SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR READINESS FOR INCLUSION

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September 2021

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **"School Administrators' Knowledge of the Rights of Children with Disabilities and their Readiness for Inclusion"** is a bonafide work submitted in part fulfillment for the degree of Masters in Science (Speech-Language Pathology) of the student Registration Number: 19SLP021. This has been carried out under the guidance of the faculty of this institute and has not been submitted earlier to any other University for the award of any other Diploma or Degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **"School Administrators' Knowledge of the Rights of Children with Disabilities and their Readiness for Inclusion"** has been prepared under my supervision and guidance. It is also certified that this dissertation has not been submitted earlier to any other University for the award of any other Diploma or Degree.

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled "**School Administrators' Knowledge of the Rights of Children with Disabilities and their Readiness for Inclusion**" is the result of my own study under the guidance of Dr. Anjana B Ram, Assistant Professor in Speech Pathology, Department of Speech Language Pathology, All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysuru and has not been submitted earlier to any other University for the award of any other Diploma or Degree.

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I will tell of all your wonderful deeds."
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Speech-language pathologists (SLP) play a vital role in preventing, assessing, managing, and rehabilitating a wide range of speech, language, and communication disorders of varying nature. One of the many roles and responsibilities of a speech-language pathologist is to advocate for children with disabilities (American Speech and Hearing Association, 2008). The 38th General Council of Rehabilitation Council of India (2015) approved role of Audiologists and SLPs in advocacy for rights / funding of services; more specifically to the educators since they are "members of interdisciplinary team about Individualized Education Program, communication management, education implications of communication disorders, hearing loss and auditory dysfunctions, educational programming, classroom acoustics, and large-area amplification systems for children with hearing loss and other auditory dysfunction;"

Education is a basic human right that provides a sense of stability, contributes to independence, and also financial security in the long run. The evidence of efforts taken by the Government of India to promote inclusive education can be traced back to 1974. The scheme of Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) was implemented by the central government in select blocks of the country for the first time (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013).

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWD), under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, and the Ministry of Education have proffered multiple legislative policies, acts and schemes in favor of inclusion of PWDs, improved accessibility to education, and overall improvement in quality of education services available for PWDs.

The schemes, acts, and policies have been implemented to eradicate any financial, social, and physical barriers to education. Knowledge of relevant educational rights is necessary to most efficiently advice, make recommendations, or suggest inclusive strategies to children with disabilities in an educational set-up.

Relevance of a school administrator

Based on interviews with inclusive educators, administrative support was one of the six best practices that helped achieve increased collaboration and responsiveness from high schoolers in school (Villa et al., 2005). School administrators are the primary decision makers in the school. They manage the curriculum for all the students, organize training programs for the teachers to keep up with the advances in teaching strategies, promote environmental and curriculum adaptations, inspect classroom management methods, and assign academic roles to the teachers (Washington, 2010).

MacKenzie et al. (2008) postulated that educational leaders for social justice must aim to raise the academic achievement of all students, prepare the students for critical participation in society by providing an inclusive, heterogeneous classroom with access to a rich and engaging curriculum for all the students. The level of implementation of inclusion friendly practices was markedly varying amongst the schools that were recognized as inclusive. It was the magnitude of administrative support and commitment that had a direct impact on the number of students with disabilities receiving education in the school.

Thus, it is important that the school administrators are mindful of the intellectual and physical differences of every child. An inclusive educational setup would comprise students from different cultures, socioeconomic statuses, and home environments having mixed academic, social/emotional, and behavioral needs.

A school administrator can take the necessary steps required to equip the teachers intellectually and socio-emotionally to provide services that satisfy the needs of a diverse group of students. In doing so, the school administrators face multiple challenges. Shortage of staff, poor teaching staff turnover, negative attitude of the teaching staff towards inclusion, the changing roles and responsibilities of staff, shortage or poor time management skills, inability to meet the individual needs of every student, incompetence of the staff and/or administrator in ensuring knowledge/skills of the teachers, ensuring that all students learn; along with lack of resources to meet the complex needs of students, inability to meet and communicate with the parents regularly are some of these challenges (Salisbury, 2006).

School principals report they sometimes feel incompetent to offer the necessary support and supervision special education teachers require. There is a lack of resources, low level of awareness of specific needs, inability to manage multiple responsibilities and non-cooperative behavior of the parents of children with disabilities (CWDs) (especially illiterate) that hinders the teachers' ability to provide efficient inclusive education (Aljabri, 2017; Alnasser, 2019).

Researchers have also documented an urgent need to address teachers' apprehensions towards inclusive education for children with disabilities in India (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Das et al., 2013). When working with CWDs, self-perceived competence of most regular school teachers was limited or low, with moderate levels of concerns regarding inclusive education. 70-95% of the teachers reported to have received no training for special education (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Das et al., 2012).

Most if not all of these challenges can be tackled through education of school administrators about the needs, importance and methods of implementation of inclusive

education. Sharma and Desai (2002) compared the concerns about integrated education in classroom teachers and principals in India. The school principals were significantly more concerned about the resources, acceptance, academic standards and workload involved in implementation of integrated education. This indicates that education programs on inclusive education could be better accepted by the principals thus, potentially better efficacy.

Educating school administrators will also guarantee some amount of impact on all the teachers/educators and students under their influence (Heckert. 2009; Robinson et al., 2008; Rowe, 2007). Deprivation of knowledge of inclusive education will keep schools from providing diverse education facilities accessible to all students regardless of their age, gender, religion, caste and needs. Alnasser (2019) asserted the need to reevaluate principal preparation programs so as to better prepare future principals to support all students, including those with disabilities.

Readiness of educators for inclusion

Fazal (2012) found that all of the educators in her study held a positive approach towards inclusive education even though poor training of most teachers and school administrators along with deficit in understanding disabilities and associated special needs was evident. She concluded that if there is proper implementation of policy(ies) resulting in availability of "trained teachers, average strength classes, adequate resources including aids, equipment and support staff, it would be more beneficial for both children with or without disability."

In an interview with pre-service teachers in Pune, participants with relatively lower level of education displayed negative attitudes and a moderate degree of concern regarding

students with disabilities in their classes. Pre-service teachers with lower degree of concerns were more confident about their teaching skills in an inclusive setup (Sharma et al., 2009).

Need for the study

School administrators ensure smooth functioning of schools and manage the staff (teaching and non-teaching), and parents. As per the role and responsibilities of a school leader, they must be "proactive in developing and implementing a plan to ensure that all staff develops culturally responsive practices needed to work with diverse students and their families" (Kozleski et al., 2003). They are a liable source of communication for professionals, caregivers and the society regarding special education issues (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). School leaders should be encouraged to provide staff and parents with evidence-based training from time to time on how to collaborate and create non-threatening social activities together (Lethole, 2017).

Ugwu and Onukwufor (2018) highlighted the need to improve the principal's skills and knowledge on the needs of people with exceptionality. At present, there are only a few studies and articles that address principals' instructional leadership practice regarding special education programs (Bays & Crockett, 2007; Jones 2006). It is possible for the school leaders to set expectations and provide opportunities for the teachers to learn how to work with CWDs (Scherer 2003).

In India, there is a decent amount of research done for teachers about knowledge and perspectives but the school administrator's knowledge about the rights of CWDs and readiness for inclusion has not been studied. Through this study, the present need for education and orientation programs for school administrators was explored and possible steps to be taken in the future are suggested.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To assess the school administrators' knowledge of educational rights of children with disabilities (CWDs) and their readiness to inclusion.

Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the awareness and knowledge of educational rights of children with disability amongst the school administrators across India.

2. To investigate the present status of school administrator's readiness for inclusion of children with disability in India.

3. To check for association between knowledge of rights of children with disabilities and school administrators' readiness to inclusion, if any.

Hypotheses of the study

H_o1 There is no significant awareness and knowledge of rights of children with disability amongst the school administrators in India.

H_o2 There is no significant readiness for inclusion of children with disabilities in school administrators in India.

H_o3 There is no significant association between knowledge of rights of children with disability and readiness to inclusion amongst the school administrators across India.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

"Education (is) ... imparting or acquisition of knowledge; mental or moral training; cultivation of the mind, feelings and manners."- Justice Manton of the US Court of Appeals (1941). Education is a process of teaching, training, and learning, particularly in schools, colleges, and universities, to enhance knowledge and develop skills (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2020)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 has not only acknowledged but also guaranteed education as a human right. Since then, several international and national regulatory agencies have recommended a set of standard rules and guidelines to reaffirm and guarantee these rights legally for all citizens regardless of their nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. The educational rights of specific socioeconomically disadvantaged groups have been reiterated in multiple other accords. However, not all of these policies and recommendations are legally binding.

The United Nations (UN), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and International Labor Organization (ILO) are internationally recognized organizations that have issued declarations, conventions, recommendations, and policies focusing on educational rights.

"Inclusion" is a contentious term that essentially means to include disabled and non-disabled students in all aspects of education, from the same classes to the same social activities and support organizations. There exist associated terminologies, instructional methods, and legal obligations. Disabilities and related stereotypes, beliefs, bad attitudes, and inappropriate actions, are a significant impediment to children's successful education and

integration. Thus, educational rights primarily concentrate on four key components, i.e. Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability to promote inclusion as cooperative, inclusive classrooms address the social and intellectual requirements of all students by providing supportive learning environments (Peters, 1999). These components are defined by Tomaševski (2001) as represented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Four key components of educational rights

Availability	Proper infrastructure (buildings, classrooms, and playgrounds), safe drinking water and sanitation facilities for both sexes, qualified teachers with fair pay and teaching resources
Accessibility	Non-discriminatory, geographically well-distributed setting with affordable educational services for all citizens including the socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (i.e., Persons with disabilities, scheduled castes and tribes, etc.)
Acceptability	Well planned and implemented to provide culturally appropriate, relevant, and good quality educational services
Adaptability	The teaching facilities and resources must be easy to transform considering the dynamic nature of the needs of children with disabilities (CWD) in the society and the inherent socio-cultural diversity

Adapted from: Tomaševski, K. (2001). *Human rights obligations: making education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable*. Right to education primers no. 3.

"No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind."- The Incheon Declaration, 2015. The International agencies have been attempting to make recommendations and formulating specific standards to protect and ensure the educational rights of children with disabilities (CWD) as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

International Obligations towards Right of Children with Disabilities

United Nations	2009 World Conference on Higher Education: The New Dynamics on Higher Education and Research For Societal Change and Development, Communiqué (08.07.2009)
	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (13.12.2006), Article 24
	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (13.12.2006), Article 8 b)/ Article 2
	Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education (2.11.2001)
	The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (20.12.1993)
	Convention on the Rights of the Child (20.11.1989), Article 28
	Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (10.11.1989), Article 1
	Declaration on the right to education (04.12.1986), Article 8
	Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (20.12.1971)

Table 2.2 *(continued.)*

	Declaration on Social Progress and Development (11.12.1969) Part II: Objectives, Article 10
	Declaration on Social Progress and Development (11.12.1969) Part III: Means and Methods, Article 19
	Declaration on Social Progress and Development (11.12.1969) Part III: Means and Methods, Article 21
	Declaration of the Rights of the Child (20.11.1959), Principle 7
	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10.12.1948), Article 26 (1)
UNESCO	Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015)
	Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (2015)
	Dakar Framework for Action – Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitment (2000)
	Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning (1997)
	Recommendation concerning the status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (1997)
	Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)
	Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education (1993)
	Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental

Table 2.2 *(continued.)*

	Freedoms (1974)
	ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966)
	Convention against Discrimination in Education (14.12.1960), Article 3
	Convention against Discrimination in Education (14.12.1960), Article 4
	Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (14.12.1960)
	Convention against Discrimination in Education (14.12.1960), Article 1, Article 2 (c), Article 3
ILO	Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (21.05.2015)
	Dakar Framework for Action – Education For All: Meeting our Collective Commitments (28.04.2000)
	Convention 159 Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons, (20.06.1983)

Adapted from: International law. (2021). Retrieved 25 August 2021, from https://www.right-to-education.org/page/international-law; Oidel. (2017). *Code of International Education Law 2017* [Ebook] (1st ed.). Geneva. Retrieved from https://www.oidel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/codeofinternationaleducationlaw_2017_corpus2_web.pdf

Evolution of Educational Rights in India

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 introduced Article 21-A into the Indian Constitution, making it a Fundamental Right to offer free and compulsory education to all children aged six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may specify by legislation. Over the years, the Indian Constitution addressed the principle of "equality of

educational opportunity" and the attainment of social justice through a "positive discrimination" strategy. Education policies in independent India have been heavily impacted by the Education Commissions established from time to time (Sripati & Thiruvengadam, 2004).

Multiple legislative policies, acts, and schemes have been proposed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment of India's Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and the Ministry of Education in support of PWD inclusion, improved access to education, and overall improvement in the quality of education services available to PWD.

After independence in India, education became the responsibility of both the state and the federal governments. The Constitution recognized that a well-educated electorate is critical to a country's stability and advancement on a democratic path. Under the chairmanship of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, the Secondary Education Commission in 1953 presented its findings on educational issues to the government and also recommended beneficial and realistic suggestions such as the establishment of multipurpose high schools, having a uniform curriculum throughout the country, etc. to improve efficiency in the educational sector. These recommendations have had a considerable impact on the development of secondary education in independent India as it was followed by the appointment of the Indian Education Commission under the chairmanship of D. S. Kothari. Kothari Commission (1964) believed that "the destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms" (Report of the Education Commission 1964-66. Vol. 1). Education, according to them, was potentially a vital tool for social, economic, and political transformation, and educational goals were linked to long-term national goals. They even stated that education

was the only tool available to create a change without a violent revolution. As per the observations made, the Indian education system was evidently in need of a complete transformation primarily in three areas, i.e., a) internal transformation, b) qualitative enhancement, and c) educational facility expansion. All the amendments made by the Government of India after that were aimed towards the same goal with necessary modifications in accordance with the country's shifting socioeconomic requirements (Manjunatha, 2020). The steps taken by the Government of India over the last 25 years are mentioned in Table 2.3.

Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (CWD) in India

Table 2.3

Chronological list of central acts pertaining to education in the last 25 years

National Education Policy (NEP)	2020
National Education Mission/ Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA)	2018
2016	
Right to Education Act (RTE)	2012
Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme (RMSAS)	2009
National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (NPPD)	2006
Action Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (APIECYD)	2005
Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA)	2001
The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act (NTAct)	1999
Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and	1995

Table 2.3 *(continued.)*

Full Participation) Act (PWD)

Adapted from: List of Central Acts Alphabetical / Chronological |Legislative Department | Ministry of Law and Justice | GoI. (2021). Retrieved 25 August 2021, from https://legislative.gov.in/documents/list-of-central-acts

Over the last few decades, attention towards education of CWD has escalated presumably due to the rising significance of issues related to disability globally and its changing discourse at the national level. Another explanation could be a resultant ''spill-over effect'' of growing international commitment towards education in general (Singal, 2016).

The objectives and provisions passed by the Government of India for CWD can also be categorized according to the four key components- Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, and Adaptability, as shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4

Component wise distribution of provisions made by the central acts for CWDs

Availability	Accessibility	Acceptability	Adaptability
Standards for infrastructure norms, minimum teacher qualifications, pupil-teacher ratio and curriculum.	Inclusion and effective access to education, health, vocational training along with specialized rehabilitation services to CWD.	Recognition of right to development as well as recognition of special needs and of care, and protection of children with severe disabilities.	Ensuring right to development with dignity and equality creating an enabling environment where children can exercise their rights, enjoy equal opportunities and full participation in accordance with various statutes.
Opportunities for sports and recreation activities.	Free and compulsory education to all children with disabilities up to the minimum age of 18 years.	Right to care, protection and security for children with disabilities.	Barrier-free environment.
Adequate number of teacher training institutions and other	Zero tolerance against discrimination and harassment.	Transportation facilities for CWD and their attendants.	Accessible building, campus, and other facilities.

Table 2.4 *(continued.)*

resource centers.

Training and employment of qualified teachers (i.e., for sign language and braille and special educators).	Provisions of textbooks, uniforms, stationery items, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities free of cost up to the age of eighteen years.	Survey of school going children in every five years.	Individualized or environmental supports that maximize academic and social development.
Monitoring compliance of RTE norms.	Inclusive spaces for all (RTE Act, 2009): All schools (including private sectors) to reserve 25 percent of their seats for children belonging to socially disadvantaged and economically weaker sections.	Training programs for staff and support staffs.	Education to persons who are blind or deaf or both in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication;

Table 2.4 *(continued.)*

	Scholarships in appropriate cases to students with benchmark disability.	Use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes.
	Promoting research to improve learning.	Suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
	For an out of school child admission to an age appropriate class and special training to enable the child to come up to age appropriate learning level.	Conducting part-time classes for CWD.
	Funds for interventions aided schools and higher secondary segments	Conducting class and discussions through interactive electronic or other media.

Table 2.4 *(continued.)*

	(Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme, 2009).	
	Learning aids and tools, mobility assistance, support services etc.	Suitable modification in the examination system.
	100% financial assistance for various facilities like special teachers, books and stationery, uniform, transport, readers allowance for the visually handicapped, hostel allowance, equipment cost, removal/ modification of architectural barriers, financial assistance for purchase/ production of instructional material, training of general teachers and	Only one language as part of their curriculum.

Table 2.4 *(continued.)*

equipment for resource rooms (IEDC
Scheme).

Note. Adapted from: Mishra, A. (2021). Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) in India - A Statistical Profile: 2021 [Ebook] (1st ed.).

New Delhi: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation National Statistical Office Social Statistics Division, Government

of India. Retrieved from http://www.nhfdc.nic.in/upload/nhfdc/Persons_Disabilities_31mar21.pdf

Currently, the rapid expansion of educational institutions at all levels, particularly in the private sector, has provided a severe challenge to educational planners and policymakers. The failure of our education strategies to address the socioeconomic inequities and cultural diversity despite having many state and central government based support services and schemes calls for more action towards improving the efficiency of educational services.

Despite these efforts, CWD remain the most marginalized in the educational system. A large percentage of the 'out of school' (i.e., not enrolled in school) population is made up of CWD. They are also more likely to be denied enrollment into various education programs. Even compared to other marginalized groups, evidence suggests that children with disabilities have the lowest school completion rates (Singal, 2016).

Factors Influencing the Accessibility of Educational Facilities

Limaye (2016) identified several elements influencing educational service delivery towards CWD, such as parents, teachers, school, community and government. Parents' attitude about education and disability, a lack of knowledge about facilities, and a lack of knowledge about disability certificates are parent-related factors that prevent students from being included in school. According to the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009), all private, government, and municipal schools must reserve and accept 25% of the seats to socioeconomically disadvantaged candidates, and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA, 2001) has provisions for admitting and training children who have never been enrolled in school before. However, when it comes to deciding whether or not to enroll their child, parents rely on professional advice (i.e. from medical and rehabilitation professionals) and the availability of a suitable school near their home. Accessibility was also brought up as another primary

concern. Therefore, despite seemingly necessary legal measures in place, CWD are still struggling to access a proper education system.

Traditionally, schools for disabled children have been segregated institutions for people with visual, hearing, and intellectual problems. Special schools are mostly found in major towns. In rural, especially remote places, such institutions are scarce. In many situations, special school students with disabilities were less adept in fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. They had lower expectations of their abilities and lacked social confidence. As a result, parents were discouraged from enrolling their children with disabilities in school, believing that it was pointless.

Many parents are ignorant of the benefits of the use of assistive devices, and schools are unable to explain the significance of use of aids and appliances, and how to use them for the benefit of the child. Furthermore, because rehabilitative services are concentrated in urban regions, some parents may find it challenging to access these services. There is a lack of knowledge about the possible compensation or monetary provisions for free aids and equipment programmes based on their annual income. When put to practice, poor outcome measures have also been reported after the use of assistive devices.

In regular schools, unfavourable attitude towards CWD by discriminating, ignoring, bullying, labelling, verbally abusing, and so on has been reported. The negative consequences have a long-term impact on the child's life. As a result, many parents withdraw their children from school. There are very few regular schools that try to understand and meet the unique requirements of CWD, which would encourage the CWD and parent to continue schooling.

Lack of training and motivation, social access, school-related obstacles, and a scarcity of special teachers impede inclusion. Educator-related challenges include the inability to update information from time to time, preconceived conceptions about CWD, personal constraints, ignoring/neglecting CWD because they fail to keep up, and a dearth of educated, resourceful teachers in remote/rural areas.

Finally, poor implementation of policies/acts/provisions due to a lack of interest at the state level, inability to release predetermined funds due to incompetent team members and a lack of collaborative work ethic between departments, failure to differentiate services based on the extent of support needs, and inability to transition from special school curriculum to general school curriculum are implementation-related factors hindering inclusive practices. Research from around the world over the last three decades reveals that successful implementation of inclusion requires both financial resources and qualified staff in addition to all other factors stated (Avramidis et al., 2007; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Forlin, 2004). Thus, lack of economic and other resources required for inclusive education as well as a shortage of skilled teachers, maybe the best explanation for the gap between policy and reality (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013; Das et al., 2013).

Role and relevance of school administrators in creating an inclusive setting

The principal's role as a change facilitator for their schools is critical to successful school reform (Hall & Hord, 1987). According to Hord (1992), change is a process that takes time, energy, and resources to support; change must start with individuals and then spread to institutions. Principals must first make a personal commitment to inclusion by understanding the intended goals and the primary implications for CWD for it to be effective and sustainable in schools. The principal's facilitative leadership has a direct impact on the level

and success of inclusion; it is a crucial factor to consider when developing educational leadership training programmes and aids in the development of best practices for inclusion (Goley, 2013).

In a successful inclusive school setting, the involvement of the principal and teachers has been reported to be critical in organizational facilitation. According to Bhatnagar and Das (2014) they are able to build an excellent inclusion programme when all of the instructors and administrators were supportive of CWD and collaborated. The administration and parents are both accountable for a school's effective inclusionary practices, but management deserves much credit for deciding to implement inclusion in the first place. When teachers were asked to identify facilitators of inclusive education in their schools, three key areas emerged: (a) infrastructure and organizational, (b) policy changes, and (c) institutional resources. Principals are at a disadvantage when joining the increasingly diverse and complex world of school administration without complete information on the three key areas that emerged.

The relative lack of knowledge about inclusive education and its relevance to school development and change among principals is a source of concern. It is not known how much evidence-based material on inclusive education is available to aspiring principals in higher education. School administrators have themselves agreed that their team of educators needed greater knowledge and training to effectively accommodate all CWD in regular schools (Salisbury, 2006).

In case of primary school principals' attitudes toward inclusion, elements like training and experience, as well as placement perceptions were explored. Praisner (2003) found that about one out of every five principals has a good attitude toward inclusiveness, while the

majority was unsure. Positive interactions with disabled children and knowledge of special education subjects are linked to a more positive attitude toward inclusion. Principals with more favourable attitudes and/or experiences are also more likely to place pupils in less restricted environments. Between impairment groups, there were differences in placement and experiences. The findings highlight the necessity of inclusive approaches that provide principals with positive experiences with students with all sorts of disabilities, as well as additional specific training for principals.

Impact of Personal Values and Attitude on Inclusion

Individual attitudes impact on how people treat children, whether or not children's rights and welfare are prioritized. A culture of how children are regarded and treated is shaped by the attitudes prevalent in a society. Students in inclusive classes have a more positive attitude toward disabled individuals (Szumski, 2020). 300 Indian parents and teachers' attitudes and knowledge of children's rights and their assessments of whether certain rights were protected, were studied. According to the findings, the majority of parents and instructors had positive opinions toward children's rights, such as the rights to health and education, as well as the freedom from child marriage and unsuitable jobs. However, nearly 1/4th of the participants disagreed that children should have the right to free expression and association. Laws promoting children's rights were poorly understood. In Indian scenario, most parents and teachers observe a violation of the seven basic rights- the right to equality, right to freedom, right against exploitation, right to freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, right to property and right to constitutional remedies. Overall, the findings imply a need to raise understanding of children's rights and needs, which could improve

attitudes toward how children are treated. Efforts to raise understanding and attitudes about children's rights are needed across society and in critical sectors.

Teachers generally regarded adaptations related with inclusion as desirable, but found them to be much less feasible to implement (Das et al., 2013; Gaad & Khan, 2007; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991). Their views on inclusive education had nothing to do with their conservational ideals (Anderson & Keith, 1997). These findings offer a new framework for understanding teachers' attitudes and new avenues for teacher training to improve the implementation of inclusive school policy.

In their interview-based study, Bhatnagar & Das (2014) noted that one of the teachers mentioned the importance of having a strong policy in place for inclusive education to succeed, and the fact that teachers are hesitant to promote inclusion. Their fear may stem from a lack of preparation and resources for inclusion, and perception of working with autistic and behaviorally challenged students. They also expressed reservations about CWD progressing academically and socially in an inclusive setting.

Teachers perceive additional training, support from administrators, and access to related services and resources as necessary in order to meet the needs of their students with special educational needs in the mainstream education setting (Gaad & Khan, 2007).

Schools with more administrative assistance and dedication reported serving more CWD in regular schools for a more extended period, including those with high support needs. When labelled inclusive, schools differed significantly in their implementation, and that level of implementation was not a representation of the index of inclusivity or a measure of programme quality (Salisbury, 2006).

Zimmerman (2011) claimed that school administrators must determine their readiness for change before undertaking the complex process of changing school policies. Moreover, "principals who expect teachers to take risks in learning and practicing new behaviors should demonstrate their openness to change". Administrators can determine their current level of effective qualities and behaviors, and identify unproductive behaviors that negatively impact their own personal beliefs, values, and preferences about inclusion.

Cook et al. (1999) found that principals and teachers held significant difference of opinion regarding inclusion in regular classes. Education programmes involving the school administrators would be prudent as it would have a domino effect on implementation of services in school, and in fostering inclusion friendly attitudes among the typical developing children, their parents, and society at large and studying school leaders' knowledge and attitudes about inclusion will offer insight into what policymakers and practitioners can do to support school leadership, teacher development, and educational change (Hallinger et al., 2017)

CHAPTER 3

Method

The primary aim of this study was to assess the school administrators' knowledge of educational rights of children with disabilities (CWDs) and their readiness to inclusion.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To investigate the knowledge of educational rights of children with disability amongst the school administrators across India.

2. To investigate the present status of school administrator's readiness for inclusion of children with disability in India.

3. To check for association between knowledge of rights of children with disabilities and school administrators' readiness to inclusion, if any.

Research Method/Design: The study followed a explorative survey type of research design conducted through an online mode

Principles of the study

The survey was carried out while adhering to the AIISH ethical committee guidelines for Bio-behavioral Sciences for human subjects (AEC, 2009):

Phase 1: Development of the survey tool

Phase 2: Validation of the tool

Phase 3: Administration of the survey

Participants

Participation selection criteria:

1. School administrators (i.e., Principal, Head Master, Academic Supervisors, Head of Department, etc.).

2. At least 1 year of experience as a school administrator in India.

The data received was divided into geographical zones based on the following classification.

- North: Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan.

- West: Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu.

- South: Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Tamil Nadu, Telangana,

- East: Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Puducherry, West Bengal.

- Central: Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand.

- Northeast: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura.

Survey questionnaire:

Phase 1: Development of the survey tool

The survey tool was developed after referencing the legislature of the relevant policies and acts in India i.e., National Education Policy (2020), The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Right to Education Act (2012), National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006), Action Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and youth with Disabilities (2005), Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act (1995), The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act (1999) and Rehabilitation

Council of India Act (1992) and scales previously developed for assessment of readiness for inclusion in teachers.

The survey tool consisted of 4 sections, namely:

  I.   Demographic details

 II.   Knowledge of the Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities (Mark 'TRUE' or 'FALSE')

III.   Readiness for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

        Part 1: Check "AGREE" or "DISAGREE"

        Part 2: Indicate how likely are you to?

Section II consisted of 15 questions investigating the knowledge of rights of children with disability in India. These questions were based on the central acts since the last 25 years and their corresponding provisions in practice.

Section III included questions reflecting attitudes and beliefs of each participant towards inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. Part 1 were items that reflect the respondents personal beliefs about inclusionary practices in terms of enrollment of CWD, effects of inclusionary practices, execution of inclusion friendly services and quality of service delivery. Part 2 required the school administrators to rate the likelihood of them implementing adaptive measures to promote inclusion. All the items in Section III: Part 2 was various types of adaptations recognized and guaranteed by central acts for education of CWD.

Item pools for each section were created. Relevant items were preserved while redundant ones were eliminated for all the sections based on the objective of every section.

Items under section II and III were closed ended questions with probable 'true/false', 'agree/disagree' and 'not likely/likely/very likely' responses, respectively.

Phase 2: Validation of the tool

The prepared item pool was given to one speech language pathologist, one psychologist and one social worker with over five years of professional experience for validation.

The validators were asked to check for simplicity, appropriateness and relevance of each item for the objective of the study. The item pool was modified based on the feedback and suggestions received from the judges.

The finalized tool was then circulated for data collection.

Phase 3: Administration of the survey

The finalized survey tool was converted into a Google form for ease of access to the participants. The participants were accessed through personal contacts, social media and national/state school associations via email and phone call.

Phase 4: Scoring & Analysis

- Overall frequency and percentage of responses for all sections were obtained.

- For Section II: +1 for each correct response

- For Section III: Part 1 Inclusion Support Score was obtained by scoring +1 for all inclusion friendly responses.

- For Section III: Part 2 Responses that reflected refusal to enhance service delivery through modifications were considered non-inclusionary responses.

- For the purpose of test of association, each respondent was categorized based on his/her knowledge and readiness into groups for analysis. Table 2.1 shows the criteria

for categorization of participants into "knowledgeable vs. non-knowledgeable", and "inclusive vs. non-inclusive".

Table 3.1

Eligibility criteria to qualify as knowledgeable and inclusion friendly

Knowledgeable	>70% or 11/15 correct score in Section I
Inclusion friendly	Not >1 item in Section III: Part 2 rated as Unlikely

These findings were used to test association between knowledge of educational rights, and readiness for inclusion. A non-parametric test had to be employed as data did not follow normal distribution. Fisher's exact test was done as two nominal values of a small sample size had to be analyzed. Statistical Analysis was carried out using SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 21.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA).

The following descriptive and inferential statistics were done:

1. Descriptive statistics in form of frequency, mean and percentage of responses for all sections.

2. Comparison of knowledge of the educational rights of children with disabilities and readiness to inclusion

CHAPTER 4
Results

The study primarily aims to assess the school administrators' knowledge of educational rights of children with disabilities (CWDs) and their readiness to inclusion. The objectives of the study are to investigate knowledge of educational rights of children with disability, and readiness for inclusion amongst the school administrators across India and to check for association between knowledge of rights of children with disabilities and school administrators' readiness to inclusion. The survey included 50 school administrators of 42 regular English medium schools in India obtained through voluntary consent to participate in the study. Figure 4.1 represents geographical distribution of the respondents across the country.

Figure 4.1

Zone wise representation of the participants
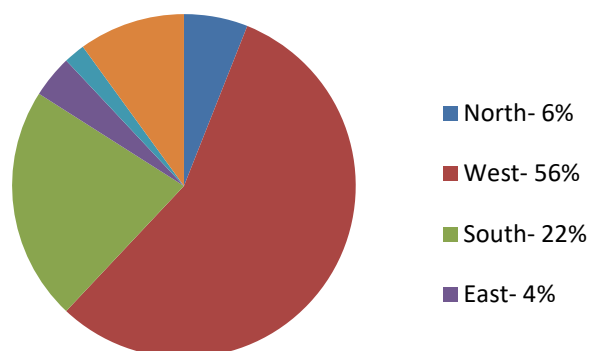
Majority of the participants (56%) were from the west zone. Zone-wise comparison of the data could not be done as there were not enough participants within each group. Because the schools were closed, getting in touch with school administration for the purpose of this study was difficult. Thus, personal contacts, social media pages, and national/state based school associations were contacted. The participation to reach ratio for this study was

much lower than expected. Table 4.1 shows the demographic details of the respondents that were included in the survey.

Table 4.1

Demographic details of the participants

	n	%
Total number of participants	50	
Highest education qualification		
Diploma	1	2
Graduate	5	10
Post Graduate	39	78
Doctor of Philosophy	5	10
Years of experience		
Less than 3	5	10
3 - 5 years	7	14
5 - 10 years	7	14
Greater than 10 years	31	62
Are you a Person with disability?	2	1
Are you related to a Person with disability?	9	18
Do you know a Person with disability?	25	50
Is your school funded by the Government of India?		
No	46	92

Table 4.1 *(continued.)*

Yes	3	6
Partially funded	1	2
Is your school recognized by the Government of India?	45	90
Does your school enroll Children with Disabilities?		
Pre-school (Nursery- UKG)	29	58
Primary school (1st- 7th std)	34	68
High school (8th- 10th std)	33	66
How many Children with Disabilities are enrolled in your school?		
None	18	36
Less than 5	13	26
>5 but less than 10	9	18
More than 10	9	18
I don't know	1	2

The results of the current study are elucidated under the following sections:

4.1 School administrators' knowledge of disabilities and educational rights of children with disabilities (CWD).

4.2 School administrators' perception of inclusionary services.

4.3 School administrators' readiness to implement adaptations to promote inclusion.

4.4 Association between knowledge of educational rights and readiness to inclusion.

4.1 School administrators' knowledge of disabilities and educational rights of children with disabilities (CWD).

As shown in Figure 4.2, the Right to Education Act (2012) and National Education Policy (2020) were found to be the most familiar acts/policies amongst the participants. The educational acts/policies implemented in the last decade were known to higher number of participants when compared to those from before 2010. However, there were still a noteworthy number of school administrators who were not familiarized with the educational and/or disability related laws.

Figure 4.2

Percentage of school administrators' that reported familiarity of acts/policies in India

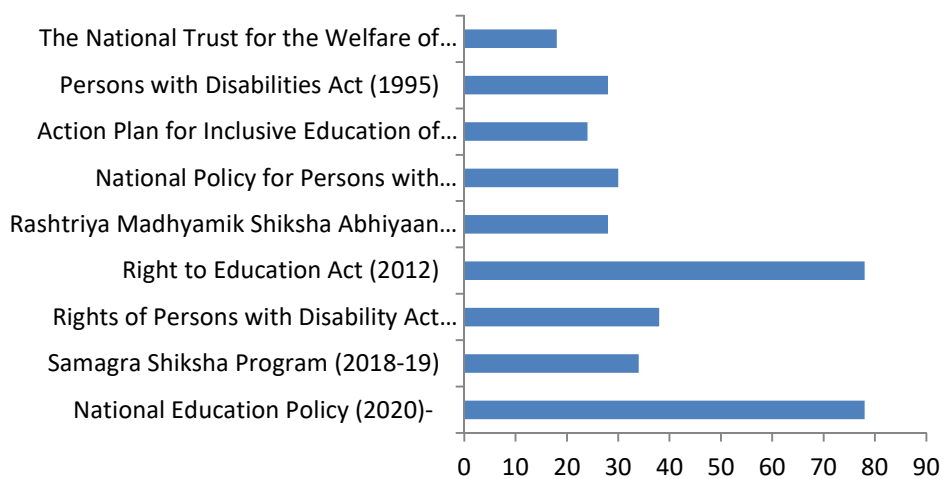Figure 4.3 depicts the reported familiarity of all disorders listed in the questionnaire. Specific Learning Disability, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, and Blindness & Low Vision were the most familiar disabilities marked by only 52-56% of the participants. Physically limiting disorders (i.e., Muscular dystrophy & Cerebral Palsy) were the least familiar amongst the school administrators included in this study.

Figure 4.3

Percentage of school administrators' reported familiarity of disabilities
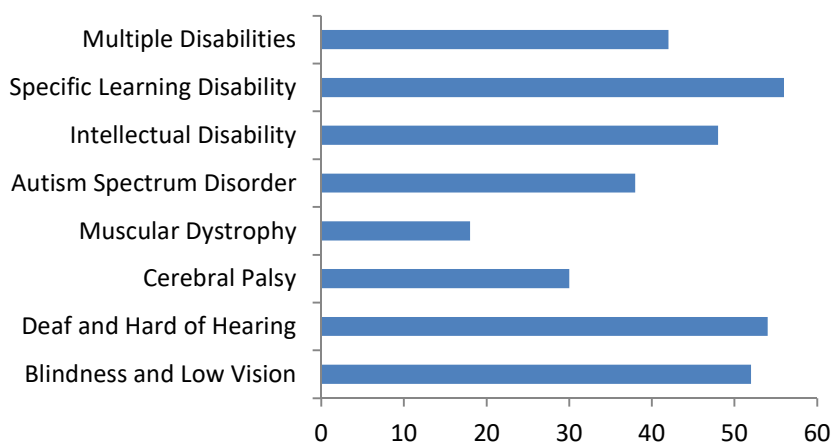
Section II of the questionnaire consisted of knowledge based closed ended questions where the participants were asked to answer with "True" or "False". Each correct response was scored +1. The test items were grouped based on key components of central policies advocating for CWD in India i.e., Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability. As seen in Table 4.2, based on the mean of correct scores, the participants were seemingly more aware of provisions made to improve educational service availability and acceptance of the necessity to give good quality relevant services to CWD as compared to accessibility and adaptability component of the acts.

Table 4.2

Percentage correct scores for knowledge of rights of children with disability in India

	Item no.	% Correct	Mean no. of participants that answered correctly
Availability	1	98	80.67
	4	54	
	14	90	

Table 4.2 *(continued.)*

Accessibility	3	84	67.5
	5	30	
	10	90	
	13	66	
Acceptability	6	74	85.33
	7	88	
	12	94	
Adaptability	2	8	58.8
	8	92	
	9	46	
	11	54	
	15	94	

4.2 School administrators' perception of inclusionary services.

Section III: Part 1 consisted of statements that had to be marked as "Agree" or "Disagree" based on participants' own beliefs. The test items were grouped based on common themes underlying each statement and were scored to obtain inclusion support scores. Table 4.3 represents the scores in agreement with the concept of inclusion in educational settings. The themes identified were enrollment of CWD, effects of inclusion, execution of inclusion friendly services and quality of service delivery: Approximately 64.4-68% of the participants are estimated to have positive beliefs about inclusive services across all the themes identified.

Table 4.3

Theme-wise distributed agreement scores (in percentage) for beliefs regarding rights of children with disability and inclusion

Theme	Item no.	Statement	Inclusion friendly belief percentage	Theme based mean score for inclusion friendly beliefs
Enrollment of CWD	16.	Children with disabilities should be in special education classes	54	68
	17.	Children with disabilities should be in regular education classes	76	
	33.	Younger children with disabilities are more easily accommodated in a regular school	74	
Effects of inclusionary practices	18.	Children with disabilities learn social skills from regular education children	92	64.4
	19	Children with disabilities have higher academic achievements when included in regular classes	80	
	20.	Children with disabilities have higher self-esteem when included in regular classes	76	

Table 4.3 *(continued.)*

	21.	Children with disabilities hinder academic progress of regular education classes	34	
	22.	Achievement is difficult for children with disabilities when included regular education classes	40	
	26.	Having a child with disability enrolled in the school does not make any difference to the social image of the institute	82	
	27.	Having a child with disability enrolled in the school has a negative impact on the social image of the institute	28	
	28.	Having a child with disability enrolled in the school has a positive impact on the social image of the institute	86	
	31.	Only children with disabilities benefit from an inclusive setting	40	
	32.	Inclusive educational set-ups has positive effects on the able-bodied typically developing children	86	
Execution of inclusionary	23.	It can be frustrating to teach a child with a disability	28	66

Table 4.3 *(continued.)*

services

	24.	Ability to teach a child with disabilities requires extensive training	92	
	29.	It is burdensome to accommodate children with disabilities in a regular school	26	
	30.	Regular teachers are not skill trained to teach children with diverse/extraordinary needs	74	
	34.	It is not possible to adapt the curriculum to suit a child with disability	40	
	35.	Lack of resources (financial, scholastic, manpower) hinder inclusion of children with disabilities	84	
	36.	The severity of a condition should be considered before planning an education program for children	94	
	38.	My school does its best in implementing inclusion friendly education strategies	90	
Quality of Service Delivery	25.	Schools are not equipped adequately to accommodate children with disabilities	72	66

Table 4.3 *(continued.)*

37.	The 'No detention' till Class 8th' policy has more drawbacks than benefits	60

4.3 School administrators' readiness to implement adaptations to promote inclusion.

Section III: Part 2 presented the participants with inclusive strategies mentioned in the educational policies & schemes. The school administrators were asked to rate their likelihood of implementation of each statement. Ideally, all the participants are mandated to make adaptations suggested under the central acts thus, scores were calculated for unlikelihood of making adaptations for the purpose of inclusion.

When considered cumulatively 4-7% of the respondents were found to have refused to make adaptations to deliver inclusion friendly services. (see Table 4.4)

Table 4.4

Mean percentage of unlikely responses to adaptation

Type of Adaptation	Item no(s)	Mean for unlikely responses (%)
Level of Support	39, 41, 43, 48, 57	7.2
Substitute Curriculum	40, 46, 47, 56	7
Collaboration	42, 51, 53, 54, 55, 58	4.67
Participation	44, 52,	6
Output	45	6

Table 4.4 *(continued.)*

| Input | 49, 50 | 6 |

4.4 Association between knowledge of educational rights and readiness to inclusion.

The responses for Section I and IV were scored to categorize each participant as knowledgeable and inclusion friendly or not as shown in Table 4.5. These findings were then used to check for association between knowledge of rights of CWDs and school administrators' readiness to inclusion using Fisher's exact test. The findings as evident in Table 4.6 suggest that there is no significant association between the knowledge of rights of CWDs and readiness to inclusion amongst the participants of the study.

Table 4.5

Categorical distribution of knowledgeable and inclusion friendly participants

Knowledge		Readiness		
		Non-inclusive	Inclusive	Total
Non-Knowledgeable	Count	3	21	24
	% within Knowledge	12.5%	87.5%	100.0%
	% within Readiness	33.3%	51.2%	48.0%
	% of Total	6.0%	42.0%	48.0%
Knowledgeable	Count	6	20	26
	% within Knowledge	23.1%	76.9%	100.0%
	% within Readiness	66.7%	48.8%	52.0%
	% of Total	12.0%	40.0%	52.0%
Total	Count	9	41	50

Table 4.5 *(continued.)*

% within Knowledge	18.0%	82.0%	100.0%
% within Readiness	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
% of Total	18.0%	82.0%	100.0%

Table 4.6

Fisher's exact test for association between knowledgeable and readiness to inclusion

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Fisher's Exact Test	-	-	-	.467	.275*

*p= >0.05

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The findings of this study are explained under the following sections:

5.1 School administrators' knowledge of disabilities and educational rights of children with disabilities (CWD).

5.2 School administrators' perception of inclusionary services.

5.3 School administrators' readiness to implement adaptations to promote inclusion.

5.4 Association between knowledge of educational rights and readiness to inclusion.

5.5 Implications and future recommendations.

5.1 School administrators' knowledge of disabilities and educational rights of children with disabilities (CWD)

5.1.1 Reported familiarity of central acts/policies in India

78% of the respondents reported familiarity to Right to Education Act (RTE, 2012) and National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) amongst the other acts/policies mentioned. Both these acts recognize education as a fundamental right for all. The educational acts/policies implemented in the last decade were known to higher number of participants when compared to those from before 2010. However, there were still a noteworthy number of school administrators who were not familiarized with the educational and/or disability related laws. More focused education programs orienting the school administrators about the laws/policies in place and recent amendments (if any) must be made available from time to time.

The RTE includes provisions for financial accessibility, zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment, the "no detention" rule, qualified educators, special training for "out of school" children, monitoring compliance with set standards for good quality

services, grievance redressal, and the reservation of 25% of seats in all (government, municipality and private) schools for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. According to 60% of the participants, the "No detention until Class 8th" policy has more drawbacks than benefits. Since this decision was made, schools across the country have seen a drop in overall student performance (Tierney & Sabharwal, 2018). Section 16 of the RTE, introduced in 2009, stipulates that no child must be held back or expelled till the completion of elementary education. States were given the option of adhering to or not adhering to the said policy. There are currently efforts being made to eliminate the no-detention policy; however, under present policy, if a child fails in Class 5 or 8, he or she will be given the opportunity to retake the exam. If the child does not pass the exam on the second attempt, he or she will be detained in that class.

One of the National Education Policy's three visions (NEP, 2020) is to establish "An education system that contributes to an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all," with equity and inclusion as the basis of all educational decisions, and the use of technology in teaching and learning, while removing language barriers, for Divyang students. The policy recognizes the needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups and makes provisions necessary for the marginalized groups. Universal access to free, safe, and high-quality early childhood care and education (ECCE), overcoming language barriers, developing a caring and inclusive environment at schools, declaring Special Education Zones (SEZs), fee waivers and scholarships offered to meritorious students from all SEDGs on a larger scale, and the recruitment of counsellors in schools are all included in the policy along with access to services in Braille or Indian Sign

Language, promoting use of assistive devices, and opportunities for teachers to take special education courses.

Reported familiarity suggests that the school administrators were aware of the above mentioned provisions under each act and must be prepared to practice inclusive services resulting in improved availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability for children with disabilities yet 32-42% of the school administrators worked at schools that did not admit CWD. This finding goes in hand with Garvar-Pinhas & Schmelkin's (1989) finding that "principals appear to respond in a more socially appropriate manner than may actually be the case in reality" (p. 42).

5.1.2 *Reported familiarity of types of disabilities*

As per Census of India (2011), there are 7,862,921 children with disability in the below 19-year age group, including 1,410,158 visually impaired, 1,594,249 hearing impaired, 683,702 diagnosed with some type of speech disorder, 1,045,656 with movement disorder, 595,089 intellectual disability of varying severity, 678,441 multiple disabilities (2 or more coexisting conditions), and 1,719,845 other disabilities. Over period of time these developmental disorders may even have increased in prevalence and more children are in need of inclusive educational settings. Many school administrators (44-82%) reported that they were not aware of the common disabilities mentioned in the questionnaire. Even though Specific Learning Disability, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, and Blindness & Low Vision were the most familiar disabilities reported they were marked familiar by only 52-56% of the participants. The least known disorders were Muscular Dystrophy and Cerebral Palsy.

School administrators are required to cooperate and collaborate with the central and state government in order to fully implement the provisions formulated for the students

including children with disabilities. It is more likely for school administrators to have a more efficient inclusionary setup if they have understood the specific characteristic and needs of each disability. The variable "having a disabled family member or close friend" had a strong and beneficial impact on the principals' views toward integration (Sharma & Chow, 2008), this also could be due to their own experience with a disability, making them more sensitive to the needs of the persons with disabilities. Understanding the physical, environmental and teaching based adaptations that can be useful for a certain type of disability would lead to more effective decision making.

5.1.3 Knowledge of Rights of Children with Disabilities in India

Principals' role in implementing inclusion cannot be overstated; every principle should have a fair understanding of inclusive education for proper implementation of inclusive education (Hallinger et al., 2017). According to the responses to Section II of the questionnaire, school administrators in the study appeared to be more aware of provisions that support relevant, culturally appropriate, and high-quality services, such as functioning educational facilities and services in sufficient quantity, such as infrastructure (buildings, classrooms, playgrounds), sanitation facilities for both sexes, safe drinking water and well trained educators receiving appropriate salaries, and teaching resource. Items concerning accessibility and adaptability had poorer correct scores; leading us to believe that the school administrators had limited information about these provisions.

The financial accessibility that has been addressed in the Right to Education Act (2012) and other central acts including but not limited to National Education Policy (2020), Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme (2009) and National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) was supposedly

known to only 30% of the participants. The Integrated Education for Disabled Children Scheme implemented through the State Governments, Autonomous Bodies and Voluntary Organizations also provides hundred percent financial assistance for various resources (i.e., books, uniforms, teaching resources, assistive devices, etc.) required for inclusive education (Mishra, 2021). Such financial accessibility routes are open to children in need and school administrators must be well equipped to lead students with disabilities to exercise their right to financial accessibility.

Environmental and curriculum based modifications are supported and recommended for an inclusive educational setup in both international and national regulatory standards. Fewer participants acknowledged that they were legally mandated to make modifications in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These adaptations are in the form of curriculum modifications, alternative mode of exchange of information, increased level of support (in form of personal assistance or visual aids, etc.), adaptations in skill level, problem type and rules associated with a particular task to improve extent of participation. Over the past decade the government has made provisions for establishment of barrier free environment through various policies, the National Education Policy (2020) is the most recent provision specifically arranging for learning resources in Indian Sign Language and Braille for use. It is the school administrator's duty to make sure these issues are addressed and children with disabilities are able to exercise their right to barrier free environment and services.

According to Crockett (2002) what schools "really require are responsive leaders- knowledgeable persons in positions of influence who are committed to ensuring context that support learning for each and every student." As school administrators oversee inclusive

learning settings, they must evaluate education policy (Furney et al., 2005), create effective solutions (Albus et al., 2006), and analyse research (Cobb, 2015). Having knowledge of the laws and policies will help them perform their duties more efficiently.

5.2 School administrators' perception of inclusionary services

Adeogun and Olisaemeka (2011) found that to be influential, "Leaders must be consummate relationship builders within groups, especially with people different from themselves. Principals should lead by example and show the same to teachers" (p. 555). Relationships strengthen and teachers are more content with their employment when principals lead by example and try to develop trust, shared values, and a common vision (Spicer, 2016).

A large number of school principals have a good attitude toward inclusion. Principals who had prior experience with special education had a more positive attitude toward inclusion than those who did not. Gender, years of service, and the type of school they lead (public vs. private) made no difference. Principals with less teaching experience and those in charge of schools with fewer students enrolled had more favourable attitudes toward integration (Sharma & Chow, 2008).

Section III: Part 1 consisted of statements about the enrollment of children with disabilities, effects of inclusionary practices on children with disabilities, their typically developing peers and educators, comments about execution of inclusionary practices and quality of service delivery. Based on whether the respondents agreed to the statements the beliefs of the participants were inferred.

5.2.1 Enrollment of children with disabilities in regular classroom

Teachers' support of inclusive education seemed to vary with experience of teaching and training in special education. This indicates need for institutional support systems and overall instructional leadership (Mngo & Mngo, 2018) from school administrators to promote unbiased enrollment opportunities to CWD and continuing education opportunities to teachers. Training opportunities will result in more positive attitudes and better preparedness to support enrollment and implement inclusive practices. (Krischler et al., 2019).

Most of the school administrators agreed that children with disabilities should be in regular education classes and accommodating a younger child with disability is relatively easy. 24% of the participants did not agree that children with disabilities belonged in a regular classroom. More research is needed into why administrators held this belief and the extent to which this affects delivery of inclusion (Weber & Young, 2017).

5.2.2 Effects of inclusionary practices

More than 80% of the school administrators believed that inclusionary classroom setup allows children with disabilities to perform better academically and socially while having a positive impact on other typically developing able-bodied students and the school's social status. 76% of the respondents were aware of the psycho-social benefits children with disabilities experience in form of higher self-esteem when included in regular classes. While most of the findings related to consequences of inclusion were positive, 28-40% of the participants supported the notions that having a child with disability enrolled in the school has a negative impact on the social image of the institute, they hindered the functioning of

regular classes, and it was only the children with disabilities that were benefitting from inclusion in regular classrooms.

5.2.3 Execution of inclusionary services

A study by Bakhshi et al. (2017) noted that teachers in Delhi, overall, had a moderate level of concerns to implement inclusive education in their schools. In addition, an overwhelming majority (95%) of the teachers indicated that they had not received training in special education. However, they were not concerned about their increased workload due to inclusion. Such scenarios prompt us to consider the educator-specific elements that influence inclusion. It is the responsibility of school administrators to identify these roadblocks and assist teachers in becoming more effective inclusion practitioners.

At least 90% of the respondents agreed that teaching a child with disabilities requires extensive training and the severity of a condition is crucial while planning education programs for children with disabilities. While 90% of them believed that their school does its best in implementing inclusion friendly education strategies 38% of the respondents had none or did not know how many children with disabilities were enrolled in their schools.

Research at the level of outcome measurements and effectiveness rating of inclusionary practices will help deduce the actual consequences of practice choices made by the school administrators and team empirically (Hosshan et al., 2018).

5.2.4 Quality of Service Delivery

72% of the school administrators admitted that their schools were not equipped adequately to accommodate children with disabilities. Singh and Muniandi (2012) identified barriers to technology integration including a lack of facilities, insufficient time to understand and apply knowledge due to extended school hours, and teachers' unwillingness

to change. Teachers' efficacy appears to be nourished and sustained more successfully in schools where teachers view their principals to be excellent instructional leaders and where the principals are confident in their own abilities. Furthermore, focusing on principal–teacher perceptual congruence as a key part of school capacity is essential (Ham et al., 2015).

Based on the overall findings of this section, it is clear that more data need to be collected to form conclusive statements about school administrator's beliefs about inclusion. Multiple other factors could play a role in shaping their opinions i.e., their own experience with inclusion or person's with disability (Sharma & Chow, 2008), resources available (Chittenden, 2016), extent of training of educators (Mngo & Mngo, 2018), socio-cultural background (Liang & Liou, 2018) that need to be studied.

5. 3   School administrators' readiness to implement adaptations to promote inclusion

Inclusion is a process that never ends. Those that advocate for it will face ongoing challenges in highly disputed situations in order to further their inclusive ideals. They should not be disheartened if they have problems achieving complete inclusion, and they should be willing to fight to safeguard their gains, as perfect inclusion is unlikely to ever be attained ().

Section III: Part 2 consisted of various types of adaptations recommended at classroom setups to enhance the effectiveness of inclusivity. School administrators were to rate likelihood of making the adaptations presented in the questionnaire.

Regular teachers believe they are unprepared to educate students with disabilities and admit to employing adaptations less frequently and inconsistently. It has been determined that the readiness of CWD to be included in regular education settings is not appropriate due to the same reason (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). Such a study has not been done in school administrators of India hence, this attempt to obtain likelihood scores was deemed necessary.

Lack of teacher training and insufficient school support services have been recognized as constraints to classroom teachers being able to accommodate the specific needs of children in inclusive settings, according to the literature (Scott et al., 1998). Teachers tended to classify physical adaptations as instructional modifications that needed to be implemented for inclusion more than educational adaptations (Tevhide et al., 2010). All types of adaptations contribute to enhancing quality of service delivered through inclusionary practices. Figure 5.1 shows types of adaptations in a classroom setting.

4-7% of the school administrators in the study stated that they were unlikely to make necessary adaptations. In the future, their reasons for this dismissal must be explored.

Figure 5.1

Types of possible adaptations in an educational setup

Nine Types of Curriculum Adaptations

Quantity *	Time *	Level of Support *
Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or number of activities student will complete prior to assessment for mastery. *For example:* Reduce the number of social studies terms a learner must learn at any one time. Add more practice activities or worksheets.	Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing. *For example:* Individualize a timeline for completing a task; pace learning differently (increase or decrease) for some learners.	Increase the amount of personal assistance to keep the student on task or to reinforce or prompt use of specific skills. *For example:* Assign peer buddies, teaching assistants, peer tutors, or cross-age tutors.
Input *	**Difficulty •**	**Output ***
Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner. *For example:* Use different visual aids, enlarge text, plan more concrete examples, provide hands-on activities, place students in cooperative groups, pre-teach key concepts or terms before the lesson.	Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work. *For example:* Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problems; simplify task directions; change rules to accommodate learner needs.	Adapt how the student can respond to instruction. *For example:* Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response, use a communication book for some students, allow student to show knowledge with hands on materials.
Participation *	**Alternate Goals •**	**Substitute Curriculum •**
Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task. *For example:* In geography, have a student hold the globe, while others point out locations. Ask the student to lead a group. Have the student turn the pages.	Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials. *For example:* In a social studies lesson, expect a student to be able to locate the colors of the states on a map, while other students learn to locate each state and name the capital.	*Sometimes called "functional curriculum"* Provide different instruction and materials to meet a learner's individual goals. *For example:* During a language lesson a student is learning toileting skills with an aide.

Reprinted from: Deschenes, C., Ebling, D., & Sprague, J. (1994). *Adapting curriculum and instruction in inclusive classrooms: A teacher's desk reference.* Bloomington, IN: Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities.

5.4   Association between knowledge of educational rights and readiness to inclusion

In this study, there was no relationship between knowledge of educational rights of CWD and school administrators' readiness to inclusion (i.e., p= >0.05). This leads to two possible assumptions i.e.

- School administrators' who are knowledgeable might not be in favour of inclusionary classrooms.

- School administrators could be inclusion friendly with limited or no knowledge of inclusion related provisions posed by the Government of India.

The findings essentially confirm that attitudes and perceptions of inclusion are not just based on knowledge of regulatory obligations that must be followed. There are many other elements at play, all of which must be thoroughly investigated; obtaining knowledge regarding various personal, cultural, or environmental factors and their impact on inclusion will aid in the development of training programs for school administrators and educators to shape positive notions about inclusion.

CHAPTER 6

Summary and Conclusion

The Rehabilitation Council of India recognizes Speech Language Pathologists as advocates for children with disabilities. All professionals on the developmental team (i.e., medical professionals, rehabilitation professionals, school administrators, teachers and social workers) must have a thorough understanding of fundamental educational rights in order to effectively advise, make recommendations, or suggest inclusive strategies to children with disabilities (CWD). There has been some research done on teachers' knowledge and perspectives in India, but no research has been done on school administrators' knowledge of the rights of students with disabilities or their readiness for inclusion. When it comes to education of CWD, school administrators are a reliable source of communication for staff, family, and the community. The purpose of this study was to investigate school administrators' knowledge about the educational rights of children with disabilities (CWDs) and willingness to implement inclusionary practices. An explorative survey type of research design was conducted through an online mode using a questionnaire designed and validated for the purpose of this study. Section I of the questionnaire was demographic details. Section II of the questionnaire assessed knowledge of educational rights of CWD through "True" or "False" questions. Section III: Part 1 & 2 assessed perceptions about inclusion through questions which required responses of "Agree" or "Disagree" and "Very likely, Likely, or Unlikely". 50 school administrators across the country, majority from the west zone (56%), responded to the questionnaire. The entries obtained were used to analyse percentage correct score for knowledge (Section II), theme wise distributed agreement scores for beliefs regarding inclusion (Section III: Part 1) and percentage of non-inclusive ratings (Section III: Part 2). It was found that there was no association between knowledge of educational right

with disabilities and school administrators' readiness to inclusion. Furthermore, overall deficit in knowledge of rights of disabilities, poor policy-implementation congruency and noteworthy amount of dismissal for adaptations to be implemented for inclusion were noted among the school administrators'. The several provisions that the central government has given for the educational upliftment of CWD are highlighted in this study. It is critical for school administrators to recognize and make essential changes to school systems in their role as change makers. While the Government of India recognizes a number of adjustments, educators in the classroom are not equipped or prepared to put them to practice.

When opposed to reaching out to every teacher, it will be easier to target the school administrators' community to advocate for inclusionary practices in classrooms. The current findings must be replicated on a wider population before conclusive remarks are formulated.

One important aspect that has not been discussed in the study is the role of a school based Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) in inclusion. Currently majority of the SLPs in the United States of America (USA) are involved in school based services. At present, Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), designates SLPs as Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. With this designation came the demand that SLPs assist in instruction by identifying pupils who required intervention in order to participate in class. The requirement for the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) paradigm was also emphasized by ESSA. Multiple systems are integrated with MTSS to address students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs both before and after special education services are implemented. There still remains a significant scope for improvement in the process of identifying children that will benefit from consultations and efficient method of service delivery (Bradburn & Gill, 2020).

American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) in its most recent professional issue statement on the roles and responsibilities of a school based SLP mentioned the importance of involvement of SLPs at all levels and stages of enrollment along with the collaborative, leadership based, and advocacy related responsibilities (ASHA, 2010). In India, if the role of SLPs is recognized as an essential team member in educational settings, the gap between regular education practices and inclusionary practices will be minimized. This is would also benefit the SLP community by creating many more job opportunities and increased scope of practice. Having SLPs on board in an educational setup will help in early identification and intervention; it will also reduce the number of cases that go untreated due to lack of access to services. As the demand for inclusionary services continues to grow, it is time for SLPs to advocate for their role of practice in this area.

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Title of the questionnaire: School Administrators' Knowledge on the Rights of Children with Disabilities and their Readiness for Inclusion- Survey Questionnaire

Test Population: School Administrators in India

Duration: 20 minutes

Section I: Demographic Details

Name	
Designation	
Highest Educational Qualification	Diploma/ Graduate/Post Graduate/ Ph.D
State	
Board of Affiliation	State Board or Education/ Central Board of Secondary Education/ Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
Is your school funded by the Government of India?	Yes/No
Is your school recognized by the Government of India?	Yes/No
Does your school currently enroll Children with Disabilities?	Yes/No
If yes, at what level? Check all that apply	▪ Pre-school (Nursery- UKG) ▪ Primary school (1st – 7th STD) ▪ High School (8th – 10th STD)

How many Children with Disabilities are enrolled in your school?	None/ Less than 5/ >5 but less than 10/ More than 10
Are you a Person with Disability?	Yes/No
Are you related to a Person with Disability?	Yes/No
Do you know any Person with Disability?	Yes/No
Which of the following acts/policies are you familiar with? Check all that apply	- National Education Policy (2020) - Samagra Shiksha Program (2018-19) - Rights of Persons with Disability Act (2016) - Right to Education Act (2012) - Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan Scheme (2009) - National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) - Action Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and youth with Disabilities (2005) - Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act (1995) - The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act (1999)
Which of the following conditions	Blindness and Low Vision

are you familiar with? Check all that apply	▪ Deaf and Hard of Hearing ▪ Cerebral palsy ▪ Autism ▪ Intellectual disability ▪ Specific learning disability ▪ Mental illness ▪ Multiple disabilities	

Section II: Knowledge of the Educational Rights of Children with Disabilities

	Mark "TRUE" or "FALSE"	TRUE	FALSE
1.	The Indian constitution secures the non-disabled as well as disabled citizens with the fundamental rights.		
2.	The Indian constitution has been making efforts in implementing legal provisions to protect and support Persons with Disabilities since the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2006.		
3.	It is the government's responsibility to ensure compulsory and free education to all Children with Disabilities up to the age of 18 years.		
4.	The government of India has norms and standards for only government funded schools, including infrastructure norms, minimum teacher qualifications, pupil-teacher ratio and curricular standards		
5.	The Right to Education Act promotes non-discrimination and		

	physical accessibility (support for movement) but not economic accessibility (i.e., funding)		
6.	The schools in India must follow both international and constitutional obligations in planning and implementing educational programmes		
7.	All educational institutes funded or recognized by the government must to conduct survey of school going children in every five years for identifying children with disabilities		
8.	All educational institutes must ensure that the education to persons is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes of communication i.e., braille for the blind, sign language for communication impaired		
9.	Non-formal education shall be discouraged for children with disabilities under the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995		
10.	The Right to Education Act (2009) also demands a 25% reservation seat for disadvantaged children including children with disabilities		
11.	Any modifications in the curriculum and examination system proposed by the concerned board of education to meet the needs of students with disabilities are not permitted		
12.	The role and expectations of principal and teachers must explicitly include developing a caring and inclusive culture at school as per the National Education Policy, 2020		
13.	Integrated Education for Disabled Children Scheme implemented		

	through the State Governments, Autonomous Bodies and Voluntary Organizations provides 100% financial assistance for various resources required for inclusive education		
14.	The Samagra Shiksha Programme incorporates the three former schemes namely, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE)		
15.	Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a continuum of educational options, learning aids and tools, mobility assistance, support services etc. are being made available to students with disabilities		

Note: Item no. 2, 4, 5. 9, 11 are false statements. Score 1 for every correct response

Section III: Readiness for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

Part 1: Check "AGREE" or "DISAGREE"			
16.	Children with disabilities should be in special education classes		
17.	Children with disabilities should be in regular education classes		
18.	Children with disabilities learn social skills from regular education children		
19.	Children with disabilities have higher academic achievements when included in regular classes		
20.	Children with disabilities have higher self-esteem when included in regular classes		

21.	Children with disabilities hinder academic progress of regular education classes		
22.	Achievement is difficult for children with disabilities when included regular education classes		
23.	It can be frustrating to teach a child with a disability		
24.	Ability to teach a child with disabilities requires extensive training		
25.	Schools are not equipped adequately to accommodate children with disabilities		
26.	Having a child with disability enrolled in the school does not make any difference to the social image of the institute		
27.	Having a child with disability enrolled in the school has a negative impact on the social image of the institute		
28.	Having a child with disability enrolled in the school has a positive impact on the social image of the institute		
29.	It is burdensome to accommodate children with disabilities in a regular school		
30.	Regular teachers are not skill trained to teach children with diverse/extraordinary needs		
31.	Only children with disabilities benefit from an inclusive setting		
32.	Inclusive educational set-ups has positive effects on the able-bodied typically developing children		

33.	Younger children with disabilities are more easily accommodated in a regular school		
34.	It is not possible to adapt the curriculum to suit a child with disability		
35.	Lack of resources (financial, scholastic, manpower) hinder inclusion of children with disabilities		
36.	The severity of a condition should be considered before planning an education program for children		
37.	The 'No detention' (till Class 8th) policy has more drawbacks than benefits		
38.	My school does its best in implementing inclusion friendly education strategies		

Part 2: Indicate how likely are you to?

		Unlikely	Likely	Highly Likely
39.	Admit a child with disability into your school			
40.	Conduct teacher training programs on topics such as behavioral management, curriculum adaptation, collaboration			
41.	Allow teachers to take courses teaching inclusive education			
42.	Give teachers opportunities to discuss their concerns about inclusion			
43.	Allow a shadow teacher, if recommended by a			

	professional			
44.	Make accommodations for the physically disabled children to move around			
45.	Make special physical arrangements (i.e., special seating arrangements, typing instead of writing)			
46.	Arrange for materials/equipment needed for the child (study material specific to their learning styles)			
47.	Allow for an alternate language (i.e., sign language, braille)			
48.	Recommend suitable scholarships & services			
49.	Accommodate technology enabled assistive devices/tool (i.e., hard wired amplification systems, loudspeakers, AAC devices)			
50.	Arrange for digital materials for study (i.e., video lessons)			
51.	Make referrals to screening/ rehabilitation services you deem necessary for the child			
52.	Allow classroom modifications to suit the needs of children with disabilities			
53.	Allow time for team discussions amongst the teachers for structured inclusive services for all students			

54.	Conduct developmental screening camps for your students			
55.	Hire a School SLP/ counselor/ other professionals that can collaboratively work with the students alongside the teachers			
56.	Raise a concern about inclusive examination strategies to the board of education regarding a particular student in your school			
57.	Appoint a supervisor solely to monitor the needs, implementation of teaching methods, and progress made through inclusive strategies at school			
58.	Take into consideration a parent suggestion to improve efficiency of your inclusive teaching setting			