The problem of management and implementation of innovative models of network interaction in inclusive education of persons with disabilities", find out that the management of educational institutions is enhanced, methodological resources are effectively used, and possibilities for professional growth and teaching staffs' pedagogical skills are expanded. Regarding the experimental work, improved managerial, psychological and pedagogical skills, as well as the participation of pedagogical workers in network interactions, contribute to the activation of educational organisations in addressing specific educational issues affecting children with disabilities.

Chandra and Bhadoria (2018), in their study "Perceptions of professionals, parents and students about inclusive education," found that the attitudes of educators, administrators, and parents of typical kids were supportive of inclusive education. There were significant differences between teachers, educational administrators, and

parents, and teachers had the most positive opinions of inclusive education. There were notable differences between educational administrators and PRI members in how they perceived the barriers to and enablers of inclusive education based on their gender, location and personal category. According to the teacher categories of gender, teaching experience, age, educational background and professional qualification, there were significant differences between teachers' perceptions of inclusive education concerning its facilitators and barriers. No significant difference was found among parents of normal students in their perceptions of inclusive education with its barriers and facilitators according to their gender, locality, and the number of dependents in the family. However, the difference between parents of normal students was found to be significant in their perceptions of inclusive education according to their educational qualifications and occupation. Regarding the barriers to and facilitators of inclusive education, parents of CWSN show no discernible differences based on their gender, location or the number of dependents in their family. Nevertheless, CWSN parents' perceptions of inclusive education varied greatly depending on their level of education and line of work. According to their gender, location and family income, normal students' assessments of inclusive education's challenges and successes varied significantly from one another. According to their family type and school category, normal children's attitudes toward inclusive education were not shown to be significantly different from one another. Depending on their location, family income and school type, CWSN's perceptions of inclusive education are based on gender or family structure.

Kumar and Nath (2018) investigated a study on "Mainstreaming the differently abled Children through inclusive education", and they found out that differently-abled students faced many difficulties in their classrooms, such as insufficient adapted facilities, lack of support from various stakeholders, improper learning strategies, lack of training of teachers, curriculum transaction, non – availability of resource teachers etc. No significant difference was found in the perception of inclusive education among teachers, peers, and resource teachers with respect to gender, locale, and type of management, as well as among parents concerning gender and locale. A significant difference was found in teachers' perceptions of inclusive education regarding gender, locale, and teaching experience.

Mngo and Mngo (2018), in their research “Teachers’ perceptions of inclusion in a pilot inclusive education program: Implications for instructional leadership”, found that students with disabilities encountered a number of challenges in the classroom, including inadequately adapted facilities, a lack of support from multiple stakeholders, inappropriate learning methodologies, a lack of teacher training, curriculum transition and the absence of resource teachers, among other issues. There were no appreciable differences in teachers’ peers’ and resource teachers, among other issues. There were significant differences in teachers’ perceptions of inclusive education based on gender, location and previous teaching experience. The majority of instructors displayed unfavourable opinions of the success of inclusive education, and they claimed that the special education and inclusive education training they received were insufficient to guarantee the successful inclusion of children with disabilities in regular education classes.

Mukherjee and Datta (2018), in their study “Stakeholders Perspectives Regarding Promotion of Inclusive Education and Inclusive Society in West Bengal”, highlighted the complexity of the changing process from a phenomenological perspective. The inclusive education method is a little disorganised and complicated. The course’s methodology and content, which do not rethink inclusive education or confront attitudes about disability, highlight the need for more context-specific reform. Students, parents, administrators, and local government officials, as are teachers, are also impacted. While some programmes might concentrate primarily on providing for children with impairments in the school system, others might mainstream disability with gender and other exclusionary factors like poverty. According to the study, the twin-track strategy promoted by DFID (2000) may be a helpful step towards ensuring inclusive education for students with disabilities in the educational system of West Bengal.

Singh (2019) conducted a study on “Inclusion of students with disabilities: A case study of South Delhi”. The investigator found that children under 14 years of age have not been refused admission to school regarding their religion, caste, gender or disability in South Delhi. No reservations were provided for disabled students; it was open to all the children. Special arrangements for disabled students, like ramps, washrooms, special educators, wheelchairs, etc., were available at the school. Since

special educators were not available in the schools and were not specially trained, the teachers faced difficulties among the special needs of students individually. Lack of sufficient teaching materials in the schools. Parents lack awareness regarding inclusive education. Parents have a positive relationship with the teachers regarding their disabled children. Classroom arrangement was poor. Students are satisfied with the teacher's encouragement and understanding.

Joseph et al. (2019), in their study "Inclusion of youth with disabilities in the mainstream: Realities, challenges and rehabilitation in Karimganj District of Assam State", showed that differently-abled were not given access to proper rehabilitative services. Government and NGOs lack coordination for decentralising services, so the differently abled students receive poor supportive devices. The majority of students with disabilities seek advice from specialists regarding their impairments. The educational sector should concentrate on using modern methods to implement the program efficiently. People with disabilities should be able to use public transportation and other public facilities.

Thomas and Uthaman (2019), in their study "Knowledge and attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education of children with specific learning disabilities", found that teachers have a positive attitude and an average level of knowledge on inclusive education and specific learning disabilities. Teachers often lack sufficient knowledge about educating children with specific learning disabilities, resulting in a lack of awareness and exclusion of these benefits for school-aged children. There is a strong link between teachers' understanding and their attitudes toward inclusive education.

Singh and Chauhan (2019), in their study "Issues and challenges of inclusive education in Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas in Madhya Pradesh State of India: Case Studies", found that KGBV had been adopted in Madhya Pradesh, but facilities like toilets and bathrooms, daily essentials, student's security barrier-free infrastructure, misdiagnosis of student's cases, poor implementation of student's education for quality education. Training of teachers, orientation related to education, assessment, diagnosis, certification, sensitisation of community activities, government policies, programmes, schemes and integration of vocational education should be promoted.

Ketheeswaran (2019), in his study “Teachers’ Perception about the Inclusive Education (IE) Practices in the Government Schools in the Batticaloa District of Sri Lanka”, found female teachers who are under 45 years old make up the majority of Batticaloa District’s teaching staff. Teachers have a positive perception of the school administration, inclusive education policies and most of the indicators related to such practices. The Batticaloa education zone, in comparison to the Batticaloa West education zone, has amazingly good inclusive education practices, according to the instructors who replied. Some indicators are poor, and some are positive for the Kalkuddha education zone. More complex issues with regard to inclusive educational methods are the lack of parental involvement, low attendance and dropout of students with special educational needs. The teachers recommended specially educated instructors for inclusive education and stakeholder awareness campaigns.

Pandya (2020) conducted a study, “A study of awareness about special education among the head teachers and teachers of regular schools of Gujarat”, and found that the majority of the head teachers and teachers have a positive attitude toward their school’s link with the community, pursue innovative teaching methods, and shield the students from obstacles and professional organisations. Most head teachers and teachers are well aware of the policy, education facility and educational resources. The final instance demonstrates the need for additional training on understanding special education for children with special needs.

Mallik (2021) conducted a study on “Provision and challenges of visually impaired students in inclusive elementary school level: A teaching-learning perspective” based on different research reviews. He found that the Courses and curriculum of school education should be set to a structured programme in order to access and support the impaired students. School environments need to be set up to be impairment-friendly, and teaching equipment, personnel, and other associated services are required for children with visual impairment. Contents of complex subjects should be removed from the curriculum, and viable examinations should be arranged for visually impaired students.

Singh et al. (2020), in their study, A Study of Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education, conducted among 180 pre-service and in-service teachers from the Gaya district of Bihar, found that Pre-service teachers have attitudes towards

inclusive education that are more positive or favourable. Significant differences were observed among in-service and pre-service teachers regarding inclusive education. Significant differences in teacher's attitudes were found towards their manner of service. No significant difference was seen towards the attitude of male and female students. Significant differences among teacher's attitudes across their locality. Therefore, it was found from the study that urban teachers were more positive towards inclusive education than rural teachers.

Paseka and Schwab (2020) examined the attitudes of parents towards inclusion, their perceptions of inclusive teaching practices, resources, and their background variables. Data was collected by using semi-structured telephone interviews of 2000 parents from Germany. Attitude in regard to inclusion of students has the most positive with physical disability, while students with behavioural disorders or students with mental disabilities have the most negative attitude towards inclusion. Parents partaking in inclusive classrooms recognise a rise in the degree of inclusive teaching practices, particularly those identifying the student's strengths. Regarding assets available for inclusive and regular classes, no group differences were noticed among parents whose children partook in regular or inclusive classes based on the availability of personal or material resources and the climate of the classroom. Parents with higher educational levels and income were found to have positive attitudes concerning the incorporation of students with physical disabilities. Concerning one's attitude towards students dealing with learning disabilities, lower educational levels of parents were found to have a more positive attitude when weighed up against parents with high educational levels.

Rose et al. (2021), in their study "A Comparison of Provision and Access to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in a Metropolitan City and a Rural District in Telangana State, India. There was an inconsistency between the availableness of resources for inclusive education and therapeutic assistance between urban and rural areas, which is discernable depending on the obtainability of training facilities for those professionally involved. Parents were more conversant about their children's rights to access appropriate schooling, and attitudes towards children with disabilities have been improved. However, the study stipulates that there is a willingness to convey the requirements of children with special educational needs

and disabilities in both districts despite the services falling inadequate of those necessitated to bring about a greater deal of educational inclusion.

Varghese and Parambat (2018), in their research Problems faced by resource teachers, parents and students under the inclusive education programme in the state of Kerala found that Children with special needs had issues completing their assignments, finding opportunities for extracurricular activities, participating with their classmates in classroom activities, utilising teaching and learning resources in the school and receiving insufficient support from resource teachers among other issues. In terms of the issues with the support system, resource teachers and normal teachers lack home visits, enough assistance and equipment to take up the challenges of kids with special needs. Lack of appropriate amenities in the home and inconvenient laboratory layouts. Libraries, etc., in the schools, and a lack of appreciation in the classroom. Poor health issues, limited playtime, trouble getting to class, lack of empathy from peers and parents, lack of access to medical care when necessary and issues with neighbours and family all contribute to socio-personal issues. The comparison of agreement percentages reveals that nearly no significant differences exist between sub-samples when it comes to the problems that children with special needs encounter in many areas. When comparing the percentages of agreement, only a small number of items are considerably different. This shows that regardless of gender and location, the CWSN generally confront issues of the same size.

Hlondo and Hnamte (2020) conducted a study on Inclusive Education in Mizoram: A Critical Study. The overall student-teacher ratio was 1:6. The most frequent CWSN was visual impairment. The most frequent CWSN was visual impairment, followed by intellectual disability, and locomotor was the least prevalent. Most schools lacked ramps, others had issues with the toilets, and the teachers had not received any training on disabilities. In the meantime, most headmasters had attended training and considered the necessity of providing all teachers with training on inclusive education. The majority of headmasters believed that not every school needed a special educator. Most schools lacked the necessary financial resources, special/resource teachers and instructional materials. There were



more teachers who had a good attitude towards inclusive education than those who did not.

There were noteworthy distinctions between primary school teachers in rural and urban areas. Teachers with different levels of expertise work towards inclusive education. No particular distinction among male and female elementary school teachers, young aged and middle-aged, middle-aged and old-aged, undergraduate and graduate teachers, undergraduate and post-graduate, graduate and post-graduate, less experienced and middle experienced, middle experienced and more experienced teachers towards inclusive education. The majority of the teachers were acquainted with the programme for inclusive education. Most parents of CWSN and rural parents believe that inclusive education is necessary for the social development and interpersonal skills of CWSN and normal children. Most parents prefer inclusive schools over special schools for CWSN, and they want the evaluation system to be flexible to their needs.

Makuyana (2022), in “Towards interventions on school dropouts for disabled learners amidst and post-COVID-19 pandemic,” researched the reduction of the number of disabled learners in garnering success in basic education in South Africa. The researcher resorted to the descriptive-narrative approach to champion reality, which has been prompted by empiricism, the direct experiences of parents of disabled children, administrative heads of schools, social workers, the Department of Social Development and Basic Education, etc. The key factors responsible for this situation are- discrimination caused by conventional school administration and their lack of enthusiasm to enlist disabled learners. Furthermore, teachers resort to exclusive teaching and learning methods, which may be seen as a consequence of their ignorance, inexperience, lack of understanding, and misconstrued understanding of disability and disability inclusion.

Alves and Campos (2024), in “School physical education and disabled students: what about Paralympic sports?” resorted to interviews and focus group discussions with disabled students, their peers, and their physical education trainers, thus letting in exploration of beliefs, virtues, and practices concerning disability. Thematic analysis was conducted to interpret the participants’ comments and responses. Paralympic sports played an evasive part in making the disabled student

perceive and opionate about their identity by precariously inquiring into the existing physical education practices. The Inclusion of Paralympic sports may be thought of as a stratagem to invigorate non-disabled students' awareness of disability, thus highlighting the virtues of equity and conceding disabled students' educational rights.

Agarwal (2020) prepared a report on universal design available in school infrastructure, referring to the backlashes of disabled children due to inaccessible school infrastructure. The report is an effort to dispose of barriers concerning fundamental physical conditions at school. It explores provisions that are made available by the implementation of available policies, thus probing into positive changes that may be fortified and protracted into a school's physical environment to thrive the chances of successful inclusive schooling. The report exclusively talks about the prominence of signage: "colour contrasted to the background wall; the combination of Braille, symbols and large fonts; and strategically located."

Mason-Williams et al. (2020) conducted research on Rethinking Shortages in Special Education: Making Good on the Promise of an Equal Opportunity for Students With Disabilities. He reported on the unequal educational opportunities that prevailed due to the shortage of special education teacher (SET) and discussed the strategies undertaken at the administrative level to combat them. The authors opined that there's no way of addressing the SET shortage other than building on the working conditions and generating compensation to cater to the problems of teachers's shortage and teachers' working conditions. The researchers have reported staffing shortages in schools in remote and rural areas, mainly due to geographic isolation, inaccessibility of teacher preparation programmes or continuous development programmes, and a general lack of interest in teaching or getting relocated to an undesirable locale.

Babik and Gardner (2021), in *Affecting the Perception of Disability: A Developmental Perspective*, found that parental practices are agents of passing down sociopolitical attitudes to their children, thus shaping specific personality traits. Further, parental prejudice is seen to create misinformation about out-groups, creating the hitches of 'over-generalisation and social exclusion'. The researchers have discussed the tendency of children to exclude their disabled peers from

academics, sports, and other social activities, succumbing to a threat of failure and diminishing group efficacy. Parents often perceive disability as a divine punishment, a consequence of karma, further justifying social exclusion by terminating the necessity of intervention.

Strnadova et al. (2023), in “Pupils’ Attitudes toward Inclusive Education”, aimed to find out the attitudes of non-disabled pupils towards their disabled classmates, keeping in mind the biological, psychological, and social factors that influence an individual’s health and well-being. The research has created scope for intervention and recognition of diverse requirements with empathy by understanding the specific needs of a disabled peer. The study has found inclusive education creates a space and tailors individuals with diverse educational needs. Rather than creating discrimination, it enables normal participation in work and social inclusion irrespective of differences in abilities or capacities.

### **Conclusion**

While reviewing related literature, several studies have been conducted based on inclusive education and specific disabilities. In Mizoram, there were only a few studies on inclusive education and disabilities. In addition, no study based on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 has been found in the context of Mizoram. Therefore, the study was conducted to determine the status and stakeholders’ perceptions on implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 in the secondary schools of Mizoram.

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CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter dealt with the methodology of the present study, population, sample, tools, development of tools, mode of data collection, tabulation, analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

3.1 Method of the Study

The study focuses on exploring the implementation status of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the perceptions of different stakeholders in secondary schools of Mizoram. The research approach used was mixed methods research, and the design was convergent mixed methods design. The study includes qualitative data collection and quantitative data collection. The convergent design intends to compare the findings from the qualitative strand with those from the quantitative strand by merging the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2023) to understand the research problem more comprehensively. This design aims to combine the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods (Patton, 1990). The merging then provides both a qualitative and a quantitative picture of the research problem. Because each type of data offers different insights, their combination contributes to seeing the issue from multiple viewpoints and perspectives (Creswell, 2015).

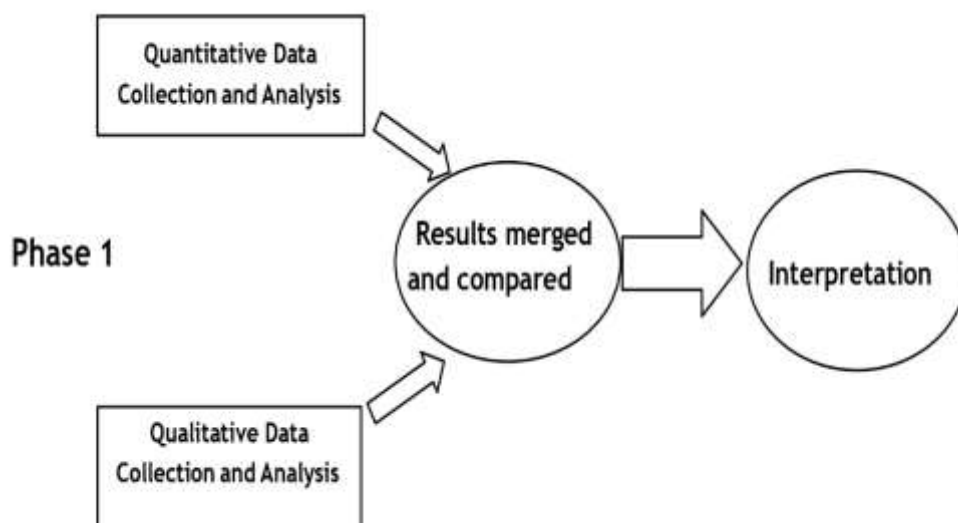


Figure 3.1 Convergent Mixed Methods Research Design (One-Phase Design) of the Study

Qualitative results offer in-depth personal viewpoints of individuals, while quantitative results yield general trends and linkages. These are both valuable results and when they are combined, they provide more data than each database alone could have offered and a more comprehensive perspective. Hence, using convergent mixed methods design, the researcher can present several viewpoints or even validate one database with another.

3.2 Population

The population of the study comprised all the secondary schools' stakeholders (director of school education, district education officers, state commissioner for persons with disabilities, headmasters, teachers, differently-abled students and parents) of Mizoram. As per the annual publication, Department of Education, Government of Mizoram (2020-2021), there were 1987 teachers working in government secondary schools and 1018 differently-abled students attending government secondary schools. Therefore, the population of the present study consists of all the present teachers working in government secondary schools, differently-abled secondary school students, and all parents of differently-abled secondary school students in the state of Mizoram.

3.3 Sample

For the present study, teachers, differently-abled secondary school students, and parents of differently-abled secondary school students were selected randomly for the quantitative phase of this study. Purposive sampling was used for the qualitative data collection phase. Details of the selected samples are given in Table No. 3.1.

Table 3.1 Samples of headmasters, teachers, students and parents in the school

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of Headmasters | No. of Teachers | No. of Students | No. of Parents | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| 1 | Aizawl District | 3 | 10 | 19 | 19 | 51 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 3 | 20 | 16 | 16 | 55 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 3 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 37 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 2 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 36 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 15 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 3 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 36 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 36 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 3 | 9 | 14 | 14 | 40 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 1 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 27 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | 21 | 15 | 15 | 54 |
| Total | | 25 | 127 | 126 | 125 | 403 |

As shown in Table 3.1, the sample of the study includes 25 headmasters, 127 teachers, 126 differently-abled secondary school students and 125 parents of differently-abled secondary school students to determine the perceptions on implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

3.3.1 Description of Demographic Data

The implementation status of the RPwD Act, 2016, was examined using a checklist constructed by the researcher. Various demographic factors were taken to gain a thorough grasp of the main study variables. The demographic variable has been presented as follows:

3.3.1.1 Description of Headmasters

Table 3.2 Description of headmasters

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of headmasters | | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 3 | - | 3 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 2 | - | 2 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 2 | - | 2 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | - | 1 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | - | 1 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 3 | - | 3 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 1 | - | 1 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | - | 3 |
| Total | | 22 | 3 | 25 |

From the above demographic table 3.2, it is clearly stated that 25 headmasters were selected as a sample for the study. The chosen samples consisted of 22 male and three female headmasters.

3.3.1.2 Description of Stakeholders

Table 3.3 Description of Stakeholders

| SI No. | Stakeholders | No. of Stakeholders | | Total |
|--------------|--|---------------------|----------|-----------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1. | Secondary school headmasters | 22 | 3 | 25 |
| 2. | District education officers | 11 | - | 11 |
| 3. | Director of school education | 1 | - | 1 |
| 4. | State commissioner for persons with disabilities | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total | | 35 | 3 | 38 |

From the table 3.3, the stakeholders consist of 38 persons; 35 were male, and three were female. Secondary school head teachers consisted of 22 male and three female teachers; all the 11 district education officers were male, and there was one male director of school education and one female state commissioner for persons with disabilities.

3.3.1.3 Description of teachers

Table 3.4 Description of Teachers in Gender

| SI No. | Districts | No. of Teachers | | Total |
|--------|-------------------|-----------------|--------|-------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 5 | 5 | 10 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 6 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 2 | 8 | 5 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | 14 | 21 |
| Total | | 66 | 61 | 127 |

To find out the perceptions on the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the sample of the study includes 127 teachers- 66 male secondary school teachers and 61 female secondary school teachers, as shown in the table 3.4.

3.3.1.3 Description of secondary school teacher's teaching experience

Table 3.5 Description of secondary school teacher's teaching experience

| Teacher's Teaching Experience | < 5 years | 5-10 years | 11-15 years | >15 years | Total |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| No. of Teachers | 43 | 15 | 23 | 46 | 127 |

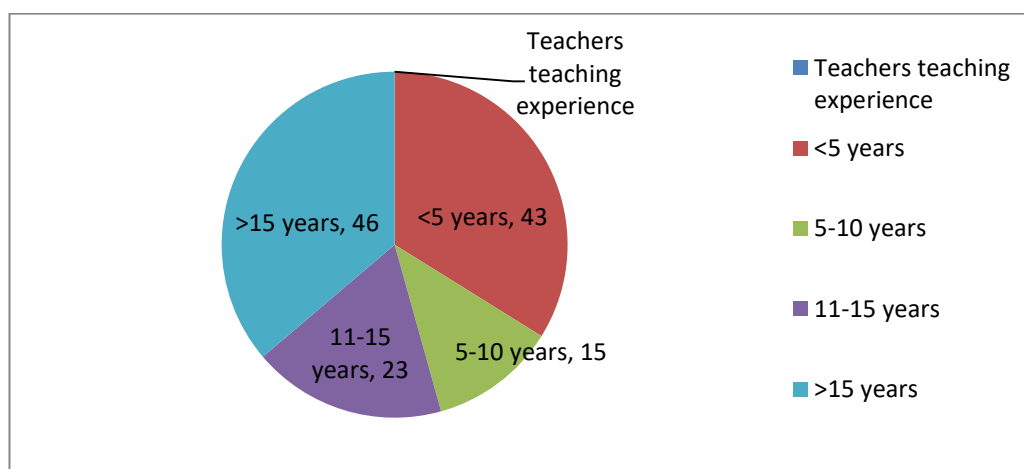


Figure 3.2 Description of secondary school teacher's teaching experience

As shown in Table 3.5 and Figure 3.2, to find out the perception of the RPwD Act, 2016, of secondary school teachers concerning their teaching experience, 127

teachers were selected as a sample. The sample consists of 43 teachers with less than five years of teaching experience, 15 teachers with 5-10 years of teaching experience, 23 teachers experiencing 11-15 years and 46 teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience. The list of educational qualifications has been presented in the tables below:

3.3.1.4 Description of secondary school teacher's educational qualification

Table 3.6 Description of secondary school teacher's educational qualification

| Teacher's Educational Qualification | Masters + B.Ed | Bachelors + B.Ed | Masters Bachelors | Total |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-------|
| No. of Teachers | 53 | 44 | 13 | 127 |

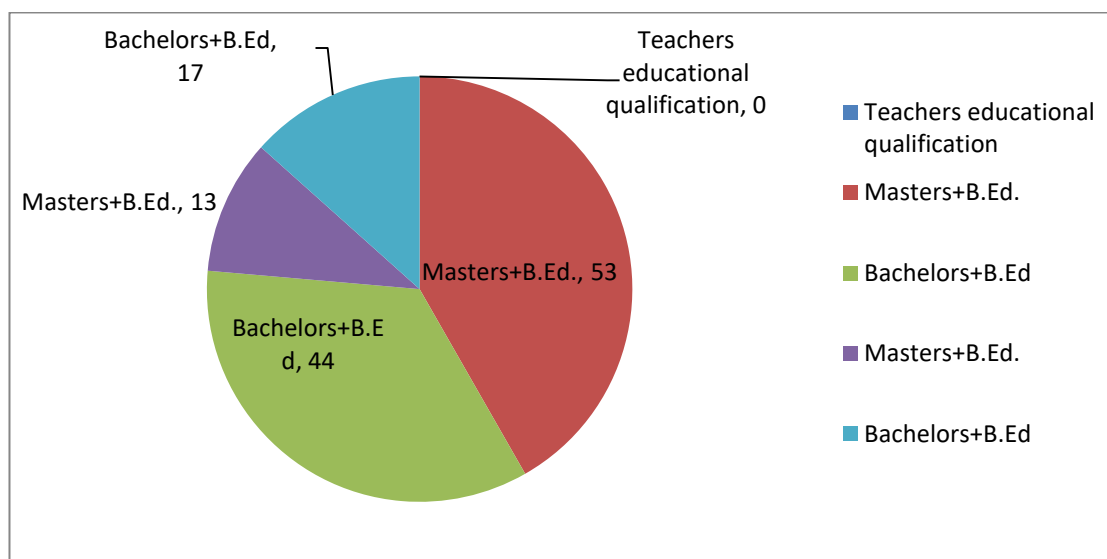


Figure 3.3 Description of secondary school teacher's educational qualification

For finding out the perception of the RPwD Act, 2016, of a secondary school teacher with regards to their educational qualification, out of 127 teachers, 53 teachers were under the category of masters + B.Ed., 44 teachers in bachelors + B.Ed., 13 teachers under master's degree and 17 teachers having bachelors degree as shown from the table 3.6 and figure 3.3.

3.3.1.5 Description of Students

Table 3.7 Description of students

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of Students | | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 8 | 11 | 19 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 4 | 12 | 16 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 6 | 8 | 14 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 2 | 8 | 11 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | 13 | 15 |
| Total | | 47 | 79 | 126 |

In order to find out the perceptions on the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, 126 differently-abled secondary school students consisting of 47 males and 79 females differently-abled secondary school students are presented in Table 3.7.

3.3.1.5 Descriptions of Parents

Table 3.8 Descriptions of Parents

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of Parents | | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 8 | 11 | 19 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 4 | 12 | 16 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 4 | 10 | 14 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 2 | 13 | 15 |
| Total | | 40 | 85 | 125 |

From Table 3.8 presented above, 125 parents of differently-abled secondary school students were collected as a sample to determine the perceptions on implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The parents consist of 40 males and 85 females.

During the sample selection process, the researcher collected the enrolment of differently-abled students from each district's district project office, Samagra Shiksha. With the information given by the office, the researcher seeks prior permission to visit and collect data from the headmaster of the secondary school. The sample of the study consists of 127 teachers who teach differently-abled students in secondary schools, 126 differently-abled secondary school students and 125 parents

of differently-abled secondary school students in order to study the perceptions on implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. The parent questionnaire was given to the students to bring back after their parents' responses, and the investigator collected it from the students the next day.

Further, in order to find out the status and challenges of implementing the RPwD Act, 2016, the director of school education, district education officers, state commissioners for persons with disabilities and headteachers of secondary schools were included in this study for interview.

3.4 Tools Used

The researcher used the following tools to attain the objectives of the study:

1. Questionnaire for teacher's perceptions on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
2. Questionnaire for differently-abled student's perceptions on the implementation of RPwD Act, 2016
3. Questionnaire for parents of differently-abled students on implementation of RPwD Act, 2016
4. An interview schedule for the director of school education on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
5. An interview schedule for the district education officers on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
6. An interview schedule for the state commissioner for persons with disabilities on implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
7. An interview schedule for headmasters on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
8. A checklist to examine the implementation status of the RPwD Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram

3.5 Construction of Tools

Due to the non-availability of standardised tools regarding the study, the investigator developed tools based on the RPwD Act 2016, chapter III.

- **Questionnaire for teachers' perceptions on the implementation of the RPwD Act 2016:** The investigator developed a perceptions scale towards the Rights of Persons with disabilities act 2016. The scale is constructed by following the Likert five-point rating scale. The scale comprises 19 statements and six semi-closed-ended questions for teachers. Each statement has five alternative responses – strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. These responses have scored 5,4,3,2 and 1.

- **Reliability of tools:** The most crucial feature of a measuring instrument is reliability. Following the completion of the final draft of the questionnaire based on expert advice and observations, the investigator initially distributed the questionnaire to a sample of thirty teachers. The investigator then used the split-half method to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability. The entire sample was split into two equal subsamples at random, and the correlation between the two halves was determined using Pearson's product-moment method. The correlation coefficient, which was determined to be $r = 0.89$, indicates that the instrument has a high level of reliability.

- **Questionnaire for differently-abled students' perceptions on the implementation of the RPwD Act 2016:** The investigator developed a perceptions scale towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. The scale is constructed by following a Likert five-point rating scale consisting of 16 statements and five semi-closed-ended questions for students. Each statement has five alternative responses – strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. These responses have scored 5,4,3,2 and 1.

- **Reliability of tool:** Reliability is the most critical characteristic of a measurement instrument. The investigator first gave the questionnaire to a sample of thirty differently-abled secondary school students after finishing the final draft based on professional advice and observations. The investigator then assessed the reliability of the questionnaire using the split-half method. Using Pearson's product-moment method, the entire sample was randomly divided into two equal subsamples and the correlation between the two halves was ascertained. The correlation coefficient, which was determined to be $r = 0.48$, indicates that the instrument has a moderate level of reliability.

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- **Questionnaire for parents of differently-abled students on implementation of RPwD Act 2016:** The investigator developed a perceptions scale towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. The scale is constructed by following the Likert five-point rating scale. The scales consist of 16 statements and six semi-closed-ended questions. Each statement has five alternative responses – strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. These responses have scored 5,4,3,2 and 1.

- **Reliability of tool:** The investigator gave the questionnaire to a sample of thirty parents of differently-abled secondary school students after the final form was completed based on professional advice and observations. The investigator then assessed the questionnaire's reliability using the split-half method. Pearson's product-moment technique was used to find the correlation between the two halves by randomly dividing the full sample into two equal subsamples. The correlation coefficient, which was determined to be $r = 0.43$, indicates that the instrument has a moderate level of reliability.

- **An interview schedule for the Director of School Education to find out the challenges in implementing the RPwD Act, 2016:** An interview tool was developed by the investigator to find out the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, which consists of 12 questions.

- **An interview schedule for a district education officer to find out the challenges in implementing the RPwD Act, 2016:** The investigator developed an interview schedule to find out the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, which contains eight questions.

- **An interview schedule for the state commissioner for persons with disabilities to find out the challenges in implementing the RPwD Act, 2016:** The investigator developed an interview schedule to determine the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, which consisted of seven questions.

- **An interview schedule for headmasters to find out the challenges in implementing the RPwD Act, 2016:** The investigator develops interview questions

to find out the perception of the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, which is comprised of 19 questions.

- **A checklist for schools to examine the status of implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram:** To explore the status of implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram, the investigator developed a checklist:

- i) Status relating to modifications and arrangements in the examination system
- ii) Status pertaining to physical infrastructure
- iii) Status relating to identification
- iv) Status relating to support aids and appliances

3.6 Validity of the Tools

The drafted questionnaires, interview schedules and checklists were validated by experts in Department of Education and Department of Psychology at Mizoram University, Banaras Hindu University and University of Allahabad. Experts suggested that by giving full cooperation, tools were reviewed, and modifications were made. Tools were drafted around three to four times. New items were added while some items were removed. The questionnaires were translated into Mizo language for the students and parents. The content and face validity have been ensured by considering expert comments when preparing the final draft of the tools. Experts in inclusive education gave their approval to the tools.

3.7 Procedure of Data Collection

In this single-phase approach, the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, analyzed them independently, and then compared the results to determine if they supported or contradicted each other. The researcher visited every district in order to gather the data. The government authorities and the administrative offices of each district were formally consulted. The one-on-one interview using the qualitative approach was conducted with the director of school education, district

education officers, state commissioners for persons with disabilities, and head teachers of secondary schools.

The district project office, Samagra Shiksha in each district, is where the researchers obtain the enrolment information for the differently-abled students. Using the information provided by the office, she approached the secondary school headmaster for permission to visit and gather data in advance. Through qualitative observation and checklist using descriptive and reflective field notes, the researcher collected data on the status of modifications and arrangements in the examination system, physical infrastructure, identification and support aids and appliances for differently-abled secondary school students under the purview of the RPwD Act, 2016.

Since the nature of the research design is concurrently parallel, the researcher simultaneously collected the data for both strands. On this line of thought, the researcher collected the perceptions of secondary school teachers, differently-abled students, and their parents using the survey method of the quantitative approach. The questionnaire was given to the students to bring back after their parents' responses, and the investigator collected it from the students the next day.

The researcher randomly selected the teachers of secondary schools who teach differently-abled students. The scale comprises 19 statements and six semi-closed questions to determine perceptions of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The investigator randomly selected differently-abled secondary school students. The scale comprises 16 items and five semi-closed questions to determine perceptions of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Moreover, the investigators selected parents of differently-abled students. The perception scale comprises 16 items and six semi-closed-ended questions to determine the perceptions on implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The questionnaire was given to the students to bring back after their parents' responses, and the investigator collected it from the students the next day.

Interviews conducted with the director of school education, district education officers, state commissioners for persons with disabilities and head teachers of secondary schools were recorded using a mobile phone for translation and transcription.

3.8 Tabulation and Analysis of Data

The collected data were tabulated and scrutinised. The data collected from the interview was analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis. Observations from the checklist were tabulated using an MS Excel worksheet. In order to verify the stated hypotheses and arrive at generalisable conclusions, data were analysed with the help of descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation and inferential statistics such as t-test and analysis of variance were used to describe the nature of data.

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**CHAPTER-4**  
**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

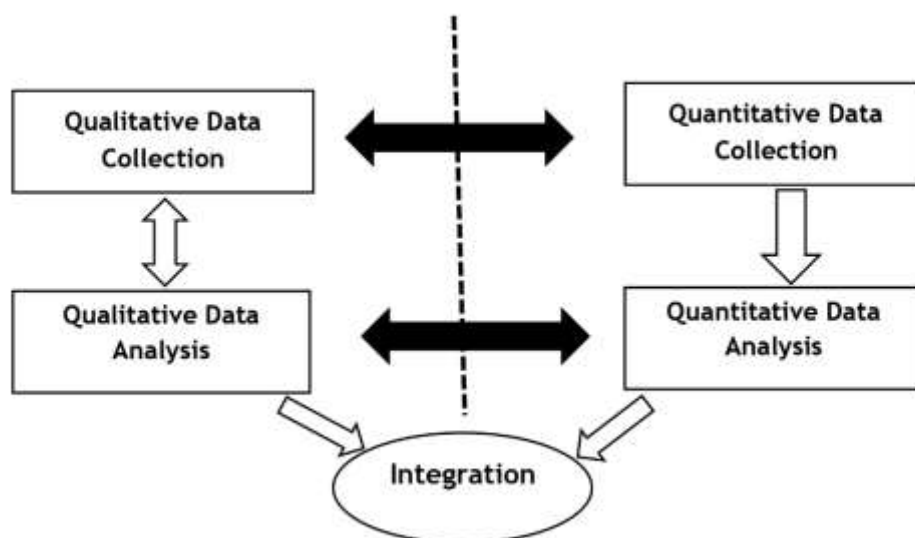
## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis and interpretation are vital and fundamental components of any research. This chapter addresses the results, interpretations, and discussions related to the various objectives and hypotheses of the current study. The data were collected using the tools constructed by the researcher.

#### 4.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Data

The researcher used integrative data analysis in this convergent mixed methods research design that comprised three phases. In the first phase, the researcher analysed the qualitative database by coding the data and generating broad themes. The second phase included the analysis of the quantitative database in terms of statistical findings. The researcher conducted a mixed methods data analysis of integrating the two databases in the third phase.



**Figure 4.1 Interactive Analysis of Convergent Mixed Methods Data**

To combine the two databases, the researcher employed a side-by-side approach, which allowed for a comparative discussion by presenting one set of findings first

and then the other. In the integration analysis, the researcher initially reported the quantitative statistical results, followed by a discussion of the qualitative findings (themes) that either support or contradict the statistical results. The study's findings are presented in alignment with the research objectives.

#### **4.2 Objective 1: To examine the implementation status of the RPwD Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram**

The topological conditions of Mizoram implemented the RPwD Act, 2016, which was back-breaking among the secondary schools in the state. However, owing to the downright absence of attitudinal barriers and intrepidity brought forth by the authorities, they further showcased their sensitivity towards bothered children and persons with disability. Objective-wise thematic analyses were used to analyse the qualitative data.

**Table 4.1 Implementation status of the RPwD Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram**

| <b>Themes</b>                  | <b>Sub-Theme</b>                                   | <b>Explanation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The Essential Prerequisites | a) Assistive aids                                  | Assistive aids include learning kits and assistive technology that are essential to make the teaching-learning process easy.                                                                                                               |
|                                | b) Hands-on training                               | Hands-on training is to be given to the stakeholders to help them with whatever assistive technology or modes of augmentative communication are available.                                                                                 |
|                                | c) Universal design for infrastructural facilities | Emphasis is given to making necessary installations for secondary school students based on the universal design to build up inclusive natured laboratories, libraries, playgrounds, etc.<br><br>Special focus is given to a teacher's pre- |

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 | d) Preparation procedure for teachers                                                                                                                                                     | service training, followed by intensive and continuous professional development training from time to time, to prepare them to incorporate a universal design for learning, methods of teaching, and assessment techniques in teaching-learning discourse.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 2. The weakness | <p>a) Conducive teaching-learning environment</p> <p>b) Enrolment of children with disability</p> <p>c) Signage</p> <p>d) The prospect of physical education</p> <p>e) Transportation</p> | <p>This creates the need to identify and manage problem behaviours found among children in a classroom.</p> <p>The enrolment ratio is, to date, below the expected margin as the concern behind their enrolment has not yet been appreciably realised or catered to.</p> <p>Using signs and symbols to communicate a message was a total amiss in secondary schools.</p> <p>Adaptive techniques to make physical education activities inclusive, incompetency of the assigned physical instructor to modify sports/games to the likeliness of a differently-abled student, and lack of awareness and inspiration were taken into account.</p> <p>The extreme topological forbearing of the</p> |

|                 |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                 | <p>f) Topological conditions of Mizoram</p> <p>g) Appointment of special educators</p> <p>h) Drop-out rates of students with disability</p> | <p>locale further made opportunities for transportation uninvited.</p> <p>The extreme demographical location of Mizoram and geo-politics aroused complications regarding the availability of resources and their anticipated accomplishments.</p> <p>Locational disadvantage, unavailability of hi-tech assistive devices, and dearth of appointment of special instructors all huddle up one against the other.</p> <p>Uncertainty regarding future prospects, financial burden, indifferent attitude of teachers and peers, and often misunderstood or mistook, thus marginalising their confidence.</p> |
| 3) The Benefits | <p>a) Student-friendly school environment</p> <p>b) Understanding the diverse learning requirements of students</p>                         | <p>Students with disability are taken special care of, their diverse learning requirements are taken into consideration, and necessary modifications are initiated for their smooth classroom functioning.</p> <p>A sound understanding of their pattern, style, and pace is taken care of. Intervention is made into the nature of disability; viable mechanisms to beat the problems are identified and accorded.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                    |



|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>c) Adequate and suitable infrastructure facilities</p> <p>d) Accessibility of resources</p> <p>e) Modification in the curriculum</p> <p>f) Sensitivity towards differently-abled students</p> <p>g) Attitudinal barrier</p> <p>h) Reasonable accommodation</p> | <p>Facilities, such as ramps, staircases with handrails, and signboards, are installed in schools to support students with disability and accommodate learners from diverse learning backgrounds.</p> <p>The use of magnifiers, braille-printed books, word cards, large printed books, audiobooks, e-text readers, and ball holders is put to use as high-tech communication aids.</p> <p>The school managing committee has decided to favour a more flexible timetable, adopted assessment techniques that cater well to learners with diverse needs, and focused on exempting second and third-language subjects.</p> <p>There exists no such complication on the grounds of pre-conceived ideas, prejudices, judgement or discrimination among teachers for students with disability.</p> <p>The teachers make an extra conscious attempt to have a positive outlook on things, negating biasedness or preference regarding ability or opportunity.</p> <p>Basic requirements enlist infrastructural facilities, such as ramps, handrails, signage</p> |
|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|  |  |                                                 |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------|
|  |  | design, transport and accommodation facilities. |
|--|--|-------------------------------------------------|

## 1. The Essential Prerequisites

**a) Assistive aids-** The schools should be well-equipped to cater to the diverse learning requirements of learners with diverse needs.

In this stream of thought, a secondary school headmaster mentioned,

*“We have gone out of our way to incorporate assistive technology in the school so as to impart quality education to children with difficulty.”*

Another administrative stakeholder of a secondary school remarked,

*“Students with disabilities were introduced to assistive aids, namely, magnifiers, writing aids, braille display, screen readers, note-taking devices, tape recorders, specially furnished desks and chairs and so on.”*

**b) Hands-on training to get used to devices-** It becomes imperative for secondary school teachers to acquire training in the sign language mechanism of Braille and get handy with the in-house assistive technology and other augmentative communications.

In this regard, a secondary school headmaster opined,

*“We realised the urgent need for the appointment of paraprofessionals, who were particularly hired to give away guidance and counselling, as well as occupational therapy to the differently-abled students.”*

In a similar stream of discussion, another secondary school headmaster opined,

*“We decided to bring reforms within the curriculum design, which required personalised educational planning. We decided to go for those assessment techniques and procedures that are flexible in nature and can generate the anticipatory learning outcome.”*

**c) Universal design for infrastructural facilities-** Despite the RPwD Act 2016 suggesting a universal design for infrastructural facilities, which ideated a fully furnished school, leaving no stone unturned. It considered the inclusion of accessible playgrounds, equipped and inclusive-natured science laboratories, libraries and reading centres along with the provision of textbooks, audio books, braille books, subscription to e-books, disability-friendly lavatories, ramps, handrails, elevators, and signage. However, the reality of schools in Mizoram is a bit different than the ideal picture is supposed to be.

In this light, an administrative stakeholder remarked,

*“Given the demographic locale of Mizoram, the states require more than the funds that have been allocated to install and build the universal infrastructure.”*

The topography that serves as the seat of the secondary schools in Aizawl poses a constant challenge for the stakeholders in making necessary installations. In this regard, a member of the state commission remarked,

*“The State is required to allocate funds more adequately in order to make modifications in the school buildings or redesign the school premises as per the prescribing of the universal design under the RPwD Act 2016.”*

**d) Preparation procedure of teachers-** The RPwD Act 2016’s redemption is to make provisions for the special educational needs of students with disability to cater to their diverse learning requirements. This also withholds the modification in the curriculum for B.Ed. and M.Ed. students concerning pre-service teacher training and regulation of intensive and continuous professional development training for in-service secondary school teachers. These training programmes are vital in their own rights, as they play an unmissable role in nurturing the teachers’ aptitude, sharpening their potential, and making them occupationally sound and appropriate to fit into an inclusive setting.

In this line of thought, a school co-ordinator replied,

*“A universal design for learning is made up of a universal objective for learning, universal methods applied to make teaching-learning successful and universal techniques adopted to assess students’ performances, and other paraphernalia possessing utmost importance while teaching secondary school students in an inclusive setting.”*

## **2. The Weaknesses**

**a) Conducive teaching-learning environment-** Most of the secondary schools in Mizoram did not have a properly accessible environment to fit students with disabilities. Moreover, feasibility posed a dominant threat as it could not fit in rightly to meet the needs of differently-abled students.

On questioning the district education commissioners, one of the respondents believed,

*“Many such constructions that are made for differently-abled students existed for the sake of existence. They were practical of no-good use, as they failed to generate any full-proof assistance to the differently-abled students.”*

**b) Enrolment of children with disability-** The number of disability enrolment in rural secondary schools was never that high, and because of this, secondary schools did not get the significant enrolments of students with disability that they were anticipating. In this light, a secondary school headmaster opined,

*“Since the enrolments were always below the belt and somewhat underwhelming, the real need for admitting children with disability into such schools was not appreciably realised, thus leaving the actual need and requirement of their existence unfettered.”*

**c) Signage design-** Another underwhelming aspect was recorded as per the findings of an observation checklist, where the presence of signage design in secondary school premises went totally missing. On being asked, a member of the state commissioner opined,

*“We shall keep these absences in mind, thus indicating that modifications shall be made, and necessary constructions shall be adjudicated considering the RPwD Act 2016 in order to construct a conducive environment that is disability friendly.”*

**d) The prospect of physical education-** No secondary schools are seen to have adapted provisions for the inclusion of physical education or made efforts to incorporate sports and games for students with disability. This research is a witness to schools where the physical education teacher had no clue whatsoever of the adapted practices to make physical education inclusive. In this regard, a student with disability opined,

*“We were kept aloof from games and sports that were conducted for other students in our school due to our physical education instructor’s incompetence to modify the game/ sport as per the appropriateness of the differently-abled students like us.”*

Another respondent, a parent of a differently-abled student, remarked,

*“The idea of encouraging our wards into sports never existed as we haven’t seen any secondary schools take the necessary initiative to send abled students for para Olympics or Special Olympics. Therefore, there was no source of inspiration or what can be referred to as a lack of awareness as to whom one can look up to or gather the drive from.”*

**e) Transportation facilities-** Keeping in mind the extreme topological condition of Mizoram, proper transportation facilities are a must-have when it comes to the successful operationalisation of any educational institution. However, it was much against our expectations to note that not a single secondary school that was covered by our research had transport facilities for differently-abled students. Needless to say, there was no one to attend these children’s school.

**f) Topological conditions of Mizoram:** The condition prevalent due to the extreme geographical locale of Mizoram has made the implementation of the RPwD Act 2016 a relentless task. On being asked about the success rate of implementation of the provisions of the Act in their respective school, a secondary school headmaster mentioned,

*“We have been providing books for those students who have reported low vision. We have also made necessary arrangements to provide wheelchairs to those students with locomotor disability. However, I believe that we are yet to call ourselves successful as we are at an initial stage of accomplishment. The need of the hour is to ideate and think beyond the foreseen capacities of the Braille, sign language and assistive devices as they cannot be materialistically adjudicated everywhere.”*

**g) Appointment of special educators-** Mizoram faces a location disadvantage when appointing special educators for differently-abled students. In this regard, a secondary school teacher remarked,

*“Apart from the appointment of special instructors, differently-abled secondary school students also have to compromise with standards due to the unavailability of capital resources and high-tech assistive devices that impede their learning outcomes.”*

Adding to this stream of thought, another secondary school teacher mentioned,

*“We perpetually face the threat that students with disabilities might not retain in academics due to poor or negligible financial assistance.”*

**h) Drop-out rates of students with disabilities-** The problem of drop-outs can only be curbed by providing adequate stipends and scholarships to students with disabilities so that they can go on fearlessly without having to worry about any sort of financial crunch. In this regard, a secondary school teacher opined,

*“Drop-out rates among secondary school disabled students can be curbed only when their educational needs are understood and satiated. In an inclusive set-up, it becomes imperative that students’ diverse learning requirements are catered well, where teachers’ attitudes towards students are well moderated without underestimating anyone’s capabilities.”*

### **3. The Benefits**

**a) Student-friendly school environment-** The research has found evidence of teachers and other secondary school stakeholders who are always ready to help students overcome their disabilities and achieve the desired learning outcomes. On being asked about what the teachers did to ensure the best for their students, a secondary school teacher mentioned,

*“As a class teacher, I ensured that I kept the seats in the first row for those with an eye problem and made proper arrangements to provide spectacles as per the needs of the students.”*

A secondary school teacher in a similar line of thought expressed,

*“My staff and I jointly planned how to aid students with mild or partial loss of vision. By handing those books with bold and large font sizes and providing them with corrective reading glasses, this problem is taken care of as well.”*

#### **b) Understanding of the diverse learning requirements of students-**

To pay heed to the diverse learning requirements of the students with disabilities and help them stay encouraged, motivated, and patient and possess a sound understanding of their learning styles and pace, vocational training programmes are initiated right from the initial teen age years. A secondary school teacher opined,

*“The secondary school authority chose to provide financial assistance to upsurge attendance of students with disabilities and reduce the risk of their dropping out of the school.”*

The research reported no other severe disability except for low vision among students and those with locomotor disability. Students were offered bold and prominent printed learning materials to beat this drawback.

**c) Adequate and suitable infrastructural facilities-** Among the most appropriate infrastructural facilities, the most noteworthy ones include along ramps, staircases with handrails, and signboards to support the students with disability in their respective schools.

In this light of thought, a secondary school teacher remarked,

*“Schools are reportedly preparing themselves to accommodate learners from diverse learning backgrounds, thus making options available for both the disabled and the non-disabled students.”*

A secondary school headmaster uttered,

*“Despite the regulations posed by the RPwD Act 2016, not all the facilities for students with disability were constructed keeping in mind the norms and criteria that are best suited for the differently-abled students. One of the most important inclusions is the barrier-free washrooms, built to partially suffice the norms decided behind the installation of washrooms for the differently-abled students.”*

**d) Accessibility of resources-** Availability of fresh drinking water facilities, sanitation, and hygiene among secondary school students with disabilities are a newly accepted reality. The majority of secondary schools in Mizoram reportedly have accessible playgrounds for students with disabilities, maybe not to an extreme extent, but to satiate one’s purpose of inclusion, not covered with grass and paved pathways.



In a similar stream of thought, a secondary school headmaster opined,

*“As per our reports, one secondary school is reportedly letting out an accommodation facility for differently-abled students, whereby the school has been handing out both facilities, that is, boarding and day school.”*

As per another secondary school headmaster,

*“Only our school has reportedly provided enlarging magnifiers, braille-printed books, word cards, large printed books, audio books, e-text readers, and ball holders. We have been offering low to high-tech communication aids and assistive devices that are purposeful for students with benchmark disabilities.”*

**e) Modification in the curriculum-** This reformation was accepted with open arms by quite a few secondary schools exclusively to cater to the diverse learning needs of differently-abled students. While discussing the other nitty-gritty that has undergone a transformation, the school management committee have reported on the change:

*“The facility of the scribe, flexible timetable, organisation of seating arrangement, extra time to take the test, followed by exemption from second and third language subjects.”*

Another initiative is being made to decide on substantial lighting near the blackboard and through the corners of the classroom. Some schools have also installed boards that are accessible for differently-abled students.

In this line of thought, a secondary school headmaster expressed,

*“Our secondary school has disabled-friendly science laboratories; however, the fire alarm system has not been installed in the laboratory.”*

**f) Sensitivity towards differently-abled students-** Ensures that almost no secondary schools have faced the pangs of attitudinal barriers, which the authorities showed after some time.

In this regard, a member of the district commissioner took to saying,

*“Some secondary schools provide seat reservations for differently-abled students in taking admission as per the RPwD Act 2016. Our schools are likely to be appointed as teachers in charge for redress of grievances, to lay an upper hand among the students with disability.”*

Another secondary school headmaster held the opinion that,

*“We play an important leadership role in the enrolment of differently-abled students in our school. We offer reserved seats to students with any kind of disability as per the guidelines of the RTE Act 2009 and RPwD Act 2016.”*

These secondary school teachers usually undergo the procedure of identification and intervention of these disabled students in the school all by themselves. They also adopt a unique teaching-learning process, prioritising the diverse learning needs of the children with disabilities to create an overtly inclusive set up.

**g) Attitudinal barriers-** These were never treated as challenges while admitting differently-abled students without having to face judgment or discrimination.

On being asked about the discriminatory attitude of the secondary school's stakeholders, a parent responded,

*“The teachers consciously attempted to create a positive outlook on things, keeping aside biases or preference in terms of ability or opportunity.”*

**h) Reasonable accommodation-** Reasonable accommodation enlists infrastructural facilities, curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities, teaching-learning materials, teaching methods, assistive technologies, curriculum, assessments, and evaluation techniques. All six schools that were taken as samples ascertained that reasonable accommodation is needed to further make believe that students with

disabilities can participate and gain education equally alongside their non-disabled counterparts.

In this regard, a school management committee member remarked,

*“For a further reality check, we tried to include the basic requirements, such as ramps, handrails, assistive technology, and accommodation facilities as deemed necessary under the RPwD Act 2016 to greater success.”*

#### **4.2.1 Status relating to modifications and arrangements in the examination system**

The following table 4.2 highlights the status relating to modifications and arrangements in the examination system from 25 schools.

**Table 4.2 Status Relating to Modifications and Arrangements in the Examination System**

| Sl No. | Status relating to modification and arrangements in the examination system | Yes        | No       |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|
| 1.     | Flexibility of time                                                        | 23 (92 %)  | 2 (8%)   |
| 2.     | Alternative objective questions instead of descriptive question            | 4 (16%)    | 21 (84%) |
| 3.     | Questions paper inaccessible format                                        | 9 (36%)    | 16 (64%) |
| 4.     | Suitable seating arrangement                                               | 25 (100 %) | -        |
| 5.     | Conduction of examination on the ground floor                              | 18 (72 %)  | 7 (28 %) |
| 6.     | Accessible examination centres                                             | 10 (40%)   | 15 (60%) |
| 7.     | Allow to use assistive devices                                             | 24 (96%)   | 1 (4%)   |
| 8.     | Allow to select mode of examination                                        | 13 (52%)   | 12 (48%) |
| 9.     | Provision for reader or scribe or lab assistant                            | 20 (80%)   | 5 (20%)  |
| 10.    | To take more than one scribe or reader                                     | 4 (16%)    | 21 (84%) |
| 11.    | Discretion of opting own scribe or reader                                  | 9 (36%)    | 16 (64%) |
| 12.    | Compensatory time for the students using                                   | 17 (68%)   | 8 (32%)  |

|     |                                                      |          |            |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------|
|     | scribe or reader or lab assistant                    |          |            |
| 13. | Late entry during the examination                    | 2 (8%)   | 23 (92%)   |
| 14. | Use of customised devices                            | 14 (56%) | 11 (44%)   |
| 15. | Facility of sign language or interpreter as required | -        | 25 (100 %) |

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As seen from Table 4.2, out of 25 schools, 23 (92%) had flexible time, while two (8%) schools did not have flexible time for the modifications and arrangements in the examination system. Four (16%) schools had alternative objective questions instead of descriptive questions, while 21 (84%) schools did not have alternative objective questions instead of descriptive questions. Nine (36%) schools had an accessible format in the examination, while 16 (64%) schools did not have an inaccessible format in the examination system. The selected sample, i.e. 25 (100%) schools, has suitable seating arrangements. Eighteen (72%) schools have conducted examinations on the ground floor of the school building. On the other hand, seven (28%) schools have not conducted their exam on the ground floor. Ten (40%) schools have access to examination centres, while fifteen (60%) did not access the examination centres. Twenty-four (96 %) of the schools were allowed to use assistive devices, while only one (4%) was not allowed to use assistive devices during the exam. Thirteen (52%) schools were allowed to select the mode of examination. Twenty (80%) of schools were provided for readers of scribes or lab assistants, while five (20%) did not provide readers for scribes or lab assistants. Most schools, i.e., twenty-one (84%), did not allow more than one scribe or reader to be taken in the examination. Seventeen (68%) allow compensatory time for students using a scribe, reader, or lab assistant. Twenty-three (92%) of the schools were exempt from late entry for differently-abled students during exams. Fourteen (56%) of the schools allowed customised devices for differently-abled students, while eleven (44%) schools were not permitted to use customised devices in the examination. It was found from the study that no sign language or interpreter was required for the differently-abled students in the examination system.

#### 4.2.2 Status relating to physical infrastructure

The status relating to physical infrastructure as mentioned by the headmasters were presented in the following table below:

**Table 4.3 Status relating to Physical Infrastructure**

| Sl No. | Status relating to Physical Infrastructure                              | Yes       | No       |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1.     | Availability of ramps as per requirement for differently-abled students | 20 (80%)  | 5 (20%)  |
| 2.     | Availability of differently-abled student's friendly toilet             | 6 (24%)   | 19 (76%) |
| 3.     | Availability of resource room in the school                             | 22 (88%)  | 3 (12%)  |
| 4.     | Arrangement of seats for the differently-abled students                 | 25 (100%) | -        |

From the table 4.3, 20 (80%) schools have ramps as per requirement, while 5 (20%) do not have ramps as required for the differently-abled students. Six (24%) schools did not have a differently-abled student-friendly toilet, whereas 19 (76%) schools had a differently-abled student-friendly toilet. The majority of the schools, i.e. 22 (88%), have reported having a resource room in their school, while three (12%) do not have a resource room for the differently-abled students. All 25 (100%) schools claimed that they make seating arrangements for the differently-abled students in their school.

### 4.2.3 Status relating to identification

Status relating to identification was presented in the following table 4.4

**Table 4.4 Status relating to identification**

| Sl No. | Status relating to identification                                                | Yes              |                    |           | No      |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1.     | Students attending medical assessment                                            | 25(100%)         |                    |           | -       |
| 2.     | Assessment, as done by provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act | 16 (64%)         |                    |           | 9 (36%) |
| 3.     | Assessment and identification have been done by                                  | Special Educator | Specialist Doctors | Any other |         |
|        |                                                                                  | 9                | 13                 | 3         |         |
| 4.     | Norms for the assessment of differently-abled students                           |                  |                    |           |         |
|        | a) Checklist                                                                     |                  |                    |           | 7       |
|        | b) Medical Examination                                                           |                  |                    |           | 13      |
|        | c) Functional Assessment                                                         |                  |                    |           | 5       |

As reported by the headmasters, all the selected sample school students had medical assessment camps. Sixteen schools had informed that an assessment camp had been conducted, while nine schools informed that the assessment was not conducted as per the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. It was found from the study that special educators had done assessment and identification at nine schools, specialist doctors at 13 schools and three other schools were done by others.

The checklist was used in 7 schools, medical examination in 13 schools and functional assessment in 5 schools for identification.

#### 4.2.4 Status relating to support aids and appliances

The status relating to support aids and appliances were presented in the following table

**Table 4.5 Status relating to support Aids and Appliances**

| Sl No. | Status relating to support Aids and Appliances                     | Yes          | No       |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| 1.     | Whether differently-abled students received assistive devices      | 25<br>(100%) | 0        |
| 2.     | Whether differently-abled students have teaching learning material | 17 (68%)     | 8 (32%)  |
| 3.     | Whether a resource teacher is available in the school              | 12 (48%)     | 13 (52%) |
| 4.     | Assistive devices available in the school                          |              |          |
|        | a) Wheelchair                                                      | 2            |          |
|        | b) Crutch                                                          | 3            |          |
|        | c) Reading glass                                                   | 25           |          |
|        | d) Large print textbooks                                           | 4            |          |
|        | e) Braille books/paper                                             | 1            |          |
|        | f) Hearing aid                                                     | 21           |          |
| 5.     | Allowances provided to the differently-abled students              |              |          |
|        | a) Uniform allowances                                              | 9            |          |
|        | b) Books & Stationery                                              | 6            |          |
|        | c) Escort Allowances                                               | 3            |          |
|        | d) Travelling                                                      | 3            |          |
|        | e) Readers' Allowances                                             | 6            |          |

All the schools received assistive devices among them. 17 schools have suitable teaching learning material, while a number of eight schools do not have suitable teaching learning material. Twelve schools have resource teachers in their school, while 13 do not have resource teachers in their school. Two wheelchairs, three crutches, 25 reading glasses, four large print textbooks, one braille book/paper, and 21 hearing aids.

Nine Uniform allowances, six books & stationery, three escort allowances, three travelling allowances, and six reader allowances were provided to the differently-abled students of 25 schools. Thus, it may be concluded that the majority of the secondary schools in Mizoram stood up to the expectations or anticipations of the checklist.

In corroboration with the findings of Rao and Kashyap (2012), the research found provision of assistive aids to reinstate the provision of support facilities. This includes a number of resources and academic support services that provide structural accessibility to students with disability. Similar to the findings of Nizejimana (2016), the researchers found that some secondary schools lacked the universal design of infrastructure, notably scientific laboratories, dining halls, restrooms, furnished libraries, and disability-friendly furniture. Further, the research findings align with Asare (2019) regarding the outreach for proliferating teachers' training programmes initiated by the government, private or NGOs via in-service training and continuous professional development programmes, thus strongly advocating the integration of inclusive education.

Similar to the findings of Maria (2013), the research found that rejection of students with special needs based on stereotypes, pre-conceived notions, and prejudices resulted in their failure to generate full-proof assistance of any kind. Contrary to the findings of Agarwal's (2020) report, which stressed making signage boards accessible, along with its colour contrasted to the background wall, a combination of Braille, keeping in mind symbols and large fonts, this research found no traces of signage design in secondary school premises whatsoever. Aligning with the results of Makuyana (2022), low enrolment and drop-out rates of disabled students in secondary schools may be attributed to the conventional school administration, whose genuine lack of enthusiasm, exclusive teaching and learning methods, and misconstrued understanding of disability failure to enrol disabled learners. Inconsistent with the findings of Alves and Campos (2024), where para-Olympic sports are included in secondary school co-curriculum to invigorate non-disabled students' awareness of disability and explore the disabled students' exposure to sports, the current research held physical education instructors as incompetent and



the administration as uninterested in modifying the games/ sports as per the appropriateness of the differently-abled students. Aligned with the findings of Opoku et al. (2015), it may be concluded that the unfavourable terrains of Mizoram have further made the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016 a relentless task. In corroboration with the findings of Kaur et al. (2015) and Joseph et al. (2019), a lack of coordination has been noted in de-centralising services while gathering government support to avail transport services to schools. Similar to the findings of Sasana (2019) and Hlondo and Hnamte (2020), the research found that secondary schools generally lacked the necessary financial resources to hire special/resource teachers and instructional materials.

However, not all secondary schools in Mizoram were stringent towards disabled students. The research has found that schools are putting forth provisions for academic support services, thus aligning with the findings of Rao and Kashyap (2012). Further, ramps and CwSN-friendly restrooms are being built, which aligns with the findings of Hlondo and Hnamte (2012). The research, however, dismisses the findings of Parasher et al. (2017) and Singh and Chauhan (2019), respectively, where the teachers were dissatisfied with the school's infrastructure and innovative resources, and other facilities like toilets/bathrooms, daily essentials, student's security, and barrier-free infrastructure were major legging, as this research not only found the installation of low high-tech communication aids and assistive devices but also traced the existence of ramps, staircases with handrails, barriers free washrooms. Similar to the findings of Mallik (2021), the research adjudged in removing contents of difficult subjects from the curriculum, such as exemption from second and third-language subjects, followed by the generation of a modifiable timetable and ensuring viable conditions to conduct the examination. The research findings may be aligned with that of Das and Datta (2011), which insists that offering accommodation to disabled students, should be mandatory; however, this detracts from the findings of Baker et al. (2012), where students despite receiving accommodation on their needs were not satisfied with the prevailing conditions.

**4.3 Objective 2: To analyse the challenges faced by the secondary school headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram.**

**4.3.1 Challenges faced by the secondary school headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram.**

**Table 4.6: Challenges faced by the stakeholders in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram**

| <b>Theme</b>                                                    | <b>Explanation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Shortage of staff</b>                                     | The problem of staffing deficit or shortage in the allocation of employees to cater to every concerned area is looming large, thus generating low enrolment.                                                                                           |
| <b>2. Lack of sincerity and commitment</b>                      | Lack of political and community will and a dearth of dedication and grit while executing policies associated with inclusive education.                                                                                                                 |
| <b>3. Inadequate regulation of funds</b>                        | These include girls' stipend, transport allowance, escort allowance, and other aids and appliances that were not received by the beneficiaries at the time of requirement.                                                                             |
| <b>4. Lack of facilities for vocational training facilities</b> | No specified vocational training facility, industry visit programme, separate workshop/training or symposium, seminar, or conference is organised to expand the idea and benefits of vocational training programmes.                                   |
| <b>5. Low on Priority</b>                                       | Due to the failure to meet prior commitments, no program is dedicated solely to implementing the RPwD Act 2016, and most importantly, no special educators were stationed in their posts as they prefer cities over the hilly rural locale of Mizoram. |
| <b>6. Lack of mental health-care facilities</b>                 | Inadequacy of psychiatric rehabilitation centres, duplication of services or wastage of whatever resource is available have further aggravated this problem.                                                                                           |

**1. Shortage of staff-** Even though funds were proposed and allocated at the beginning of the academic year, there was a shortage in the allocation of employees to cater to every concerned area.

In this light, a stakeholder said,

*“The primary issue that is still undergoing trouble is a staffing deficit, due to which the RPwD Act 2016 is not able to function in a full-fledged manner.”*

Another stakeholder believed,

*“Many special educators have been attached to Aizawl; however, it is difficult to cover the entire district with fewer employees.”*

The shortage of staff generates low enrolment among secondary school students. A stakeholder stated,

*“Enrolment rate of children with disabilities in secondary schools is least on par with that of non-disabled children in the mainstream education system.”*

**2. Lack of sincerity and commitment-** A dearth of dedication and grit while executing policies associated with inclusive education can be a source of major crises.

Based on this line of argument, a stakeholder stated,

*“Disinterest in implementation of the constitutional rights and other provisions further aggravate the loopholes and suggest the lack of political and community will.”*

Another respondent opined,

*“Lack of willingness among parents as well as the community in sending their wards to mainstream institutions is also suggestive of the lack of political will towards implementing inclusive education.”*

**3. Inadequate regulation of funds-** Allocation and regulation of funds hold considerable prominence regarding the smooth functioning of any policy.

In this regard, a stakeholder reported,

*“The number of differently-abled students and their expenses did not match up.”*

As per another stakeholder,

*“The majority of the money was spent on human resources, who defeated the goal of the RPwD Act, 2016.”*

Another stakeholder opined,

*“Girls’ stipend, transport allowance, escort allowance, other aids and appliances despite being sanctioned for the differently-abled students were not received by the beneficiaries at the time of requirement.”*

**4. Lack of facilities for vocational educational training facilities:** The researcher found very little input on the incorporation of vocational training programmes organised for differently-abled students.

In this context, a stakeholder said,

*“As far as my knowledge permits, there is no specified vocational educational training facility or separate workshop/training that is organised for the differently-abled students.”*

**5. Low on priority-** The development of PwD has been lagged because of the lack of priority given to persons with disability at the higher levels of the government.

More so, a stakeholder reported,

*“Earlier, it was ensured that a district-level committee for the disabilities would meet every three years, yet no progress has been made.”*

Another stakeholder opined that,

*“There is no program dedicated solely to the implementation of the RPwD Act 2016, thus generating success.”*

Another loophole was suggested through the indifferent attitude of parents or guardians regarding securing educational opportunities for their wards. In this line of thought, a stakeholder opined,

*“I was not very well convinced about sending my ward to school regularly as I was extremely unsure of how she would perform in a mainstream institution, given the health condition and medical observation of my ward.”*

The Commissioner believed that,

*“Mizoram’s implementation of the RPwD Act 2016 was appalling since special educators were not stationed in their post but attached to the city area.”*

**6. Lack of mental health care facilities:** Programs for social inclusion of those with mental health issues are not always given top priority by local administrators.

In this regard, a stakeholder opined,

*“A lack in mental health care facilities both at community and primary care level further results in inadequacy of psychiatric rehabilitation centres.”*

In a similar line of thought and based on further introspection, another respondent came up with the argument that,

*“Enabling implementations of such services either cause duplication of services or wastage of whatever resource is available.”*

In corroboration with the findings of Mason-Williams et al. (2019), the research found staffing shortage in schools in Mizoram due to the geographic isolation of the state coupled with the inaccessibility of teacher preparation programs or continuous development programmes and a general lack of interest in the teaching or getting relocated to an undesirable locale. Aligned with the findings of Makwana (2022), a lack of community mobilisation and disabled students’ withdrawal from participation leave traces of their lack of interest in intervening and responding to diverse learning needs. Mphongoshe et al. (2015) in their report spoke vividly about the need for adequate funding for one to adapt to the physical environment and professional

growth of lecturers; however, the research found that the disabled faced difficulty in meeting the rising expenses lost money before human resources, and even failed to avail the allowances in time. Contrary to the recommendations of Joshi's (2023) article, which focused on the incorporation of industry-linked curriculum skills for PwDs to generate employability, marked by internships and industry visits for industry exposure, secondary schools in Mizoram has no specified vocational educational training facility or separate workshop/training organised to facilitate the needs of differently-abled students. Similar to the findings of Joseph et al. (2019), thesis research found a lack of mental health care facilities both at the community and primary care level, inadequacy of psychiatric rehabilitation centres, and inaccessibility to proper rehabilitative services for disabled students.

#### **4.4 Objective 3: To explore the perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram**

##### **4.4.1 Perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram**

**Table no. 4.7 Qualitative Data Analysis based on Objective 3**

| <b>Theme</b>                                  | <b>Sub-Theme</b>                                                 | <b>Explanation</b>                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Perception of teachers on inclusion</b> | a) Make efforts to build up an inclusive set-up.                 | The idea of building up an inclusive set-up is intended to holistically prepare students to become competent enough and participate as full and contributing individuals in society. |
|                                               | b) Optimistic look out for teachers towards every possible thing | Possess a slightly more positive attitude to reduce the transition time in the inclusion model and have a more consultative and collaborative approach to incorporate inclusion.     |
|                                               | c) Not prepared to deal with students with severe disabilities   |                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   | <p>d) Gender-neutral approach</p> <p>e) Capacity-building programme for all the teachers</p>                                                                                                                                  | <p>Some teachers lack adequate training or exposure or are not certified field investigators to deal with students who fall beyond the category of mild and moderate disabilities.</p> <p>Gender has created no impact on the attitudinal differences among teachers when it comes to nurturing or culturing inclusion. Teachers are expected to undergo refresher courses and undertake necessary training regarding include identification of traits, or intervention into the teaching-learning process for children with special needs.</p>                                                                   |
| <b>2. Perceptions of students with disability</b> | <p>1) Lower prospect in disability</p> <p>2) A voluntary check on the negative perceptions</p> <p>3) Positive attitude towards life and embracing virtues of self-acceptance</p> <p>4) Address inequalities as they exist</p> | <p>Disability-related stigmatisation, marginalisation or other discriminating factors often influence ones notion on disability.</p> <p>Untoward perceptions eventually lead one to miss opportunities and work, decline one's self-esteem, and give way to isolation.</p> <p>A disabled person's attitude is instrumental in ameliorating the relevant health services, thereby nurturing their acceptance, arousal, and embracement of self.</p> <p>Inequalities in any form, value, or capacity to seek and develop tailored educational interventions among persons with disability and their caregivers.</p> |

|                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                | <p>5) Independent living capacity</p> <p>6) Sex in Disability</p> <p>7) Emphasis on social education</p>                                                                                        | <p>In an independent living capacity, the aspects of moral, social, behavioural, and financial empowerment are covered.</p> <p>Apart from futility in terms of opportunity or exposure, women, unlike their male counterparts, have limited access to rehabilitation.</p> <p>Social education posits importance as it plays a titular role in augmenting the impact of social stereotypes on their accessibility of opportunity or exposure.</p>                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>3. Perceptions of parents of differently-abled students</b> | <p>a) Lack of awareness</p> <p>b) Expensive and has only limited reach</p> <p>c) Lack of accessibility</p> <p>d) Real nature of integration in schools</p> <p>e) Extreme outlook of parents</p> | <p>Parents are often unaware or lack knowledge regarding the diagnosis of disability or about the scholarships, fellowships and grants that can fund their education.</p> <p>Increased school fees, transportation, and induced cost in other miscellaneous expenditures.</p> <p>Lack of sufficiently trained teachers, unavailability of essential equipment and educational materials, breakdown in collaboration between departments, and half-hatched infrastructure.</p> <p>Discriminatory attitudes or other dissuading reflexes, such as ignorance, bullying, calling names, and being verbally abused</p> |



|  |                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | f) Social stereotyping | <p>towards persons with disabilities at all levels of society.</p> <p>Some parents are proactive when it comes to their child's participation in any endeavour, while others are upset due to their children's slow or very little progress.</p> <p>Some equated vulnerability with disability, some disabled girls were treated as a depreciating asset, and some blamed disability as a repercussion of Karma.</p> |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 1. Perception of teachers on inclusion

**a) Make efforts to build up an inclusive set-up-** Students with disability do well out of the opportunities of inclusion in regular school because it augments their learning and builds on their outcomes.

In this context, a secondary school stated,

*“The main idea behind inclusion is to holistically prepare students so that they become competent enough to partake as full and contributing individuals in society.”*

Another teacher reflected,

*“Inclusive education sharpens a differently-abled student's social and communication skills. It further gingers up their utmost capacity to dissent from the higher models appertaining to academic behaviour.”*

**b) Optimistic outlook of teachers towards every possible thing-** The respondent secondary school teachers were seen to possess a slightly more positive attitude towards reducing transition time in the inclusion model.

In favour of this argument, a secondary school teacher expressed his opinion,

*“Many of us are in favour of the motion and strongly agree to the fact that inclusion models reduce the transition time required by students to transcend from one setting to another.”*

Another teacher stated,

*“Most of us believe and abide by a teaching model that is consultative and collaborative in approach and nature in order to incorporate or adjudicate inclusion.”*

**c) Not prepared to deal with students with severe disabilities:** Some secondary school teachers expressed concern while sharing their views about those children with special needs. These children mostly claim extra time from their teacher due to their individual differences or diverse learning requirements.

In a similar line of thought, a secondary school teacher opined,

*“Teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles and functions fail to include students with severe disability or extremely diverse learning requirements. This is because we lack adequate training or exposure to deal with students who fall beyond the category of mild and moderate disabilities. Also, not all of us are well-trained field investigators.”*

Some teachers have accepted their failure to incorporate a fair and equitable distribution of professional roles; however, they are keenly aware of their professional inadequacy and are hopeful of rising above their loopholes. A respondent stated,

*“We want to be supportive of the inclusion model and make it instrumental in the long run; however, we are not competent at the moment to incorporate students with extreme disability levels due to our significant incapability.”*

**d) Gender-neutral approach-** It is imperative for a teacher to create and establish a positive social attitude towards disability, differently-abled, and those

children living on the margins of society. It has been observed that gender has created no impact on the attitudinal differences among teachers when it comes to nurturing or culturing inclusion.

In this line of thought, a secondary school teacher opined,

*“Teachers are the most imperative part of any inclusive set-up. Their mental construct and notion about various natural and social phenomena build the base of any argument or statement.”*

Another respondent threw light on how inclusive philosophy may be institutionalised,

*“Moreover, mapping the mindscape of the teachers is believed to be equally vital for the successful institutionalisation of inclusion through the best possible practices. The inclusive approach was strongly proctored by the teachers’ perceptions of inclusion and their professional roles and responsibilities.”*

**e) Capacity-building programme for all the teachers-** Teachers emphasise the virtues of capacity building regardless of levels. They resort to policymakers’ consideration of orientation and basic training programmes that would, in turn, address the challenges related to various inclusion processes.

In a similar context, a secondary school teacher stated,

*“The various processes involved in inclusion include identifying traits or intervention into the teaching-learning process for children with special needs.”*

Stressing further on teachers’ active participation and involvement, another teacher opined,

*“As teachers, we should lay emphasis on contextualisation and community participation, as they are but significantly potent drives in discerning inclusive efforts.”*

Teachers are also expected to overlook the significant families’ inhibition to speak opaquely or give out detailed information about their family members with

disabilities due to the prevalence of social stigma, all of which gets covered under their effort to upgrade their skills constantly.

## **2. Perception of students on the inclusion of the RPwD Act 2016**

**a) Lower prospect of disability-** The research found that some children with disability are already well informed about the lower prospects for the disabled.

On this note, a secondary school student stated,

*“I have heard my parents refer to subtly low prospects for the disabled. They say that these are capable of leading one towards a maladaptive coping mechanism, which might be because of inconsistent rehabilitation and treatment.”*

Another student added to this string of thought, stating,

*“Disability-related stigmatisation, marginalisation or other discriminating factors associated with it may come in the way of their parents’ seeking help to cope with perpetually rising stress quotient.”*

**b) A voluntary check on the negative perceptions:** Untoward perceptions can lead one to miss out on opportunities and work, decline one’s self-esteem, and give way to isolation.

In this line of thought, a secondary school student opined,

*“The facets of stigmatisation marginalisation are invariably tagged along with recurring negative health outcomes. This results in prolongation of the discomfort among PwDs, acting as a constant source of social burden.”*

Another very relatable opinion includes the identification or introspection of the probable causes for the arousal of negative attitudes toward disability. In this regard, a secondary school student opined,

*“These factors are collectively responsible for defining the probable hindrance that foster or act as agents in affecting a child with*

*disability's health and the subsequent social integration, thus comprehending both the aspects of development and effectiveness."*

**c) Positive attitude towards life and embracing virtues of self-acceptance:**

Children with disability's positive outlook towards disability stand pivotal in aggravating their chances of association with fruitful correspondences. The chances of their positive attitude toward disability are directly proportional to their improved quality of life and furthermore.

Aligning thought with this notion, a child with disability inferred,

*"Understanding a disabled person's attitude toward their disability should be the foremost step while constructing an effective behavioural intervention towards one's own self. My positive attitude towards my disability has always led to my corresponding positive behaviour."*

To further simplify, it can be assumed that our knowledge about a disabled person's attitude could be instrumental in ameliorating the relevant health services, thereby nurturing their acceptance of self. Self-arousal and self-embracing shall foster the integration of self-care into society.

**d) Address inequalities as they exist:** The crucial disparities in the attitudes of the two groups, that is, the disabled and the non-disabled, require redresses to seek and develop tailored educational interventions among persons with disability and their caregivers.

A student remarked in this regard,

*"Certain educational interventions foster hope, develop a positive outlook, and nourish a healthy cooperative behaviour that shall be beneficial in coping with disability."*

Another secondary school student found the intervention of RPwD Act 2016's contributing to be,

*"Crucial towards the improvement of children with disability's social inclusion thus associating it with improved quality of life."*

**e) Independent living capacity:** However much we try to justify that age is just a number and the main drive is instrumented by one's willpower, elders with disability suffer a more significant deal as compared to the young ones. The elderly not only suffer from the pangs of disability but also other health-related problems.

A school student commented in this regard,

*"I have known a family friend who faced a few ills of disability generated due to ageing: the generic ones being physical, psychological, social, and functional degeneration."*

Another school student added,

*"Disability generally comes along with its fair share of hazards. It involves financial commitments and often takes a toll on the person and their family members/caregivers emotional well-being and psyche."*

These conniving forces can be brought down only when the burdens related to disability are diminished through real empowerment.

As per a disabled student,

*"By empowerment, I mean seeking independent living capacity, which includes moral, social, behavioural, and financial empowerment. Also, to beat the imminent pangs of age, an improved health-care model for PwD is essential."*

**f) Sex in Disability:** Research has found that the number of disabled women is more than the number of disabled men. The same goes for an ageing population where more women are seen to confront impairment as compared to the number of men captivated with impairment. Seeking insight from our social construct, a secondary school student has opined,

*"Given the construct of a developing country, the number of unemployed women supersedes the number of employed men. Women traditionally occupy the role of homemakers, as they are the heads of their household. Now, while we are talking about disability,*

*unemployment and lower standards of living come up as an un-negotiable problem.”*

In a similar line of thought, another student opined,

*“In the same manner, disabled women are more likely to secure lower educational outcomes than men, less likely to be hired in a paid work ecosphere, or if at all hired, they are more likely to get involved in low salary jobs or simply remain unemployed.”*

Excerpts have it that women, unlike their male counterparts, have limited access to rehabilitation. More so, one receives opportunities for rehabilitation depending upon their employment outcomes. Given the futility of opportunity or exposure, women are more likely to get intimidated or nervous about being exposed to public spheres.

Another secondary school student shared inputs of her cumulative research over the years, stating,

*“Even the nature of impairment varies between the two sexes, where it may be concluded that women are more likely to get exposed to degenerative conditions, while injury-related events are majorly prevalent among men.”*

**g) Emphasis on social education-** To constantly promote a positive lifestyle among the rising numbers of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, de-institutionalisation becomes imperative.

On this line of argument, a secondary school student opined,

*“There has been an emerging need to support their living (on their own conditions) as an involuntary rule to be followed by the community. One must realise the importance behind manoeuvring other people’s behaviour towards those dealing with impairment(s).”*

In a similar string of thought, another school student added,

*“Social education posits importance as it plays a titular role in augmenting the impact that social stereotypes have on their accessibility of opportunity or exposure.”*

The social temperament of people associated with disability anticipates high support needs to dissipate the dissonance that is created by the so-called ‘normal’ people. This is to be done to reinstate their presence amid people irrespective of impairments.

A school student remarked,

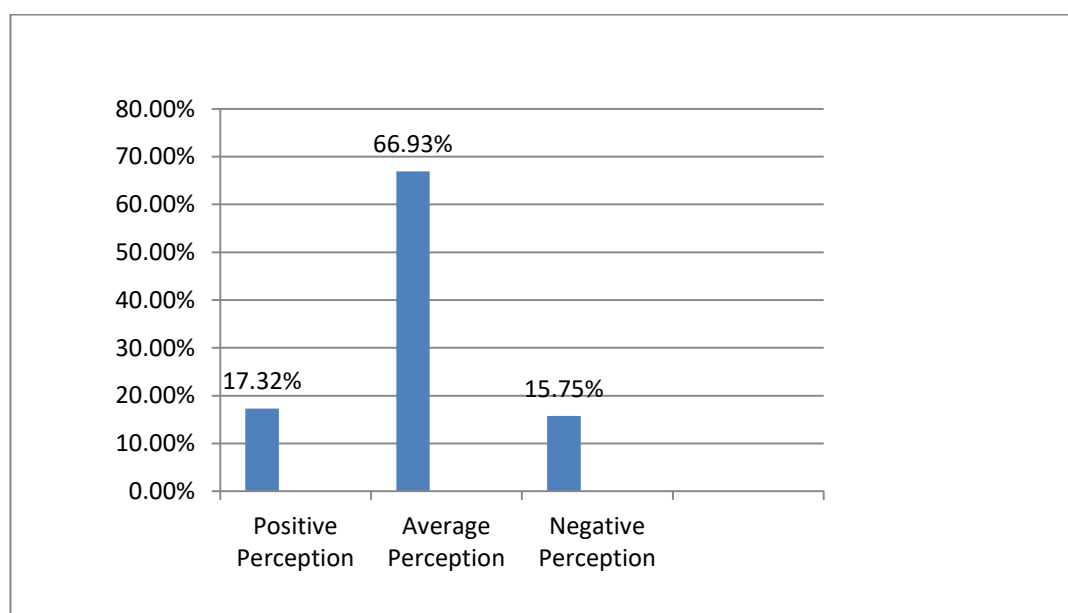
*“Social rendering is instrumental in exposing more generic traditional gender roles. More significantly so, disabled people are driven towards caricaturing those that shall be conducive in reducing their propriety as stigmatised/marginalised others.”*

#### **4.4.2 Findings of the perceptions on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers in Mizoram**

**Table 4.8 Perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers in Mizoram**

| <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>Positive Perception</b> | <b>Average Perception</b> | <b>Negative Perception</b> |
|----------|-------------|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 127      | 71.53       | 10.76     | 20 (15.75%)                | 85 (66.93%)               | 22 (17.32%)                |





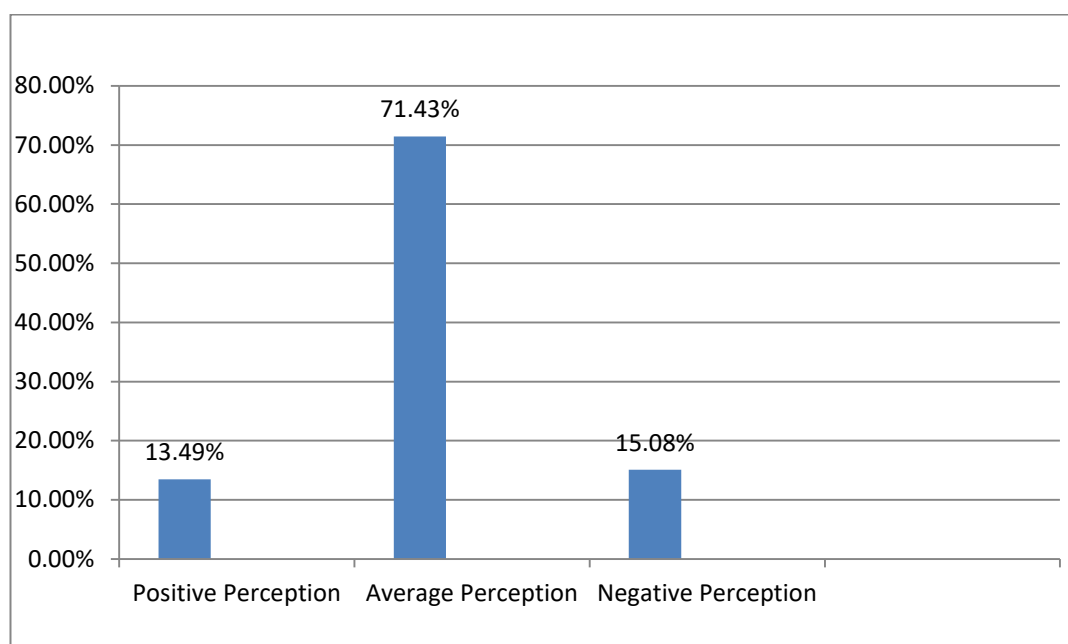
**Figure 4.2 Perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers in Mizoram**

From Table 4.8 and Figure 4.2 above, it can be seen that the majority, 66.93 % of secondary school teachers, had an average perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The table also shows that 17.32 per cent of secondary school teachers had a positive perception, while 15.75 per cent had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The mean score of secondary school teachers on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, was 71.53, and the standard deviation was 10.76.

#### **4.4.3 Findings of the perceptions on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram**

**Table 4.9 Perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram**

| N   | Mean  | SD   | Positive Perception | Average Perception | Negative Perception |
|-----|-------|------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 126 | 54.94 | 8.12 | 17 (13.49%)         | 90 (71.43%)        | 19 (15.08%)         |



**Figure 4.3 Perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram**

From the above Table 4.9 and Figure 4.3, it can be seen that the majority, i.e., 71.43 per cent of differently-abled secondary school students, had an average perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The table also shows that 13.49 per cent of differently-abled secondary school students had a positive perception, while 15.08 per cent had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The mean score of differently-abled secondary school students on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, was 54.94, and the standard deviation was 8.12.

### **3. Perception of Parents of Differently-abled school students**

**a) Lack of awareness-** This is further personified by a lack of information, unawareness of where to obtain a disability certificate and its procedure. In this light, a respondent answered,

*“We lack knowledge regarding the diagnosis of disability and often fail to understand its implication.”*

It often becomes problematic for parents to understand which students may be included in the general classes and how much time they should spare there. Stakeholders have reported a shocked state of mind of parents on the detection of disability,

*“Counselling falls inadequate for parents to cope with the shock, thus turning futile to help them accept their children’s disability.”*

A school student’s parent reported,

*“We are not aware of the funding available to include disabled students like our wards in regular schools. It also took me years to understand the uses and importance of the disability certificate.”*

**b) Expensive and has only limited reach:** Inclusive schools frequently fall short in meeting the needs of the entire population of students with disabilities. What is ideally promoted as an inclusive school often lacks in the totality of spirit or mannerisms.

A guardian opined,

*“Increased school fees and transportation costs are major setbacks.”*

Parents are frequently compelled to choose between educating a child with a disability and one without. In this light, a parent stated,

*“Often we fail to devote time or lack the consciousness to accompany our children to schools.”*

**c) Lack of accessibility:** There are very few schools that are truly inclusive in nature. The rest are inefficient in serving the whole population of students with disabilities.

A respondent mentioned,

*“The dearth of adequately trained educators, equipment and educational material, coordination among various departments is an invariable loophole.”*

Another parent was of the opinion,

*“The hilly terrain is responsible for uneven distribution of transportation facilities.”*

In a similar context, another parent opined,

*“Also, not all schools are infrastructurally well furnished; they require curriculum restructuring and reforms in the examination systems.”*

**d) Real nature of integration in schools:** Despite the integration method being advised in schools, differently-abled students are treated indifferently in schools to date.

In this regard, a parent opined,

*“Integration was only partial, as discriminatory attitudes or other dissuading reflexes towards persons with disabilities at all levels of society scream aloud and contribute to the continued neglect towards their right to education.”*

Another parent stated,

*“However much you try, some people always try to pull you down, citing your inefficiency or inability to do a particular task. It was hurtful to see my child complain about being ignored, bullied, getting called names, and being verbally abused by his peers, but to little refrain. However much the teachers tried, it was not always possible for them to intervene and prevent every possible attempt of bullying or harassment.”*

**e) Extreme outlook of parents-** Parents of differently-abled school students showcase extreme mentality when it comes to their academic make-up. It often happens that some parents become frustrated by the slow or minimal progress of their children. Some parents chase the idea of initiating frequent changes in their child’s school.

In this light of thought, a parent stated,

*“We thought changing the school was the only resort as we found no school to be adequately substantial for our ward.”*

Another parent opined,

*“We believe our child deserves to be educated differently, unlike how other normal children are taught.”*

Results found an overwhelming presence of parents being overly protective, which subsequently impacted their child’s educational performance.

**f) Social stereotyping:** Girls with disabilities experience multiple forms of discrimination. Disability and gender in India have a tangled equation. Many parents choose to train girls to become responsible homemakers, especially if they are differently-abled. On this note, a stakeholder responded,

*“I decided not to send my ward for higher education. She may be instead taught to take care of the family members.”*

Disabled girls fall prey in the face of patriarchal norms. A guardian opined,

*“My child’s disability is equated with her being vulnerable in our community, thus facing manifold burdens in the process of education.”*

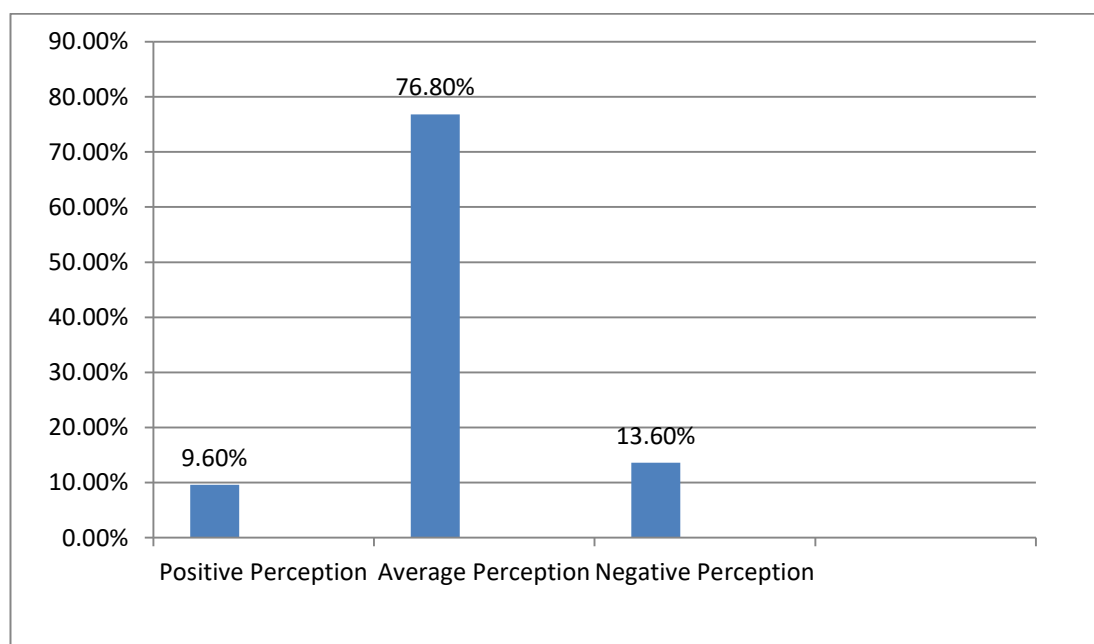
Another parent retorted,

*“People often target us saying our child’s disability is due to our “karma” or a result of the sins committed by us in the previous birth.”*

What is utterly regressive is treating girls with disabilities as a depreciating educational investment.

**4.4.4 Findings of the perceptions on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram**  
**Table 4.10 Perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram**

| N   | Mean  | SD   | Positive Perception | Average Perception | Negative Perception |
|-----|-------|------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 125 | 54.48 | 7.53 | 12 (9.6%)           | 96 (76.8%)         | 17 (13.6%)          |



**Figure 4.4 Perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram**

From the above Table 4.10 and Figure 4.4, it can be seen that the majority, i.e., 76.8 per cent of parents of differently-abled secondary school students, had an average perception of the RPwD Act, 2016. The table also shows that 9.6 per cent of parents of differently-abled secondary school students had a positive perception, while 13.6 per cent had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The Mean score of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in the RPwD Act, 2016, was 54.94, and the standard deviation was 8.12.

Similar to the results of Singh and Shrivastava (2005), teachers in secondary schools in Mizoram have positive attitudes about inclusive education and are likely to undergo intensive instructional trainings and partake in enrolment campaigns to arouse an environment conducive to mainstreaming of disabled children. In corroboration with the findings of Nizejimana (2016), who emphasised the importance of teacher-student interaction in the form of class discussion, small-group discussion and storytelling as the most effective teaching strategies, the current research found that both students and teachers share positive attitudes towards inclusive education to nurture their social and communication skills. Aligned with the findings of Asare (2019) regarding the integration of inclusive education to

generate improvement in the quality of teacher training and in-service training by the government, the present research has come across policymakers' consideration of orientation and basic training programmes. Similar to the findings of Geleta (2019) and Valvi and Sonawane (2016), secondary school teachers in Mizoram refrain from differentiating between students on the basis of age, sex, or experience and have a nearly similar attitude, are self-efficacious about their abilities towards inclusive education. In corroboration with the findings of Mngo and Mngo (2018), the research marked the problems of inaccessibility of teacher preparation programs, continuous development programmes, lack of adequate teacher training or curriculum transition, and an absence of resource teachers, which require work.

While Paseka and Schwab (2020) found a generally positive attitude towards including physically disabled students, there were predominantly negative attitudes towards including students with behavioral disorders or mental disabilities, the current research found that the attitude of others towards disabled persons create a sense of maladaptive coping mechanism. Aligned with the findings of Opoku, Mprah, Dogbe and Saka (2015), the research found that social stigma is closely associated with educating a disabled child, resulting in the prolongation of discomfort among PwDs, resulting in a substantial social burden. Kaur, Leongb, Yusef and Singh (2015) found a poor sense of opinion developing quite involuntarily among disabled persons on constantly being avoided, teased, and harshly reacted, which has been addressed in this research by creating educational interventions to foster hope, develop a positive outlook, and nurture a cooperative behaviour in schools to cope up with disability. Wadegaonkar and Uplane (2017) remarked on the implications of social abilities in expressing sentiments, initiating, co-ordinating, resisting, tolerating differences and managing emotions, which may be corroborated with the findings of the current, wherein it has been realised that nurturing acceptance of self and embracing one's self shall foster the integration of self-care into society. In corroboration with the findings of Strnadova et al. (2023), inclusive education creates a space and tailors individuals with diverse educational needs, thus creating a social rendering rather than creating discrimination, augmenting social stereotypes' impact, and encouraging normal participation concerning work and social inclusion in individual capacities.

In collaboration with the findings of Sasana (2019), this research found that parents lack awareness of inclusive education. Instances of Digumarthi and Sudarshanam's (2012) findings of conducting a home-based programme, where specialised instructors visit students, were not seen in the case of disabled students in Mizoram. Aligning with the results procured by Das and Datta (2011), this research found impaired children with their mothers experience peer victimisation and were humiliated, ignored, bullied, and called names. Pillai and Shaji (2016), doubting the real nature of integration in secondary schools, remarked that most disabled children do not receive any tools or assistance, and most disabled children do not receive mediocre skill development, which is similar to the findings of this research. Babik and Gardner (2021) parental practices are agents of passing down socio-political attitudes to their children, thus shaping specific personality traits in them. Further, parental prejudice is seen to create misinformation about out-groups, creating the hitches of over-generalisation and social exclusion. Hlondo and Hnamte's (2020) parents felt that CwSN and typical children's social development and interpersonal skills depended on inclusive schooling. For CwSN, the majority of parents favoured inclusive schools over special schools, and they wanted an adaptable evaluation method. Similar to the findings of Babik and Gardner (2021), this research also came across parents who perceive disability as a divine punishment, a consequence of "*karma*", further explaining social exclusion by terminating the necessity of intervention.

**4.5 Objective 4: To compare secondary school teachers' perceptions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender, educational qualifications, and teaching experience.**

All null hypotheses have been tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings have been presented, analyzed, and discussed in this chapter in line with the study's objectives.

The results and discussion are presented in relation to the formulated null hypothesis and the study's objectives.



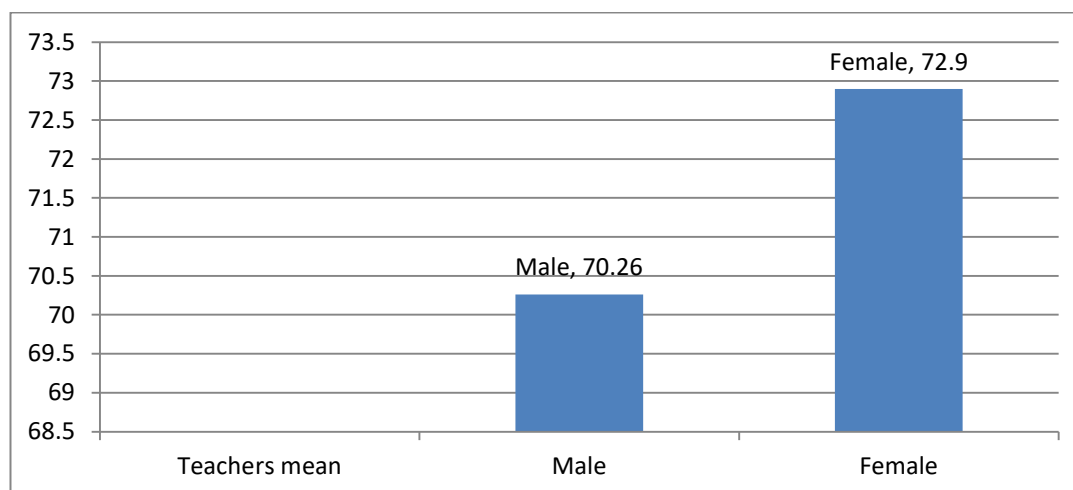
**H04a:** There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

#### 4.5.1 Findings on comparison of perception on rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among secondary school teachers with respect to their gender

**Table 4.11 Comparison of perception on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their gender**

| Gender | n  | Mean  | SD    | t-value            |
|--------|----|-------|-------|--------------------|
| Male   | 66 | 70.26 | 11.62 | 1.79 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Female | 61 | 72.90 | 9.65  |                    |

<sup>NS</sup>Not significant at 0.05 level of significance



**Figure 4.5 Comparison of perception on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their gender**

Table 4.11 and Figure 4.5 indicates the significance of the difference in perceptions between male and female secondary school teachers in Mizoram is 1.79. Since this calculated t-value is lower than the critical value at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance, the difference is not significant, supporting the null hypothesis which states “There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female secondary school teachers in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016,” cannot be rejected. The difference in the male and female

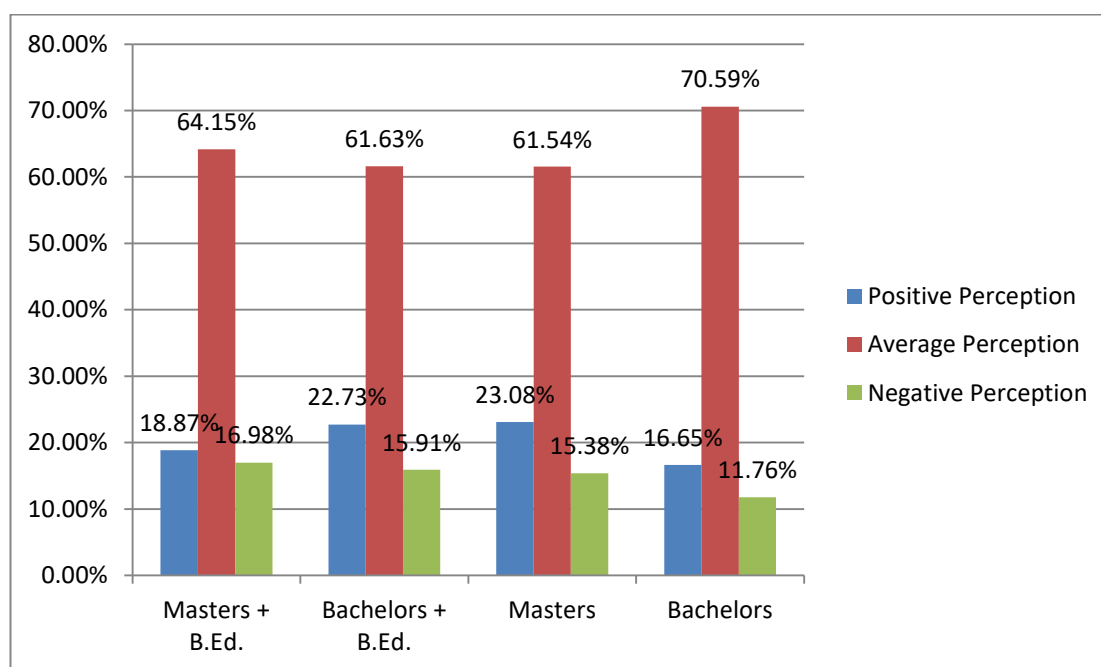
mean scores is not statistically significant. Hence, a conclusion can be drawn that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers in Mizoram regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

**H04b:** There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their educational qualifications.

#### **4.5.2 Findings on comparison of perception on the Rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among secondary school teachers with respect to their educational qualification.**

**Table 4.12 Comparison of perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their educational qualification**

| <b>Educational Qualification</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>Positive Perception</b> | <b>Average Perception</b> | <b>Negative Perception</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Masters + B.Ed.                  | 53       | 10 (18.87%)                | 34 (64.15%)               | 9 (16.98%)                 |
| Bachelors + B.Ed.                | 44       | 10 (22.73%)                | 27 (61.36%)               | 7 (15.91%)                 |
| Masters                          | 13       | 3 (23.08%)                 | 8 (61.54%)                | 2 (15.38%)                 |
| Bachelors                        | 17       | 3 (16.65%)                 | 12 (70.59%)               | 2 (11.76%)                 |



**Figure 4.6 Comparison of perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their educational qualification**

The Table 4.12 shows that, among the educational qualifications of secondary school teachers in Mizoram, 64.15 per cent of Master + B.Ed. qualifications had average perception, while 61.36 per cent of Bachelors + B.Ed. had average perception, 61.54 per cent of Master degrees, and 70.59 per cent of Bachelor degrees had average perception on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. At the same time, 18.87 per cent of Master + B.Ed. had a positive perception, while 23.73 per cent of Bachelors + B.Ed., Master degrees had a perception of 23.08 per cent and 16.65 per cent of bachelors had a positive perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. This table also shows that 16.98 per cent of Master + B.Ed. had negative perceptions, while 15.91 per cent of Bachelors + B.Ed., 15.38 per cent of Master's degrees, and 11.76 per cent of bachelors had negative perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

To assess statistical significance, a null hypothesis was formulated to counter the "There is no significant difference in the educational qualifications of teachers of

secondary schools in Mizoram”. To test this null hypothesis, one way ANOVA was put to use and the following table 4.13 is procured

**Table 4.13 Difference in the educational qualifications of secondary school teachers in Mizoram**

| Source of Variation | SS       | df  | MS       | F-value |
|---------------------|----------|-----|----------|---------|
| Between Groups      | 404.4222 | 3   | 134.8074 | 0.4846  |
| Within Groups       | 34219.23 | 123 | 278.2051 |         |
| Total               | 34623.65 | 126 |          |         |

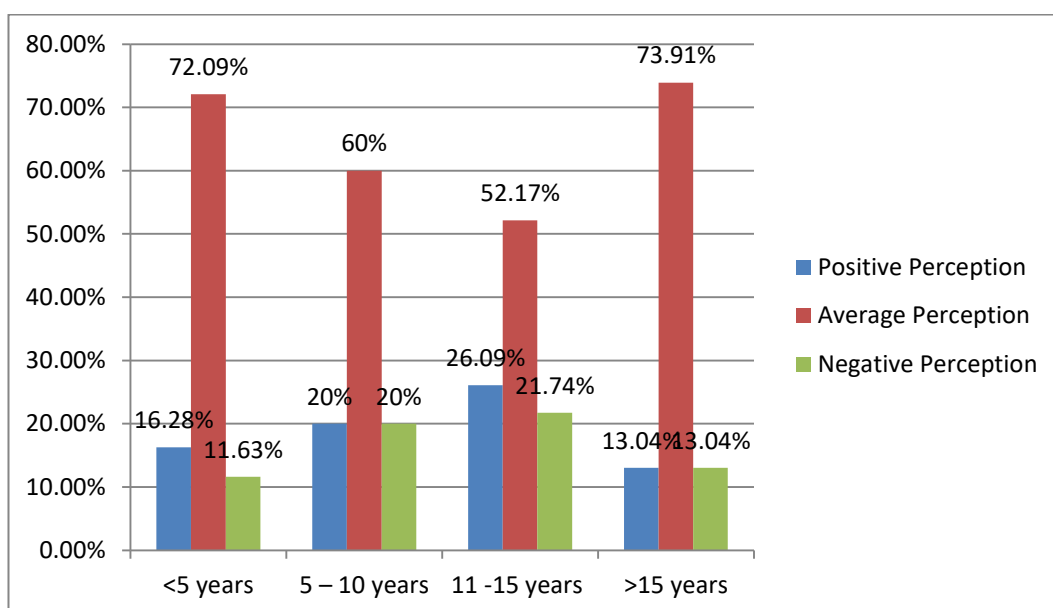
Since the analysis of variance in the table 4.13 shows that the F value is less than the F critical value, it means that there is no statistically significant difference between secondary school teachers having different educational qualifications in their perception of the RPwD Act, 2016. This signifies that secondary school teachers in Mizoram had more or less the same perception regarding the Act. Thus, this study reveals that the educational qualifications of secondary school teachers in Mizoram did not influence/affect their perception of the RPwD Act, 2016.

**H04c:** There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their teaching experience.

#### **4.5.3 Findings on the comparison of perception on the rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among secondary school teachers with respect to their teaching experience.**

**Table 4.14 Comparison of perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their teaching experience**

| Teaching Experience | n  | Positive Perception | Average Perception | Negative Perception |
|---------------------|----|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <5 years            | 43 | 7 (16.28)           | 31 (72.09%)        | 5 (11.63%)          |
| 5 – 10 years        | 15 | 3(20%)              | 9(60%)             | 3(20%)              |
| 11 -15 years        | 23 | 6(26.09%)           | 12(52.17%)         | 5(21.74%)           |
| >15 years           | 46 | 6(13.04%)           | 34(73.91%)         | 6(13.04%)           |



**Figure 4.7 Comparison of perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their teaching experience**

Table 4.14 and Figure 4.7 shows that, regarding the teaching experience of secondary school teachers in Mizoram, 72.09 per cent of teachers having less than five years of teaching experience had average perception, while 16.28 per cent had a positive perception and 11.63 per cent had a negative perception on the RPwD act 2016. Among teachers experienced between 5-10 years, 60 per cent fall in the average range, 20 per cent in the positive range, and 20 per cent in the negative range, respectively. In the teacher's experience between 11-15 years, 26.09 per cent had a positive perception, 52.17 per cent had an average perception, and 21.74 per cent had a negative perception of the Act. Among the teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience, 73.91 per cent had an average perception, 13.04 per cent had a positive perception, and 13.04 per cent had a negative perception of the RPwD Act, 2016.

**Table 4.15 Difference in the educational qualifications of secondary school teachers in Mizoram**

| Source of Variation | SS         | df  | MS       | F        |
|---------------------|------------|-----|----------|----------|
| Between Groups      | 165.342219 | 3   | 55.11407 | 0.470103 |
| Within Groups       | 14420.3113 | 123 | 117.2383 |          |
| Total               | 14585.6535 | 126 |          |          |

Table 4.15 shows the analysis of the variance in the different teaching experiences of secondary school teachers in Mizoram. It can be clearly seen that the calculated F value is less than the F critical value, which implies that there is no significant difference between teachers having more than 15 years of experience, having experience between 11 to 15 years, having experience between 5 to 10 years and having experience less than five years. This reveals that secondary school teachers in Mizoram, irrespective of their teaching experiences, had more or less the same perception regarding the RPwD Act, 2016 during the time this study was undertaken.

**4.6 Objective No. 5: To compare the perceptions of differently-abled students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram with respect to their gender.**

The null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The results and discussion are presented in relation to this null hypothesis and the study's objectives.

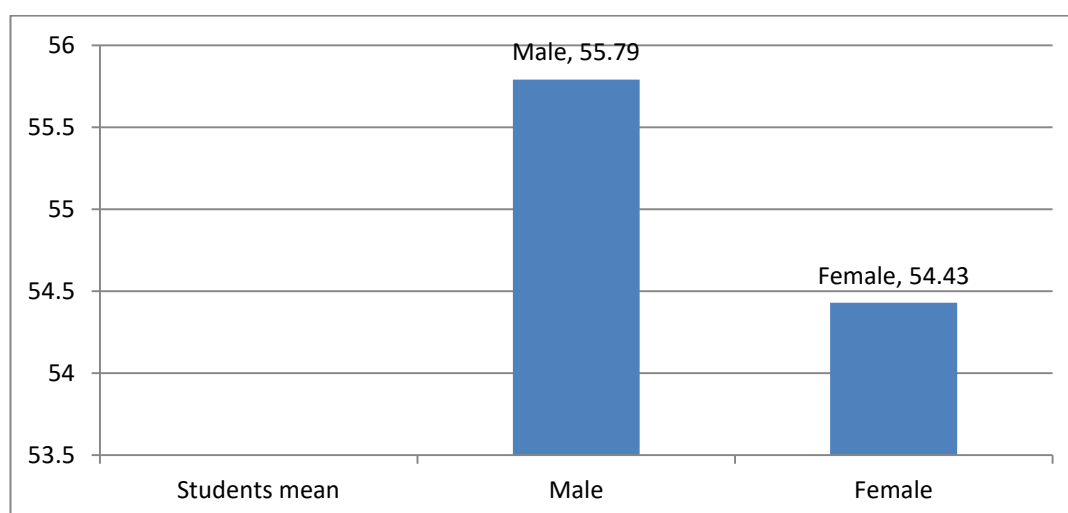
**H05:** There is no significant difference in the perceptions of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, based on their gender.

**4.6.1 Findings on the comparison of perception of differently-abled secondary school students about rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 with respect to their gender**

**Table 4.16 Comparison of perception of differently-abled secondary school students about the rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender**

| Gender | n  | Mean  | SD   | t-value            |
|--------|----|-------|------|--------------------|
| Male   | 47 | 55.79 | 8.69 | 1.31 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Female | 79 | 54.43 | 7.77 |                    |

<sup>NS</sup>Not significant at 0.05 level of significance



**Figure 4.8 Comparison of perception of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender**

Table 4.16 indicates that the t-value for the significance of the difference in perceptions between male and female secondary students in Mizoram is 1.31. Since this t-value is lower than the critical value at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance, the difference is not significant, supporting the null hypothesis which states, “There are no significant differences in the perception of male and female secondary students in Mizoram towards the rights of persons with disabilities act 2016” cannot be rejected. The difference between the mean scores of male and female students is not statistically significant. Consequently, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female students in Mizoram regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

#### 4.7 Objective No. 6: To compare the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender

The null hypothesis has been tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Results and discussion are being presented as per the framed null hypothesis in conjunction with this objective.

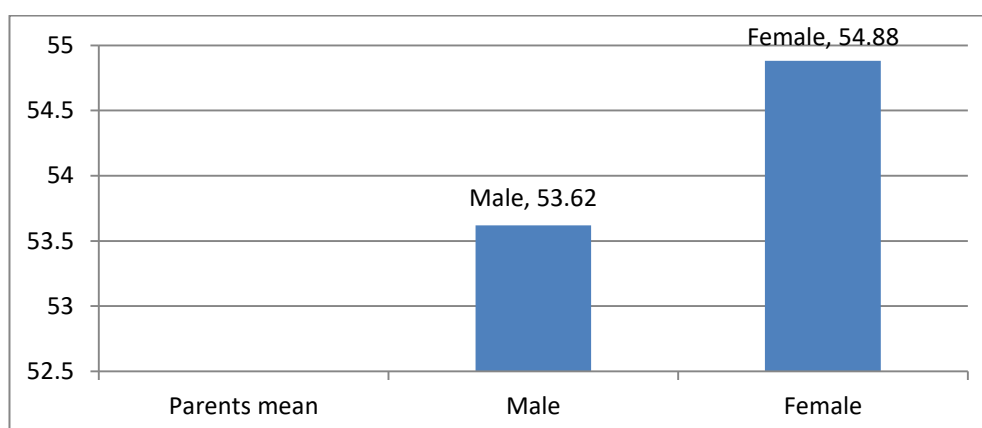
**H06:** There is no significant difference in the perception of parents of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

##### 4.7.1 Findings on the comparison of perception of differently-abled secondary school students about Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender

**Table 4.17 Comparison of perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 with respect to their gender**

| Gender | n  | Mean  | SD   | t-value            |
|--------|----|-------|------|--------------------|
| Male   | 40 | 53.62 | 9.38 | 1.12 <sup>NS</sup> |
| Female | 85 | 54.88 | 6.51 |                    |

<sup>NS</sup> Not significant at 0.05 level of significance



**Figure 4.9 Comparison of perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 with respect to their gender**



The table 4.17 shows the t-value for the significance of the difference in the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram is 1.12. As the calculated t-value is below the critical value at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance, the difference is not significant, and the null hypothesis asserts, “There is no significant difference in the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram towards the rights of persons with disabilities act 2016” cannot be rejected. The difference in the mean scores between males and females is not statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram regarding the RPwD Act, 2016.

#### **4.8 Objective 7: To propose viable mechanisms for effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram**

##### **4.8.1 Suggestions for stakeholders**

1. An institution-based intervention programme will be helpful for those involved in the educational administration of differently-abled students; since little is known about the challenges they face, this could enable schools to take preventive action that impedes equality.
2. Making stakeholders aware of the significance of addressing the problems encountered by differently-abled students could be beneficial. As a result, they will be able to assist, mentor, and advise the differently-abled students in resolving their problems. The intervention programmes can help in adaptable techniques for each person’s well-being and support various student populations.
3. Funds provided for differently-abled students should be revised and increased. The competent authorities should organise block-wise orientation programmes for parents, municipal officials, and educational administrators annually. Training programmes such as environmental building programmes are to be conducted regularly with the motto of giving awareness to community-based NGOs and churches every year.

4. It is necessary to conduct identification and assessment camps regularly. The differently abled students should be monitored by follow-up on the necessary assistive equipment provided.
5. Awareness, sensitisation programmes and so on should be organised at the school, community or district level to advocate for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
6. Competent authorities may resort to qualified sign language interpreters to help them communicate and infer the intricacies and problems. The Mizoram Board of School Education has been considering the usage of large print textbooks for the academic year 2023-2024. Studying sign language at a theological college is a great prospect that will lead to and will always help reduce barriers faced by people with disabilities.
7. No programme can run single-handedly, which in turn requires getting associated or getting along well with other organisations and agencies for the successful execution of its roles and functions. NGOs may be invited to collaborate in the ongoing process.
8. District-level committees should be formed and required to meet every three years to assess the progress of people with disabilities. Certified doctors should be trained to cater to each district. It has been proffered that a person with a disability must have a valid UDID to get desired benefits from the government. A medical evaluation camp should be arranged at the district level in cooperation with the health department.
9. To make the RPwD Act, 2016 instrumental, opportunities for fellowships, grants, allowances, and scholarships may be initiated. Allowances for girls, transportation and travel allowances, and escort allowances for differently-abled students should be allocated at the appropriate time.
10. For intellectual disability and mental retardation, teaching-learning materials should be provided regularly. Aids and appliances, such as reading glasses, high-quality hearing aids, crutches, wheelchairs and so on, may be sanctioned for differently-abled students.
11. It is advised that the state government provide accessible restrooms for differently abled students in every school to ensure that no student has

trouble using the restroom. Institutions should be infrastructural well-furnished, including ramps and user-friendliness of basic amenities, such as lavatories, sanitation facilities, and drinking water.

12. Both abled and differently-abled students should have access to appropriate teaching and learning resources, or the school must purchase these resources.
13. Every school should appoint at least one resource or special teacher to serve as the lead educator responsible for implementing inclusive education.

#### **4.8.2 Suggestions for teachers**

1. Headmasters ought to have more authority in areas pertaining to how the schools run, such as hiring new instructors for the institution, managing teacher transfers, and using government funding in any way they see fit.
2. Given the need that the majority of headmasters have identified, it is highly advised that all teachers receive inclusive education training.
3. Attend workshops that challenge preconceptions, foster a good attitude towards inclusion and provide an awareness of varied disabilities.
4. All teachers ought to participate in training to reduce barriers for differently-abled students. Teachers who are proactive and effective are essential in motivating students with disabilities to ask for assistance when they need it. There should be no discrimination among the students, and they should have a positive outlook towards their differently-abled classmates in different ways.
5. Teachers must be fully aware of the rights of the differently-abled students. Teachers have a responsibility to establish a barrier-free atmosphere. To accomplish inclusive education, they must continue to provide equitable opportunities for students with disabilities and those with normal students.
6. Infrastructural facilities for the inclusion of accessible playgrounds, science laboratories, libraries, reading centres, provision of textbooks, audiobooks, Braille books, e-books, disability-friendly lavatories, ramps, handrails, elevators and signage. In order to eliminate architectural barriers in schools, it is imperative that existing ramps and railing be upgraded or renovated right away. In addition, schools lacking these amenities should start building

new ramps and railings with the appropriate guidance and monitoring system.

7. For their studies, differently-abled students need access to resources, appliances and transportation; thus, teachers need to be mindful of the supplies. The student's enrolment and drop-out should be recorded carefully by the teachers. Careful planning of the curriculum at the beginning of the school session is necessary to ensure inclusive education.
8. Teachers should inculcate among the differently-abled students the desire to seek advice from experts, doctors, counsellors and government authorities regarding their disability, reservations and benefits for their education and job recruitment.
9. The government should sanction funds, scholarships, stipends, and allowances for the education of differently-abled students. Teachers must guide the students on the way to claim their benefits.
10. Identification and assessment camps organised by the government should be given priority.
11. There may be a more substantial parental involvement in the operations of the schools. Meetings between parents and instructors should be planned regularly.
12. The abilities of each individual student should be taken into consideration while designing the school's evaluation system.

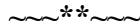
#### **4.8.3 Suggestions for differently-abled students**

1. Differently-abled students must be aware of their rights and duties in order to claim their opportunity as the right to education.
2. Differently-abled students should make proper use of the resources provided in the school.
3. The differently-abled students themselves should know the funds, scholarships, stipends, and allowances sanctioned by the government
4. Differently-abled students must be aware of their reservations in the institution and job recruitment.
5. Identification and assessment camps should be given top priority.

6. Differently-abled students should not hesitate to consult experts, doctors, counsellors, and government authorities regarding their disability, reservations, and benefits.

#### **4.8.3 Suggestions for parents**

1. Parents of differently-abled students must be aware of the Rights and Acts of the differently-abled.
2. Parents must also be aware of the funds, scholarships, stipends, aids and appliances the differently-abled students are about to receive.
3. Parent involvement is crucial for the differently-abled. Parents should cooperate with the teachers, schools, community, and government for the betterment of their children.
4. Parents should regularly attend awareness programmes and sensitisation workshops to uplift their children.
5. Parents must know to consult experts in the area, counsellors, doctors, and Psychiatrists for their disabled children.



## **CHAPTER-V**

### **MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

## **CHAPTER-V**

### **MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The present chapter deals with the major findings, discussions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.1 Major findings of the study**

The major findings of the study have been presented objective-wise:

##### **5.1.1 Findings on the status of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.**

a) Low vision was the most common among the differently-abled students, followed by hearing impairment. The two least prevalent types of disabilities among Mizoram's differently-abled students were dwarfism and speech and language. The majority of the schools had flexible time for the modifications and arrangements in the examination system. The majority of the schools have alternative objective questions instead of descriptive questions. Most schools did not have an accessible format in the examination system.

b) The entire selected sample schools have suitable seating arrangements. The majority of the schools have conducted examinations on the ground floor of the school building. The majority of the schools did not have access to the examination centres. Most schools were allowed to use assistive devices during the exam. The majority of the schools were allowed to select the mode of examination. The majority of the schools were provided for the reader of the scribe or lab assistant.

c) The majority of the schools were not allowed to take more than one scribe or reader in the examination. Most schools allowed compensatory time for the students using a scribe, reader, or lab assistant. Most schools were exempt from late entry for differently-abled students during exams. Most schools allowed the use of customised devices for the differently abled students in the examination. It was found

from the study that no sign language or interpreter was required for the differently-abled students in the examination system.

d) Most schools had ramps as per requirement, while most did not have student-friendly toilets for differently-abled students. Most schools have reported having a resource room for differently-abled students. All the schools claimed that they make seating arrangements for the differently-abled students.

e) Most schools had medical assessment camps as per the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Specialist doctors and special educators performed medical examinations, prepared checklists and conducted functional assessments.

f) The majority of the schools had suitable teaching and learning materials. Half of the respondent schools have resource teachers. They receive wheelchairs, crutches, reading glasses, large print textbooks, braille books/paper and hearing aids. The majority of the schools received uniform allowances, books & stationery, escort allowances, travelling allowances and reader allowances.

### **5.1.2 Findings on the challenges faced by the secondary school headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram**

**1. Shortage of staff-** Even though funds were proposed and allocated at the beginning of the academic year, there was a shortage in the allocation of employees to cater to every concerned area.

**2. Lack of sincerity and commitment-** A dearth of dedication and grit while executing policies associated with inclusive education can be a source of significant crisis.

**3. Inadequate regulation of funds-** Allocation and regulation of funds hold considerable prominence when it comes to the smooth functioning of any policy.



**4. Lack of facilities for vocational training facilities:** The researcher found very little input on the incorporation of vocational training programmes organised for differently abled students.

**5. Low on priority-** The development of Persons with Disabilities has lagged because of the lack of priority given to Persons with Disability at the higher levels of the government sector. Another loophole was suggested through the indifferent attitude of parents or guardians regarding securing educational opportunities for their wards.

**6. Lack of mental health care facilities-** Programmes for social inclusion of those with mental health issues were not always given top priority by local administrators.

### **5.1.3 Findings on the perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.**

a) The majority, i.e. 66.93% of secondary school teachers, had an average perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. 17.32% of secondary school teachers had a positive perception, while 15.75% had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. The mean score of secondary school teachers on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 was 71.53, and the standard deviation was 10.76.

b) The Majority, i.e., 71.43 % of differently-abled secondary school students, had an average perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. 13.49 % of differently-abled secondary school students had a positive perception, while 15.08 % had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. The mean score of differently-abled secondary school students on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 was 54.94, and the standard deviation was 8.12.

c) The majority, i.e. 76.8 % of parents of differently-abled secondary school students, had an average perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. 9.6 % of parents of differently-abled secondary school students had a positive

perception, while 13.6 % had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The mean score of parents of differently-abled secondary school students on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 was 54.94, and the standard deviation was 8.12.

#### **5.1.4 Findings on the comparison of the perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their gender**

This study indicated that:

- The mean score of male differently-abled secondary school teachers is 70.26.
- The mean score of female secondary school teachers is 72.90
- The standard deviation of the male secondary school teachers is 11.62
- The standard deviation of the female secondary school teachers was 9.65.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 with respect to their gender.

#### **5.1.5 Findings on the comparison of the perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their educational qualification**

The study found that:

- A considerable majority, 64.15%, of Master + B.Ed. qualification had an average perception, 18.87% had a positive perception, and 16.98% had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.
- 61.36 % of Bachelors + B.Ed. had an average perception, 22.73% had a positive perception, and 15.91% had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.
- 70.59% of Bachelor's degrees had an average perception, 16.65% of Bachelor's had a positive perception, and 11.76% of Bachelor's had a negative perception on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

- There is no significant difference in the perception of secondary school teachers in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their educational qualifications.

#### **5.1.6 Findings on the comparison of the perception of rights of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among secondary school teachers with respect to their teaching experience**

- 72.09 % of teachers having less than five years of teaching experience had an average perception, while 16.28% had a positive perception and 11.63% had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- Among teachers with experience between 5-10 years, 60% fall in the average range, 20% in the positive range and 20% in the negative range, respectively.
- In the teacher's experience between 11-15 years, 26.09% had a positive perception, 52.17% had an average perception, and 21.74% had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- Among the teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience, 73.91% had an average perception, 13.04% had a positive perception, and 13.04% had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of secondary school teachers in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 with respect to their teaching experience.

#### **5.1.7 Findings on the comparison of the perceptions of differently-abled students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram with respect to their gender**

A comparison of the perceptions of differently-abled students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram with respect to their gender revealed that:

- The mean score of male differently-abled secondary school students is 55.61.
- The mean score of female differently-abled secondary school students is 54.29.
- The standard deviation of the male students is 8.69, and that of female students is 7.77.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of students of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

#### **5.1.8 Findings on the comparison of the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, concerning their gender**

A comparison of the perceptions of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram with respect to their gender revealed that:

- The mean score of male parents of differently-abled secondary school students is 53.59, and female parents of differently-abled secondary school students are 54.76.
- The standard deviation of the male students is 9.38, and the female is 6.51.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

The current study has produced a number of recommendations for differently-abled students of Mizoram. Here are some given as follows:

- 1. Training of teachers, parents, and NGOs should be organised depending on the funds:** Funds provided for differently-abled students

should be revised and increased. Orientation programs for parents, municipality, and educational administrators, block-wise, and a combined programme for all the mentioned should be organised every year. Training programmes such as environmental building programs are to be conducted regularly with the motto of giving awareness to community-based NGOs and churches every year. Sometimes, training programmes may be allocated by the Samagra Shiksha, Rehabilitation Council of India, Office of the Commissioner of the Persons with Disabilities, Mizoram University.

2. **Providing an accessible, barrier-free, and conducive environment is their top goal:** Competent authorities may resort to qualified sign language interpreters to help them communicate and infer the intricacies and problems. The Mizoram Board of School Education has been considering the usage of large print textbooks for the academic year 2023-2024. Studying sign language at Theological College is a great prospect that will lead to and will always help reduce barriers faced by people with disabilities.
3. **Collaborations:** No programme can run single-handedly, which in turn requires getting associated or getting along well with other organisations and agencies for the successful execution of its roles and functions. NGOs may be invited to collaborate in the ongoing process. Certified train doctors are being trained to cater to each district. It has been proffered that a person with a disability must have a valid UDID to get desired benefits from the government. Notices are sent to each district regarding how to manage disabled people, and every three years, a district-level committee on disabilities is required to meet. A disability-related programme has been implemented in Siaha, Lunglei and Lawngtlai districts. These areas have reportedly benefitted from the programme.
4. **Grants, allowances, and scholarships:** To make the RPwD Act, 2016, instrumental, opportunities for fellowships, grants, allowances, and scholarships may be initiated. For intellectual disability and mental

retardation, teaching-learning materials should be provided regularly. Allowances for girls, transportation and travelling allowances, escort allowance, aids and appliances, such as reading glasses, high-quality hearing aids, crutches, wheelchairs and so on, may be sanctioned for differently-abled students. Institutions should be well-furnished infrastructural, including ramps and user-friendliness of basic amenities, such as lavatories, sanitation facilities, and drinking water.

5. **Initiatives:** An association for the differently-abled has emerged, where there shall be no discrimination among the students and have a positive outlook towards their differently-abled classmates in different ways. The first meeting, which was a morally reformed training, was organised under the commissioner's guidance. Awareness, sensitisation programmes, and other activities should be organised at the school, community, or district level to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

### 5.3. Suggestions for further studies

The present study led to several suggestions for further research in Mizoram and different parts of the country among the differently-abled students. The suggestions for further research are stated as follows:

1. Similar studies may be framed to see the effectiveness of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, among students belonging to other disadvantaged and exceptional groups.
2. A comparative study may be conducted based on the effective implementation of the act based on the students' social-economic status and background knowledge. This may include significant differences in rural and urban areas.
3. A comparative study may be planned to investigate the effectiveness of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, on different types of disabilities, be it visual impairment, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, intellectual disability, etc.

4. A comparative study may be designed based on the beneficiary's sex, which will be separate for boys and girls.
5. Further research on government policies, scholarship, sponsorship, and flagship programmes may be conducted to further enhance the chances of inclusion of persons with disabilities.
6. A study can be carried out about the teaching methods and an inclusive setup technique that may be incorporated in day-to-day teaching learning to further ensure the incorporation of the provisions stated by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
7. Extended research may be carried out on larger samples to enhance the validity of the study findings.
8. Giving precedence to candidates with a professional certificate in special education throughout the hiring process could boost the number of special teachers. It is advised that the state government launch a particular recruitment campaign to find professionally competent special teachers.
9. It is imperative that existing ramps and railing be upgraded or renovated immediately to eliminate school architectural barriers. In addition, schools lacking these amenities should start building new ramps and railings with the appropriate guidance and monitoring system.
10. It is advised that the state government provide accessible restrooms for differently abled students in every school to ensure that no student has trouble using the restroom.
11. A disability certificate must be given to the designated differently-abled students; a medical evaluation camp should be arranged at the district level in cooperation with the health department.
12. Regular monitoring and follow-up on the provided assistive equipment are necessary. Both abled and differently-abled students should have access to appropriate teaching and learning resources, or the school must purchase these resources.
13. Given the need that the majority of headmasters have identified, it is highly advised that all teachers receive inclusive education training.

14. Regularly scheduled awareness programmes on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, inclusive classroom practices, and other equity initiatives at the school or district level will help teachers and headmasters develop a favourable attitude towards inclusive education.
15. There may be a more substantial parental involvement in the operations of the schools. Meetings between parents and instructors may be planned on a regular basis.
16. The abilities of each individual student should be taken into consideration while designing the school's evaluation system.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In light of the above qualitative and quantitative analysis, the results of the findings establish the perception and impact of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 among the secondary school teachers, differently-abled secondary school students, parents of differently-abled secondary school students, stakeholders such as Headmasters, District Education Officers, Director of School Education and State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, should be well aware of every citizen in India especially the differently-abled including parents, teachers, social leaders, educational officials, government officials to solve various issues in different situation. The Act provides the right which is beneficial for the differently-abled in education, job opportunities, security measures, financial assistance etc. The researcher found that teachers, students, and parents of Mizoram have an average perception on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. No significant difference was found among the male and female teachers, with regards to their educational qualification and teaching experience. At the same time, no significant difference was found among the male and female differently-abled students and among the parents of differently-abled secondary school students. Implementing more effective and efficient measures towards the successful transition of differently-abled students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders to new geographical and institutional setups will significantly impact these recommendations and suggestions, which, if considered and implemented, could further enhance the current findings.



### **5.5 Limitations**

A few limitations of the present study that may affect the generalizability of the results are as follows:

1. Only MBSE affiliated secondary schools were considered for the study.
2. Some participants did not respond to some statements. As a result, the researcher eliminated such questionnaires from the data tabulation and interpretation process, hence decreasing the sample size.

### **5.6 Educational Implications**

1. The results of the study can be used by policy makers to develop regulations pertaining to RPwD Act 2016. Given the difficult topographical conditions of the states, certain special measures can be provided for other parts of India.
2. The findings of the study found that funds provided for the differently-abled students were few. The amount of money sanctioned for differently-abled students must be increased.
3. The study revealed that not much funding was available for differently-abled students. It is necessary to boost the funding authorized for differently-abled students.
4. Every school should appoint at least one resource or special teacher to serve as the lead educator responsible for implementing inclusive education.
5. Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) should be updated and furnished to provide services to the school. Teachers and headmasters need to be made aware of the services offered by these facilities.
6. Headmasters ought to have more authority in areas pertaining to how the schools run, such as hiring new instructors for the institution, managing teacher transfers, and using government funding in any way they see fit.

7. Improving the quality of differently-abled students in Mizoram is hampered by the non-rationalisation of teachers. The RPwD Act 2016 is challenging for many government schools to implement in practice due to shortage of teachers. As a result, it is imperative that teachers be rationalized.
8. The results show that students, teachers and parents were not well-informed on the RPwD Act 2016, despite the fact that these individuals- especially those who have disability in their lives- need to be motivated to pursue their academic goals and given the right advice.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Status of Implementation of RPwD Act 2016

| Sl No. | Status relating to Modifications and arrangements in examination system | Yes | No |
|--------|--|-----|----|
| 1. | Flexibility of time | | |
| 2. | Alternative objective questions instead of descriptive question | | |
| 3. | Questions papers inaccessible format | | |
| 4. | Suitable seating arrangement | | |
| 5. | Conduction of examination on ground floor | | |
| 6. | Accessible examination centres | | |
| 7. | Allow to use assistive devices | | |
| 8. | Allow to select mode of examination | | |
| 9. | Provision for reader of scribe or lab assistant | | |
| 10. | To take more than one scribe or reader | | |
| 11. | Discretion of opting own scribe or reader | | |
| 12. | Compensatory time for the students using scribe or reader or lab assistant | | |
| 13. | Late entry during examination | | |
| 14. | Use of customized devices | | |
| 15. | Facility of sign language or interpreter as required | | |

| Sl No. | Status relating to Physical Infrastructure | Yes | No |
|--------|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Did the School building have ramps as per the requirement for differently-abled students? | | |
| 2. | Do you have differently-abled student's friendly toilet? | | |
| 3. | Do you have a resource room in your school? | | |
| 4. | Do you make seating arrangement for the differently-abled students? | | |

| Sl No. | Status relating to identification | Yes | No |
|--------|--|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Did your student attend medical assessment? | | |
| 2. | Is the assessment done as per the provisions of RPwD Act 2016? | | |
| 3. | How the assessment and identification did have been done in your school? | Special Educator | Specialist Doctor
Any other |
| | | | |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 4. | What are the norms for the assessment of the differently-abled students? | |
| | a) Checklist | |
| | b) Medical Examination | |
| | c) Functional Assessment | |

| Sl No. | Status relating to support aids and appliances | Yes | No |
|--------|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Do the differently-abled students in your school received assistive device? | | |
| 2. | Do the differently-abled students have the suitable teaching-learning material? | | |
| 3. | Is there a resource teacher for the differently-abled students in your school? | | |
| 4. | What kind of assistive devices were provided to the differently-abled students? | | |
| | a) Wheelchair | | |
| | b) Crutch | | |
| | c) Reading glass | | |
| | d) Large print textbooks | | |
| | e) Braille books/paper | | |
| | f) Hearing aid | | |
| 5. | What kind of allowances was provided to the differently-abled students? | | |
| | a) Uniform Allowances | | |
| | b) Books & Stationery | | |
| | c) Escort Allowances | | |
| | d) Travelling Allowances | | |
| | e) Reader allowances | | |

Appendix II

Interview questions for the District Education Officer (DEO) about the Implementation of RPwD Act, 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

- District:
 - Gender:
 - Years worked as a District Education Officer:
 - Qualification:
1. What procedure is followed by the district education office to maintain the records of differently-abled students?
 2. How do you monitor and supervise the implementation of various provisions under the RPwD Act, 2016?
 3. What probable steps can be taken at the district level to strengthen secondary schools for differently-abled students?
 4. Besides academic activities, what schemes and programmes were adopted to raise awareness and sensitize students with disabilities concerning RPwD Act, 2016 in Mizoram?
 5. What training programmes and workshops are conducted for the education (sensitization) of differently-abled students?
 6. Which training programme or workshop have you attended for the education (sensitization) of differently-abled students?
 7. What challenges do you face in implementing RPwD Act, 2016 in your district?
 8. What suggestions do you want to propose for the successful implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016 in secondary schools of Mizoram?

Appendix III

Interview questions for Director of School Education about Implementation of RPwD Act, 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

- Gender:
- Years worked as Director of School Education:
- Qualification:
 1. How often does the government maintain records of differently-abled students?
 2. How do you monitor and supervise the implementation of various provisions under the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016?
 3. What do you do to ensure the provision of Braille-printed books and other learning materials for differently-abled students in the secondary schools of Mizoram?
 4. Comment on the availability of large-print books, enlarging hardware/software, high-tech tools including screen readers, digital book readers, and scan and read systems.
 5. Remark on the availability of sign language interpreters available in your District and State.
 6. What efforts did the government make to implement the RPwD Act, 2016 in Mizoram?
 7. Besides academic activities, what government schemes and programmes were adopted in secondary schools for differently-abled students?
 8. Mention the training programme or workshop you have attended and conducted concerning the education of differently-abled students.
 9. What challenges have you faced while implementing the RPwD Act, 2016 in Mizoram?
 10. What are your expectations from the State/Central Government regarding the aid and learning resources that have been provided to date?
 11. How will RPwD Act 2016 be a turning point for the future of differently-abled students?
 12. What can be the probable suggestions for the successful implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016 in secondary schools of Mizoram?

Appendix IV

Interview questions for Headmasters about Implementation of RPwD Act 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

- School: District: Gender:
- Locale: Rural /Urban Years worked as a Principal:
- Qualification:

1. What are the provisions of reservation (PH) for differently-abled students in your school?
2. What roles do special educator(s) from SCERT play in identifying and monitoring differently-abled students?
3. How do you define the monitoring mechanism of your school? How frequently does monitoring take place?
4. What kind of assistive devices and support services has the Government of Mizoram provided to your school for differently-abled students?
5. What infrastructural facilities do you have for the differently-abled students to hassle-free reach the school?
6. Remark on the user-friendliness of the basic amenities (laboratories, sanitation facility, drinking water, canteens) available for differently-abled students.
7. Comment on the availability of signboards to identify classrooms in your school.
8. How do you define the condition of the resource centre allocated for differently-abled students?
9. What are the problems faced by the differently-abled students while taking their examinations?
10. What kind of transportation facility do you provide for differently-abled students?
11. What kind of discrimination do differently-abled students face in the school?
12. Mention the kind of training programme or workshop you have attended concerning the education of differently-abled students.
13. What are the scopes of vocational training provided for differently-abled students in your school?
14. How many are differently-abled students from the school capable of receiving vocational training?
15. How do you divide the differently-abled students into different vocational training programmes?

16. Where do you provide vocational training to the students?
17. What is the availability of trained teachers for teaching different vocational programmes?
18. What kind of efforts do you make to create an inclusive classroom?
19. What measures are taken by your school to successfully implement the RPwD Act, 2016?

Appendix V

Interview Questions for State Commissioner about Implementation of RPwD Act 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

1. What are your views on the practical implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016 in secondary schools of Mizoram?
2. What initiative has been taken by the government to develop the Sign and Braille-language module?
3. What are the efforts taken by the government to provide learning resources for differently-abled students?
4. What role has been played by the government in strengthening secondary schools for differently-abled students?
5. How efficiently does the State Government maintain records of differently-abled students?
6. How have you conducted the pilot study or allocated funds to check the ground reality for implementing the RPwD Act, 2016 in Mizoram?
7. Propose a few recommendations for the successful implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016 in secondary schools of Mizoram?

Appendix VI

Teacher's Perception on Implementation of RPwD Act, 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

| Sl. No. | Profile | Label | Responses |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Name of the school: | | | |
| Name of the District: | | | |
| 1. | Gender | Male | |
| | | Female | |
| 2. | Teaching Experiences | < 5 years | |
| | | 5 – 10 years | |
| | | 11 -15 years | |
| | | >15 years | |
| 3. | Educational Qualification | B. A. / B. Sc. | |
| | | M.A. / M. Sc. | |
| | | B. Ed. | |
| | | M. Ed. | |
| | | Any others | |
| 4. | Institution Area | Urban | |
| | | Rural | |
| 5. | Age Range | 26-35 | |
| | | 36-45 | |
| | | 46-55 | |
| | | 56-65 | |

The following opinionnaire has been prepared to understand the teachers' perceptions of the RPWD Act, 2016. You are requested to provide your responses kindly. Five columns against each statement indicate the responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Please mark tick in the column (□) to express your response to each statement. Rest assured that your responses will be kept confidential and used for research only.

PART-A

| Sl No | Statements/ Items | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------|--|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Aware of RPwD Act, 2016. | | | | | |
| 2 | Differently-abled students are admitted without discrimination. | | | | | |
| 3 | Differently-abled students are given equal opportunities to learn. | | | | | |
| 4 | Differently-abled students have equal opportunities for sports and recreation. | | | | | |
| 5 | School facilitates differently-abled students to access classrooms without any external help. | | | | | |
| 6 | School building has ramps as per the requirement for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 7 | Classroom furniture and other support facilities are accessible and modified as per the needs of differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 8 | Differently-abled students are provided accommodation (hostel facilities) depending on their individual requirements. | | | | | |
| 9 | All students have the opportunities to read, write, and learn in their mother language. | | | | | |
| 10 | Identification and monitoring of differently-abled students are done on regular basis by special educators. | | | | | |
| 11 | Facilities such as books, examination paper, scribe or amanuensis are available for differently-abled | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | students. | | | | | |
| 12 | Transport facilities (pick-up and drop) are available in school specially for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 13 | Provision of attendant is made available in schools for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 14 | Additional resource room is allocated for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 15 | All students (with and without disabilities) enjoy resources available in school without discrimination. | | | | | |
| 16 | Differently-abled students are getting scholarships in schools in collaboration with government policies. | | | | | |
| 17 | Braille, sign language and mother language satisfies the educational needs of differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 18 | School management establishes rapport with parents of differently-abled students to communicate their academic performance. | | | | | |
| 19 | My pre-service teacher training/in-service training, and teaching experience has given me the pre-requisite skill that will enable me to make my class inclusive. | | | | | |

PART-B

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | How willing are you to take a professional development training programme to teach differently-abled students in the classroom? |
| 2 | Comment on the availability of trained teachers for teaching different vocational programmes for differently-abled students? |
| 3 | Briefly discuss the capability of differently-abled students in receiving vocational training? |
| 4 | How do you divide the differently-abled students into different vocational training programs? |
| 5 | What challenges do you face in providing educational needs to differently-abled students in your school |
| 6 | What kind of efforts do you make to create an inclusive classroom? |

Appendix VII

Student's perception on Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------|--|
| Name of the Institution: | | |
| Name of the District: | | |
| Class: | | |
| Nature of Disability: | | |
| Gender | Male | |
| | Female | |
| Locale | Urban | |
| | Rural | |

The following opinionnaire has been prepared to understand students' perceptions of the RPwD Act, 2016. You are requested to provide responses that genuinely reflect your immediate opinion. Five columns against each statement indicate the responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Please mark tick (☐) in the column to express your answer for each statement. Rest assured that your response will be confidential and used only for research purposes.

PART-A

| Sl No | Statements/ Items | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Aware of RPwD Act, 2016. | | | | | |
| 2 | Differently-abled students were admitted without discrimination. | | | | | |
| 3 | Differently-abled students have equal opportunities to learn. | | | | | |
| 4 | Differently-abled students have equal opportunities for sports and recreation. | | | | | |
| 5 | The school facilitates differently-abled students to access classrooms without any external help. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6 | School buildings have ramps as per the requirement for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 7 | Classroom furniture and other support-aided facilities are accessible and modified as per the need of differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 8 | Differently-abled students are provided accommodation (hostel facilities) depending on their individual requirements. | | | | | |
| 9 | All students have the opportunities to read, write, and learn in their mother language. | | | | | |
| 10 | Facilities such as books, examination papers, scribes or amanuensis are available for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 11 | Transport facilities (pick-up and drop) are available in schools, especially for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 12 | Provision of an attendant is made available in the school for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 13 | Additional resource room is allocated for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 14 | All students (with and without disabilities) enjoy resources available in school without discrimination. | | | | | |
| 15 | Initiative taken by schools to provide government scholarships to | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | the differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 16 | Braille, sign language and mother language satisfy the educational needs of differently-abled students. | | | | | |

PART-B

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Besides academic activities, what basic training is imparted in the school for differently-abled students? |
| 2 | Comment on the availability of specified trained teachers for teaching different vocational programs. |
| 3 | How satisfied are you with the vocational program that has been imparted in the school? How relevant are these in facilitating a livelihood for the differently-abled students? |
| 4 | Suggest a few measures that may be taken to improve the existing vocational program. |
| 5 | What challenges do you face as a differently-abled student? |

Appendix VIII

Parent's perceptions on Implementation of RPwD Act, 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|--|
| Name of the child's institution: | | |
| Name of the district: | | |
| Class: | | |
| Nature of child's impairment: | | |
| Gender | Male | |
| | Female | |
| Locale | Urban | |
| | Rural | |

The following opinionnaire has been prepared to understand parents' perception of the RPwD Act, 2016. You are requested to provide responses that genuinely reflect your immediate opinion. Five columns against each statement indicate the responses: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Please mark tick (☐) in the column to express your answer for each statement. Rest assured that your response will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

PART-A

| Sl No | Statements/ Items | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|-------|---|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | Aware of RPwD Act 2016. | | | | | |
| 2 | Differently-abled students are admitted to schools without any discrimination. | | | | | |
| 3 | Differently-abled students are given equal opportunities to learn. | | | | | |
| 4 | Differently-abled students are given equal opportunities for sports and recreation. | | | | | |
| 5 | School infrastructure facilitates differently-abled students. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6 | The school building has basic amenities (sanitation facilities, toilets, kitchen, drinking water) as per the requirement of differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 7 | All students have the opportunities to read, write, and learn in their mother language. | | | | | |
| 8 | Identification and monitoring of differently-abled students are made regularly by special educators. | | | | | |
| 9 | Facilities such as books, examination papers, scribes or amanuensis are available for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 10 | Transport facilities (pick-up and drop) are available in school, especially for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 11 | Provision of attendants is made available in schools for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 12 | An additional resource room is allocated for differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 13 | All students (with and without disabilities) enjoy resources available in school without discrimination. | | | | | |
| 14 | Initiative taken by schools to provide government scholarships to differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 15 | Braille, sign language and mother language are used satisfactorily to | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | fulfil the educational needs of differently-abled students. | | | | | |
| 16 | The school creates rapport with parents of differently-abled students for their academic performance. | | | | | |

PART-B

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 | How satisfied are you with the vocational programme that the school imparts? |
| 2 | What educational challenges are you facing while providing education to your ward? |
| 3 | What role does the school play in resolving the problems faced by your ward? |
| 4 | How aware are you of the government-sponsored schemes concerning differently-abled students? |
| 5 | How has your ward benefitted with the help of these government-sponsored schemes? |
| 6 | How will RPwD Act, 2016 be a turning point for the future of differently-abled students? |

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BRIEF BIO-DATA OF THE CANDIDATE

BRIEF BIO-DATA OF THE CANDIDATE

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| NAME | : LALMUANKIMI |
| FATHER'S NAME | : LALROTLINGA |
| ADDRESS | : BAWNGKAWN BRIGADE VENG |
| GENDER | : FEMALE |
| RELIGION | : CHRISTIAN |
| MARITAL STATUS | : SINGLE |
| EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION | : M.A, M.PHIL., B.ED. |
| PH.D. REGISTRATION NO. AND DATE | : MZU/Ph.D/1650 of 21.10.2020 |
| DEPARTMENT | : EDUCATION,

MIZORAM UNIVERSITY |
| TITLE OF THE THESIS | : STATUS AND STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016 IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF MIZORAM |

COPY OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES

PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| NAME OF THE CANDIDATE | : LALMUANKIMI |
| DEGREE | : Doctor of Philosophy |
| DEPARTMENT | : EDUCATION |
| TITLE OF THESIS | : Status and Stakeholders' Perceptions
on Implementation of Rights of Persons
with Disabilities Act 2016 in Secondary
Schools of Mizoram |
| DATE OF ADMISSION | : 21 st October 2020 |
| APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL | |
| 1. DRC | : 30 th & 31 st March 2021 |
| 2. BOS | : 16 th April 2021 |
| 3. SCHOOL BOARD | : 20 th May 2021 |
| MZU REGISTRATION NO. | : 2463 of 2008-2009 |
| Ph. D. REGISTRATION NO. & DATE | : MZU/Ph.D/1650 of 21.10.2020 |
| EXTENSION (If Any) | : |

(PROF. LOKANATH MISHRA)

Head

Department of Education

ABSTRACT

STATUS AND STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016 IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF MIZORAM

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

LALMUANKIMI

MZU REGISTRATION NO: 2463 of 2008-2009

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**STATUS AND STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION
OF RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016 IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF MIZORAM**

By

LALMUANKIMI

Department of Education

Supervisor

Dr. ABHA SHREE

Submitted

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Introduction

The acceptance of variety, in general, is the critical factor that underpins the achievement of inclusion. The backgrounds of today's children are more varied than ever before. This includes differences in language, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and academic skills (Salend, 2008). Two essential elements for inclusion are efficient administration and training; inclusion will not be achieved if the stakeholders lack expertise in these fields. Successful classroom management, good teaching strategies, effective accommodation practises, and instructional flexibility are the four components of successful inclusion.

Classrooms that foster learning are defined by well-designed organizational and management frameworks. Effective classroom management, encompassing physical, procedural, instructional and behavioural aspects, establishes the foundation for efficient instruction delivery. Effective classroom management is required if students are to benefit from any form of instruction, especially in inclusive classrooms where students display a wide range of diversity (Jones & Jones, 2007). Any student's learning will not be at its best without efficient organization and management of the classroom. Certain modifications to the physical environment, the curriculum, the delivery of education, or the assignments given to some pupils are necessary. Many disabled students are capable of succeeding academically, but only with suitable accommodations. They can be interventions tailored specifically for children with disabilities or broad accommodations that are suitable for all students.

Rationale of the Study

The RPwD Act, 2016 describes inclusive education as an educational system where students with and without disabilities learn together, with teaching and learning methods adapted to accommodate the diverse needs of students with disabilities. According to the RTE Act, 2009, every child has the right to free and compulsory education up to the elementary level. The idea that every child should attend school is the foundation of the right to education. Children are excluded from schools

worldwide for various reasons, including poverty, gender, race, language, and religion. Nevertheless, every child has the right to early growth, learning, and development from their parents and community. When they reach school age, they also have the right to feel welcomed and included by teachers and peers. The core principle of inclusive education is that everyone benefits when students from diverse backgrounds receive their education together.

In Mizoram, there are 1,181 secondary students with special needs. Although there has been some progress in raising awareness, the needs of students with disabilities have received less attention. Parents, educators and students must all be familiar with the act. For many of us in India, the act may sound familiar but is still ambiguous. The RPwD Act, 2016 has not been the subject of any research among Mizoram's secondary pupils. It presents a challenging opportunity to assess how the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, has been implemented among students, teachers and parents in secondary schools in Mizoram. The study also seeks to identify any disparities in gender, educational attainment and training. This study will provide an overview of Mizoram's current position with regard to the application of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and identify what efforts should be made to improve its application.

Given the significance of the RPwD Act, 2016 and the lack of research in this area in Mizoram, an in-depth study is required to uncover many perspectives and features of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram. In addition, the current study seeks to identify the issues that schools and children in inclusive settings confront. Understanding the issue is only the beginning of research; this study aims to recommend the best course of action for Mizoram's implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016.

Research Questions

The following research questions motivated the researcher to conduct the present research:

1. What is the implementation status of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram?
2. What are the challenges faced by the headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents of secondary schools in Mizoram about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016?
4. Do secondary school teachers' perceptions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, differ with respect to gender, educational qualification and teaching experience?
5. Do the differently-abled secondary school students' perceptions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, differ with respect to gender?
6. Do parents' perceptions of differently abled secondary school students regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 differ with respect to their gender?
7. How can the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, be effectively implemented in secondary schools of Mizoram?

Statement of the Problem:

In the context of the above rationale and quest to find answers to quantitative and qualitative research questions, the title of the study is framed as “Status and Stakeholders’ Perceptions on Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 in Secondary Schools of Mizoram.”

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the implementation status of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.

2. To analyse the challenges faced by the secondary school headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in Mizoram.
3. To explore the perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.
4. To compare secondary school teachers' perceptions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender, educational qualifications, and teaching experience.
5. To compare the perceptions of differently-abled students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram with respect to their gender.
6. To compare the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.
7. To propose viable mechanisms for effectively implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were framed to test the objectives of the present study, which were tested at a 0.05 level of significance

H04a: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

H04b: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their educational qualifications.

H04c: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their teaching experience.

H05: There is no significant difference in the perception of students of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

H06: There is no significant difference in the perception of parents of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

Delimitation of the Study

The present has been delimited to the government secondary schools of Mizoram. This research includes only those government secondary schools where at least one differently-abled student is being studied.

Method of the Study:

The study focuses on exploring the status of the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and perceptions of different stakeholders in secondary schools of Mizoram, the method of the research is concurrent triangulation under mixed methods research design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann & Hanson, 2003). The research includes qualitative data collection (field observation diary & interviews) and quantitative data collection (survey).

The study focuses on exploring the implementation status of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the perceptions of different stakeholders in secondary schools of Mizoram. The research approach used was mixed methods research, and the design was convergent mixed methods design. The study includes qualitative data collection and quantitative data collection.

Population

The population of the study comprised all the secondary schools' stakeholders (director of school education, district education officers, state commissioner for persons with disabilities, headmasters, teachers, differently-abled students and parents) of Mizoram. As per the annual publication, Department of Education, Government of Mizoram (2020-2021), there were 1987 teachers working in

government secondary schools and 1018 differently-abled students attending government secondary schools. Therefore, the population of the present study consists of all the present teachers working in government secondary schools, differently-abled secondary school students, and all parents of differently-abled secondary school students in the state of Mizoram.

Sample

For the present study, teachers, differently-abled secondary school students, and parents of differently-abled secondary school students were selected randomly for the quantitative phase of this study. Purposive sampling was used for the qualitative data collection phase. Details of the selected samples are given in Table No. 3.1.

Table 1 Samples of headmasters, teachers, students and parents in the school

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of Headmasters | No. of Teachers | No. of Students | No. of Parents | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| 1 | Aizawl District | 3 | 10 | 19 | 19 | 51 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 3 | 20 | 16 | 16 | 55 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 3 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 37 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 2 | 10 | 12 | 12 | 36 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 15 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 3 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 36 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | 15 | 10 | 10 | 36 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 3 | 9 | 14 | 14 | 40 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 1 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 27 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | 21 | 15 | 15 | 54 |
| Total | | 25 | 127 | 126 | 125 | 403 |

Table 2 Description of headmasters

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of headmasters | | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 3 | - | 3 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 2 | - | 2 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 2 | - | 2 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | - | 1 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | - | 1 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 3 | - | 3 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 1 | - | 1 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | - | 3 |
| Total | | 22 | 3 | 25 |

Table 3 Description of Stakeholders

| Sl No. | Stakeholders | No. of Stakeholders | | Total |
|--------------|--|---------------------|----------|-----------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1. | Secondary school head teachers | 22 | 3 | 25 |
| 2. | District education officers | 11 | - | 11 |
| 3. | Director of school education | 1 | - | 1 |
| 4. | State commissioner for persons with disabilities | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total | | 35 | 3 | 38 |

Table 4 Description of Teachers in Gender

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of Teachers | | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 6 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 2 | 8 | 5 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | 14 | 21 |
| Total | | 66 | 61 | 127 |

Table 5 Description of secondary school teacher's teaching experience

| Teacher's Teaching Experience | < 5 years | 5-10 years | 11-15 years | >15 years | Total |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| No. of Teachers | 43 | 15 | 23 | 46 | 127 |

Table 6 Description of secondary school teacher's educational qualification

| Teacher's Educational Qualification | Masters + B.Ed | Bachelors + B.Ed | Masters Bachelors | Total |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| No. of Teachers | 53 | 44 | 13 | 127 |

Table 7 Description of students

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of Students | | Total |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 8 | 11 | 19 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 4 | 12 | 16 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 6 | 8 | 14 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 2 | 8 | 11 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 3 | 13 | 15 |
| | Total | 47 | 79 | 126 |

Table 8 Descriptions of Parents

| Sl No. | Districts | No. of Parents | | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| 1 | Aizawl District | 8 | 11 | 19 |
| 2 | Lunglei District | 4 | 12 | 16 |
| 3 | Siaha District | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| 4 | Champhai District | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| 5 | Kolasib District | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| 6 | Serchhip District | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | Lawngtlai District | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| 8 | Mamit District | 1 | 9 | 10 |
| 9 | Saitual District | 4 | 10 | 14 |
| 10 | Khawzawl District | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| 11 | Hnahthial District | 2 | 13 | 15 |
| Total | | 40 | 85 | 125 |

Tools Used

The researcher used the following tools to attain the objectives of the study:

1. Questionnaire for teacher's perceptions on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
2. Questionnaire for differently-abled student's perceptions on the implementation of RPwD Act, 2016
3. Questionnaire for parents of differently-abled students on implementation of RPwD Act, 2016
4. An interview schedule for the director of school education on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
5. An interview schedule for the district education officers on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
6. An interview schedule for the state commissioner for persons with disabilities on implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
7. An interview schedule for headmasters on the implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016
8. A checklist to examine the implementation status of the RPwD Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram

Construction of Tools

Due to the non-availability of standardised tools regarding the study, the investigator developed tools based on the RPwD Act 2016, chapter III.

Validity of the Tools

The drafted questionnaires, interview schedules and checklists were validated by experts in Department of Education and Department of Psychology at Mizoram University, Banaras Hindu University and University of Allahabad. Experts suggested that by giving full cooperation, tools were reviewed, and modifications were made. Tools were drafted around three to four times. New items were added while some items were removed. The questionnaires were translated into Mizo language for the students and parents. The content and face validity have been ensured by considering expert comments when preparing the final draft of the tools. Experts in inclusive education gave their approval to the tools.

Procedure of Data Collection

In this single-phase approach, the researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, analyzed them independently, and then compared the results to determine if they supported or contradicted each other. The researcher visited every district in order to gather the data. The government authorities and the administrative offices of each district were formally consulted. The one-on-one interview using the qualitative approach was conducted with the director of school education, district education officers, state commissioners for persons with disabilities, and head teachers of secondary schools.

The district project office, Samagra Shiksha in each district, is where the researchers obtain the enrolment information for the differently-abled students. Using the information provided by the office, she approached the secondary school headmaster for permission to visit and gather data in advance. Through qualitative observation and checklist using descriptive and reflective field notes, the researcher collected data on the status of modifications and arrangements in the examination system, physical infrastructure, identification and support aids and appliances for

differently-abled secondary school students under the purview of the RPwD Act, 2016.

Since the nature of the research design is concurrently parallel, the researcher simultaneously collected the data for both strands. On this line of thought, the researcher collected the perceptions of secondary school teachers, differently-abled students, and their parents using the survey method of the quantitative approach. The questionnaire was given to the students to bring back after their parents' responses, and the investigator collected it from the students the next day.

The researcher randomly selected the teachers of secondary schools who teach differently-abled students. The scale comprises 19 statements and six semi-closed questions to determine perceptions of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The investigator randomly selected differently-abled secondary school students. The scale comprises 16 items and five semi-closed questions to determine perceptions of implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Moreover, the investigators selected parents of differently-abled students. The perception scale comprises 16 items and six semi-closed-ended questions to determine the perceptions on implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The questionnaire was given to the students to bring back after their parents' responses, and the investigator collected it from the students the next day.

Interviews conducted with the director of school education, district education officers, state commissioners for persons with disabilities and head teachers of secondary schools were recorded using a mobile phone for translation and transcription.

Tabulation and Analysis of Data

The collected data were tabulated and scrutinised. The data collected from the interview was analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis. Observations from the checklist were tabulated using an MS Excel worksheet. In order to verify the stated hypotheses and arrive at generalisable conclusions, data were analysed with the help

of descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation and inferential such as t-test and analysis of variance were used to describe the nature of data.

Major Findings:

Objective 1: Implementation status of the RPwD Act 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Findings on the implementation status of the RPwD Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Status relating to modifications and arrangements in the examination system

Out of 25 schools, 23 (92%) had flexible time, while two (8%) schools did not have flexible time for the modifications and arrangements in the examination system. Four (16%) schools had alternative objective questions instead of descriptive questions, while 21 (84%) schools did not have alternative objective questions instead of descriptive questions. Nine (36%) schools had an accessible format in the examination, while 16 (64%) schools did not have an inaccessible format in the examination system. The selected sample, i.e., 25 (100%) schools, has suitable seating arrangements. Eighteen (72%) schools have conducted examinations on the ground floor of the school building. On the other hand, seven (28%) schools have not conducted their exam on the ground floor. Ten (40%) schools have access to examination centres, while fifteen (60%) did not access the examination centres. Twenty-four (96 %) of the schools were allowed to use assistive devices, while only one (4%) was not allowed to use assistive devices during the exam. Thirteen (52%) schools were allowed to select the mode of examination. Twenty (80%) of schools were provided for readers or scribes or lab assistants, while five (20%) did not provide readers for scribes or lab assistants. Most schools, i.e., twenty-one (84%), did not allow more than one scribe or reader to be taken in the examination. Seventeen (68%) allow compensatory time for students using a scribe, reader, or lab assistant. Twenty-three (92%) of the schools were exempt from late entry for differently-abled students during exams. Fourteen (56%) of the schools allowed customised devices for differently-abled students, while eleven (44%) schools were

not permitted to use customised devices in the examination. It was found from the study that no sign language or interpreter was required for the differently-abled students in the examination system.

Status relating to physical infrastructure

20 (80%) schools have ramps as per requirement, while 5 (20%) do not have ramps as required for the differently-abled students. Six (24%) schools did not have a differently-abled student-friendly toilet, whereas 19 (76%) schools had a differently-abled student-friendly toilet. The majority of the schools, i.e. 22 (88%), have reported having a resource room in their school, while three (12%) do not have a resource room for the differently-abled students. All 25 (100%) schools claimed that they make seating arrangements for the differently-abled students in their school.

Status relating to identification

As reported by the headmasters, all the selected sample school students had medical assessment camps. Sixteen schools had informed that an assessment camp had been conducted, while nine schools informed that the assessment was not conducted as per the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. It was found from the study that special educators had done assessment and identification at nine schools, specialist doctors at 13 schools and three other schools were done by others. The checklist was used in 7 schools, medical examination in 13 schools and functional assessment in 5 schools for identification.

Status relating to support aids and appliances

All the schools received assistive devices among them. The majority of 17 schools have suitable teaching learning material, while a number of eight schools do not have suitable teaching learning material. Twelve schools have resource teachers in their school, while 13 do not have resource teachers in their school. Two wheelchairs, three crutches, 25 reading glasses, four large print textbooks, one braille book/paper, and 21 hearing aids.

Nine Uniform allowances, six books & stationery, three escort allowances, three travelling allowances, and six reader allowances were provided to the

differently-abled students of 25 schools. Thus, it may be concluded that the majority of the secondary schools in Mizoram stood up to the expectations or anticipations of the checklist.

Objective 2: Challenges faced by the secondary school headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram.

Findings on the challenges faced by the secondary school headmasters, district education officers, director of school education and state commissioner for persons with disabilities in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram.

Table 10 Challenges faced by the stakeholders in implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in Mizoram

| Theme | Explanation |
|---|--|
| 1. Shortage of staff | The problem of staffing deficit or shortage in the allocation of employees to cater to every concerned area is looming large, thus generating low enrolment. |
| 2. Lack of sincerity and commitment | Lack of political and community will and a dearth of dedication and grit while executing policies associated with inclusive education. |
| 3. Inadequate regulation of funds | These include girls' stipend, transport allowance, escort allowance, and other aids and appliances that were not received by the beneficiaries at the time of requirement. |
| 4. Lack of facilities for vocational training facilities | No specified vocational training facility, industry visit programme, separate workshop/training or symposium, seminar, or conference is organised to expand the idea and benefits of vocational training programmes. |
| 5. Low on Priority | Due to the failure to meet prior commitments, no program is dedicated solely to implementing the RPwD Act 2016, and most importantly, no special educators were stationed in their posts as they prefer cities over the hilly rural locale of Mizoram. |
| 6. Lack of mental health-care facilities | Inadequacy of psychiatric rehabilitation centres, duplication of services or wastage of whatever resource is available have further aggravated this problem. |

Objective 3: Perceptions of teachers, differently-abled students and their parents about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Findings of the perceptions on rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among secondary school teachers in Mizoram

Majority i.e. 66.93 per cent of secondary school teachers, had an average perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. 17.32 per cent of secondary school teachers had a positive perception, while 15.75 per cent had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The mean score of secondary school teachers on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, was 71.53, and the standard deviation was 10.76.

Findings of the perceptions on rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among differently-abled students in Mizoram

The majority, i.e., 71.43 per cent of differently-abled secondary school students, had an average perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The table also shows that 13.49 per cent of differently-abled secondary school students had a positive perception, while 15.08 per cent had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The mean score of differently-abled secondary school students on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, was 54.94, and the standard deviation was 8.12.

Findings of the perceptions on rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram

The majority, i.e., 76.8 percent of parents of differently-abled secondary school students, had an average perception of the RPwD Act, 2016. The table also shows that 9.6 percent of parents of differently-abled secondary school students had a positive perception, while 13.6 percent had a negative perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The Mean score of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in the RPwD Act, 2016, was 54.94, and the standard deviation was 8.12.

Objective 4: Comparison of secondary school teachers' perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender, educational qualifications and teaching experience.

Findings on the comparison of secondary school teachers' perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender, educational qualifications and teaching experience.

All null hypotheses have been tested at a 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance. The findings have been presented, analyzed, and discussed in this chapter in line with the study's objectives.

The results and discussion are presented in relation to the formulated null hypothesis and the study's objectives.

Findings on comparison of perception on rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among secondary school teachers with respect to their gender

H04a: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender

The significance of the difference in perceptions between male and female secondary school teachers in Mizoram is 1.79. Since this calculated t-value is lower than the critical value at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance, the difference is not significant, supporting the null hypothesis which states "There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female secondary school teachers in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016," cannot be rejected. The difference in the male and female mean scores is not statistically significant. Hence, a conclusion can be drawn that there is no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female teachers in Mizoram regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

Findings on comparison of perception on the Rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among secondary school teachers with respect to their educational qualification.

H04b: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their educational qualifications.

Among the educational qualifications of secondary school teachers in Mizoram, 64.15 per cent of Master + B.Ed. qualifications had average perception, while 61.36 per cent of Bachelors + B.Ed. had average perception, 61.54 per cent of Master degrees, and 70.59 per cent of Bachelor degrees had average perception on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. At the same time, 18.87 per cent of Master + B.Ed. had a positive perception, while 23.73 per cent of Bachelors + B.Ed., Master degrees had a perception of 23.08 per cent and 16.65 per cent of bachelors had a positive perception of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. This table also shows that 16.98 per cent of Master + B.Ed. had negative perceptions, while 15.91 per cent of Bachelors + B.Ed., 15.38 per cent of Master's degrees, and 11.76 per cent of bachelors had negative perceptions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

To assess statistical significance, a null hypothesis was formulated to counter the "There is no significant difference in the educational qualifications of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram". To test this null hypothesis, one way ANOVA was put to use.

The F value is 0.48 which less than the F critical value, it means that there is no statistically significant difference between secondary school teachers having different educational qualifications in their perception of the RPwD Act, 2016. This signifies that secondary school teachers in Mizoram had more or less the same perception regarding the Act. Thus, this study reveals that the educational qualifications of secondary school teachers in Mizoram did not influence/affect their perception of the RPwD Act, 2016.

Findings on the comparison of perception on the rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 among secondary school teachers with respect to their teaching experience.

H04c: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their teaching experience.

Regarding the teaching experience of secondary school teachers in Mizoram, 72.09 per cent of teachers having less than five years of teaching experience had average perception, while 16.28 per cent had a positive perception and 11.63 per cent had a negative perception on the RPwD act 2016. Among teachers experienced between 5-10 years, 60 per cent fall in the average range, 20 percent in the positive range, and 20 per cent in the negative range, respectively. In the teacher's experience between 11-15 years, 26.09 per cent had a positive perception, 52.17 per cent had an average perception, and 21.74 per cent had a negative perception of the Act. Among the teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience, 73.91 per cent had an average perception, 13.04 per cent had a positive perception, and 13.04 per cent had a negative perception of the RPwD Act, 2016.

The calculated F value is 0.47 which is less than the F critical value implies that there is no significant difference between teachers having more than 15 years of experience, having experience between 11 to 15 years, having experience between 5 to 10 years and having experience less than five years. This reveals that secondary school teachers in Mizoram, irrespective of their teaching experiences, had more or less the same perception regarding the RPwD Act, 2016 during the time this study was undertaken.

H05: There is no significant difference in the perceptions of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, based on their gender.

Objective 5: Comparison of perception of differently-abled secondary school students about rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 with respect to their gender

Findings on the comparison of perception of differently-abled secondary school students about rights of persons with disabilities act 2016 with respect to their gender

The t-value for the significance of the difference in perceptions between male and female secondary students in Mizoram is 1.31. Since this t-value is lower than the critical value at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance, the difference is not significant, supporting the null hypothesis which states, “There are no significant differences in the perception of male and female secondary students in Mizoram towards the rights of persons with disabilities act 2016” cannot be rejected. The difference between the mean scores of male and female students is not statistically significant. Consequently, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female students in Mizoram regarding the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Objective No. 6: Compare the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender

Findings on the comparison of the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender

The null hypothesis has been tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Results and discussion are being presented as per the framed null hypothesis in conjunction with this objective.

H06: There is no significant difference in the perception of parents of secondary schools in Mizoram towards the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, with respect to their gender.

The t-value for the significance of the difference in the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram is 1.12. As the calculated t-value is below the critical value at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance, the difference is not significant, and the null hypothesis asserts, “There is no significant difference in the perception of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram towards the rights of persons with disabilities act 2016” cannot be rejected. The difference in the mean scores between males and females is not statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the perceptions of parents of differently-abled secondary school students in Mizoram regarding the RPwD Act, 2016.

Objective 7: Viable mechanisms for effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, in secondary schools of Mizoram

Suggestions for stakeholders

1. An institution-based intervention programme will be helpful for those involved in the educational administration of differently-abled students; since little is known about the challenges they face; this could enable schools to take preventive action that impedes equality.
2. Making stakeholders aware of the significance of addressing the problems encountered by differently-abled students could be beneficial. As a result, they will be able to assist, mentor, and advise the differently-abled students in resolving their problems. The intervention programmes can help in adaptable techniques for each person’s well-being and support various student populations.
3. Funds provided for differently-abled students should be revised and increased. The competent authorities should organise block-wise orientation programmes for parents, municipal officials, and educational administrators annually. Training programmes such as environmental building programmes are to be conducted regularly with the motto of giving awareness to community-based NGOs and churches every year.

4. It is necessary to conduct identification and assessment camps regularly. The differently-abled students should be monitored by follow-up on the necessary assistive equipment provided.
5. Awareness, sensitisation programmes and so on should be organised at the school, community or district level to advocate for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
6. Competent authorities may resort to qualified sign language interpreters to help them communicate and infer the intricacies and problems. The Mizoram Board of School Education has been considering the usage of large print textbooks for the academic year 2023-2024. Studying sign language at a theological college is a great prospect that will lead to and will always help reduce barriers faced by people with disabilities.
7. No programme can run single-handedly, which in turn requires getting associated or getting along well with other organisations and agencies for the successful execution of its roles and functions. NGOs may be invited to collaborate in the ongoing process.
8. District-level committees should be formed and required to meet every three years to assess the progress of people with disabilities. Certified doctors should be trained to cater to each district. It has been proffered that a person with a disability must have a valid UDID to get desired benefits from the government. A medical evaluation camp should be arranged at the district level in cooperation with the health department.
9. To make the RPwD Act, 2016 instrumental, opportunities for fellowships, grants, allowances, and scholarships may be initiated. Allowances for girls, transportation and travel allowances, and escort allowances for differently-abled students should be allocated at the appropriate time.
10. For intellectual disability and mental retardation, teaching-learning materials should be provided regularly. Aids and appliances, such as reading glasses, high-quality hearing aids, crutches, wheelchairs and so on, may be sanctioned for differently-abled students.
11. It is advised that the state government provide accessible restrooms for differently abled students in every school to ensure that no student has

trouble using the restroom. Institutions should be infrastructural well-furnished, including ramps and user-friendliness of basic amenities, such as lavatories, sanitation facilities, and drinking water.

12. Both abled and differently-abled students should have access to appropriate teaching and learning resources, or the school must purchase these resources.
13. Every school should appoint at least one resource or special teacher to serve as the lead educator responsible for implementing inclusive education.

Suggestions for teachers

1. Headmasters ought to have more authority in areas pertaining to how the schools run, such as hiring new instructors for the institution, managing teacher transfers, and using government funding in any way they see fit.
2. Given the need that the majority of headmasters have identified, it is highly advised that all teachers receive inclusive education training.
3. Attend workshops that challenge preconceptions, foster a good attitude towards inclusion and provide an awareness of varied disabilities.
4. All teachers ought to participate in training to reduce barriers for differently-abled students. Teachers who are proactive and effective are essential in motivating students with disabilities to ask for assistance when they need it. There should be no discrimination among the students, and they should have a positive outlook towards their differently-abled classmates in different ways.
5. Teachers must be fully aware of the rights of the differently-abled students. Teachers have a responsibility to establish a barrier-free atmosphere. To accomplish inclusive education, they must continue to provide equitable opportunities for students with disabilities and those with normal students.
6. Infrastructural facilities for the inclusion of accessible playgrounds, science laboratories, libraries, reading centres, provision of textbooks, audiobooks, Braille books, e-books, disability-friendly lavatories, ramps, handrails, elevators and signage. In order to eliminate architectural barriers in schools,

it is imperative that existing ramps and railing be upgraded or renovated right away. In addition, schools lacking these amenities should start building new ramps and railings with the appropriate guidance and monitoring system.

7. For their studies, differently-abled students need access to resources, appliances and transportation; thus, teachers need to be mindful of the supplies. The student's enrolment and drop-out should be recorded carefully by the teachers. Careful planning of the curriculum at the beginning of the school session is necessary to ensure inclusive education.
8. Teachers should inculcate among the differently-abled students the desire to seek advice from experts, doctors, counsellors and government authorities regarding their disability, reservations and benefits for their education and job recruitment.
9. The government should sanction funds, scholarships, stipends, and allowances for the education of differently-abled students. Teachers must guide the students on the way to claim their benefits.
10. Identification and assessment camps organised by the government should be given priority.
11. There may be a more substantial parental involvement in the operations of the schools. Meetings between parents and instructors should be planned regularly.
12. The abilities of each individual student should be taken into consideration while designing the school's evaluation system.

Suggestions for differently-abled students

1. Differently-abled students must be aware of their rights and duties in order to claim their opportunity as the right to education.
2. Differently-abled students should make proper use of the resources provided in the school.
3. The differently-abled students themselves should know the funds, scholarships, stipends, and allowances sanctioned by the government

4. Differently-abled students must be aware of their reservations in the institution and job recruitment.
5. Identification and assessment camps should be given top priority.
6. Differently-abled students should not hesitate to consult experts, doctors, counsellors, and government authorities regarding their disability, reservations, and benefits.

Suggestions for parents

1. Parents of differently-abled students must be aware of the Rights and Acts of the differently-abled.
2. Parents must also be aware of the funds, scholarships, stipends, aids and appliances the differently-abled students are about to receive.
3. Parent involvement is crucial for the differently-abled. Parents should cooperate with the teachers, schools, community, and government for the betterment of their children.
4. Parents should regularly attend awareness programmes and sensitisation workshops to uplift their children.
5. Parents must know to consult experts in the area, counsellors, doctors, and Psychiatrists for their differently-abled children.

Educational Implications

1. The results of the study can be used by policy makers to develop regulations pertaining to RPwD Act 2016. Given the difficult topographical conditions of the states, certain special measures can be provided for other parts of India.
2. The findings of the study found that funds provided for the differently-abled students were few. The amount of money sanctioned for differently-abled students must be increased.
3. The study revealed that not much funding was available for differently-abled students. It is necessary to boost the funding authorized for differently-abled students.

4. Every school should appoint at least one resource or special teacher to serve as the lead educator responsible for implementing inclusive education.
5. Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) should be updated and furnished to provide services to the school. Teachers and headmasters need to be made aware of the services offered by these facilities.
6. Headmasters ought to have more authority in areas pertaining to how the schools run, such as hiring new instructors for the institution, managing teacher transfers, and using government funding in any way they see fit.
7. Improving the quality of differently-abled students in Mizoram is hampered by the non-rationalisation of teachers. The RPwD Act 2016 is challenging for many government schools to implement in practice due to shortage of teachers. As a result, it is imperative that teachers be rationalized.
8. The results show that students, teachers and parents were not well-informed on the RPwD Act 2016, despite the fact that these individuals- especially those who have disability in their lives- need to be motivated to pursue their academic goals and given the right advice.

Conclusion

In light of the above qualitative and quantitative analysis, the results of the findings establish the perception and impact of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 among the secondary school teachers, differently-abled secondary school students, parents of differently-abled secondary school students, stakeholders such as Headmasters, District Education Officers, Director of School Education and State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, should be well aware of every citizen in India especially the differently-abled including parents, teachers, social leaders, educational officials, government officials to solve various issues in different situation. The Act provides the right which is beneficial for the differently-abled in education, job opportunities, security measures, financial assistance etc. The researcher found that teachers, students, and parents of Mizoram have an average perception on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. No significant difference was found among the male and female teachers, with regards to their educational qualification and teaching experience. At the same time, no significant difference was found among the male and female differently-abled students and among the parents of differently-abled secondary school students. Implementing more effective and efficient measures towards the successful transition of differently-abled students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders to new geographical and institutional setups will significantly impact these recommendations and suggestions, which, if considered and implemented, could further enhance the current findings.

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