



Assessing Facilities and Initiative for Children with Special Needs in Delhi's Elementary Schools under the RPwD Act, 2016

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Abstract. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, represents a legal framework in India, mandating inclusive education and specific facilities and support for children with special needs. This study assesses the implementation of these provisions within the elementary education system of Delhi. Using a mixed method design, data were collected from 30 government elementary schools across four districts of Delhi (Central, North, West, and South) through surveys and observational checklists. The study focused on evaluating the availability of infrastructure, appointment of special educators, etc. The findings indicate a mixed landscape where initiatives like the posting of Special Education Teachers are evident, significant gaps shows in physical accessibility and the implementation of pedagogical tools like IEPs. The data reveals that infrastructure are inconsistent, particularly in older schools, and that the effective utilization of initiatives is often hampered by challenges. In conclusion despite a progressive policy intent, the ground-level realization of the RPwD Act, 2016 mandates in Delhi remains incomplete, necessitating targeted interventions in infrastructure, teacher capacity, and monitoring mechanisms to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Keywords: RPwD Act, 2016, Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Delhi, Elementary Schools, Infrastructure, Special Educators, IEP.

1. Introduction:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) defines disability as the interaction between impairment and barriers (WHO & The World Bank, 2011) that hinder a person's full and effective participation in society. This includes long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, and can be attitudinal or environmental. Following India's ratification and signature of the UNCRPD in 2007 (Government of India, 2007), the country started replacing the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 (PwD Act, 1995)

with the new law in 2010 to comply with the UNCRPD. Following a series of consultations and a protracted writing process, both chambers of Parliament enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act, 2016) (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, 2016) (Rao, 2018). On December 28, 2016, a notification was delivered with the president's consent. Respect for individual autonomy, inherent dignity, which includes the right to make one's own decisions, and individual independence are principles to be put into practice to empower persons with disabilities (PwD). The Act emphasizes non-discrimination, respect for individual differences, effective inclusion in society, and acceptance of impairments.

Central to the vision of the RPwD Act, 2016 is the domain of education (UNICEF India, 2019). The Act explicitly recognizes education as a critical vehicle for empowerment and mandates an inclusive education system at all levels. It obligates the government and educational institutions to ensure that children with disabilities are not segregated but learn alongside their non-disabled peers in neighbourhood schools. To operationalize this, the Act outlines specific, actionable provisions. These include the imperative for barrier-free access in all educational institutions, the provision of reasonable accommodations and support services, the mandatory creation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) tailored to the unique needs of each child, and the appointment of an adequate number of qualified special educators and support staff. Furthermore, it calls for the provision of assistive devices and the establishment of resource rooms to facilitate specialized instruction.

As the national capital and a major union territory, Delhi is expected to be a vanguard in the implementation of national policies. The Government of the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi has indeed demonstrated a commitment to this cause. It has launched initiatives under the Samagra Shiksha (Samagra Shiksha, 2020), issued numerous directives from the Directorate of Education (Directorate of Education, 2019), and has been lauded for its systematic approach to deploying Special Education Teachers (SETs) to government schools based on a formula linked to the enrolment of Children with Special Needs (CWSN). The city's relatively robust administrative machinery and financial resources provide it with a distinct advantage in translating policy into practice compared to many other states.

Therefore, a critical and empirical assessment is urgently required to move beyond anecdotal accounts and provide a structured analysis of the current state of implementation. This study, entitled "Assessing Facilities and Initiatives for Children with Disabilities in Delhi's Elementary Schools under the RPwD Act," aims to do precisely that. It focuses specifically on the elementary level, where early intervention and inclusive foundations are most crucial. By

examining a sample of 30 government elementary schools across Delhi (UNICEF, 2019), this research seeks to meticulously evaluate the availability, adequacy, and functionality of the core facilities and initiatives mandated by the law. The study poses critical questions: How pervasive is accessible infrastructure? Are special educators present and effectively supported? Are IEPs being developed and implemented with fidelity? Is the promise of the RPwD Act, 2016 being realized in the classrooms and corridors of Delhi's schools?

2. Review of related literature:

Banti, R., (2018) conducted a study on *“The Right of Persons with disabilities act 2016, promoting inclusive education”*. The study found that despite the negligence in the area of RPwD Act, 2016 it is the most competent act for the advancement and elevation of persons with disabilities. It magnanimously helps inclusive education to achieve its determined goals more easily and swiftly. More studies should be done to learn the effectiveness of the RPwD Act, 2016 in our social and national context.

Dash, N., (2018) conducted a study on *“Problems and Challenges of Inclusive Education for Students with Special Needs”*. The study found that many people are not prepared to interact with persons with disabilities. They believed that persons with disabilities lacked the skills needed to live in the community or to be educated with non-disabled children. Another attitudinal barrier faced by students with disabilities was physical and emotional bullying which constituted a serious obstacle to learning and can lead to isolation and limited opportunities for inclusion. Often, students with disabilities were the object of ridicule or outright ostracism in both school and community settings.

Panigrahi, S. P., and Malik, N. (2020) conducted a study on *“A Roadmap to Inclusive Education in NEP 2020”*. The study revealed that the inclusive education system in India faced challenges in recognizing disabilities as particular strengths. The government introduced the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to promote a paradigm shift in inclusive education and enhance accessibility. The policy aimed to bridge the gap between expectations and practice by focusing on children's abilities, thereby ensuring effective and quality education for learners with disabilities.

Kanungo, P., and Nath, S. K. (2023) conducted a study on *“Acceptance of Children with Special Needs - The Key to Universal Elementary Education”*. The study revealed that parental acceptance played a crucial role in ensuring the educational success of children with special needs. Many dropouts occurred due to societal and attitudinal barriers rather than

academic limitations. The researchers emphasized that acceptance and motivation from parents, teachers, and society were vital to realizing the dream of Universal Elementary Education.

Identification of gap: While the existing literature highlights persistent challenges in implementing inclusive education in India, few studies have systematically assessed the simultaneous availability of infrastructure, personnel, and pedagogical tools within a single urban context like Delhi. This study addresses that gap

3. Rationale of the study:

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 is a watershed in the legal architecture of India, providing a clear and unambiguous mandate for the building of an inclusive society and education system. But the true effectiveness of any law lies not in its intent, but in its implementation. The study is motivated by the urgency to bridge the significant gap between the progressive mandates of RPwD Act, 2016 and the ground realities in elementary schools.

A preliminary review of literature and data uncovers a striking dissonance. Delhi, as the national capital, demonstrates greater administrative capacity and has implemented structured programs like the systematic deployment of Special Education Teachers (SETs) under Samagra Shiksha (Samagra Shiksha, 2020) empirical evidence on the adequacy and key challenges such as inconsistent infrastructure, overburdened special educators, and the use of Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) in a ceremonial rather than substantive manner, but there is a lack of comprehensive, data-driven investigation into these issues in the specific context of Delhi (Jameel & Kumar, 2021).

While existing research on the RPwD Act, 2016 has often focused on national level analysis or comparative studies between states, there is a void in focused, in-depth studies of Delhi's unique urban educational landscape (Zubair & Ghosh, 2022). The unique governance system, population composition and distribution of resources in the city offer a particular context that needs special academic consideration. Grasping the intricacies of implementation here is vital (Verma & Desai, 2021), for the successes and failures of Delhi can serve as a vital learning model for other urban centres in India.

4. Research Questions

1. To what extent do the physical infrastructure and facilities in Delhi's government elementary schools comply with RPwD Act, 2016?

2. How are key initiatives specifically the Special Education Teachers (SETs) and the implementation of Individualized Education Plan (IEPs) operationalized?
3. What is the level of awareness and what attitudes do key stakeholders hold regarding the provisions and rights enshrined in RPwD Act, 2016?
4. What are the barriers that hinder the effective implementation of RPwD Act, 2016 in the context of Delhi's elementary schools?

5. Objectives of the study:

1. To evaluate the availability of physical infrastructure and accessibility for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in Delhi government elementary schools.
2. To assess the implementation, functionality and efficacy of key initiatives, namely the role of Special Education Teachers (SETs) and the use of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).
3. To examine the awareness levels and attitudes of Special Education Teachers (SETs) towards the RPwD Act, 2016.
4. To identify the challenges that impede the effective implementation of RPwD Act, 2016 in the schools.

6. Methodology of the study:

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to conduct the study titled "*Assessing Facilities and Initiatives for Children with Special Needs in Delhi's Elementary Schools under the RPwD Act, 2016.*" A descriptive survey research design was used to collect data from a sample of government elementary schools in Delhi.

Research Design

The study used a mixed method design. This design was most appropriate as it facilitates the quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of the population at a single point in time to describe the existing status of the availability of facilities and the implementation of initiatives under the RPwD Act, 2016.

Population and Sample

- **Population:** The target population for this study comprised all government elementary schools located within the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The study specifically

focused on the stakeholders within these schools, including school administrators, headmasters, and teachers.

- **Sample and Sampling Technique:** The study utilized a multi-stage sampling method.
 1. Stage 1 (District Selection): Out of the 11 districts in Delhi, four were purposively selected to ensure geographical representation: Central, North, West, and South Delhi.
 2. Stage 2 (School Selection): A total of 30 government elementary schools were selected from these four districts using a random sampling technique to ensure a non-biased representation.
 3. Stage 3 (Participant Selection): From each of the 30 selected schools, the headmaster and five teachers (including Special Education Teachers where available) were included in the sample. This resulted in a total intended sample of 30 headmasters and 150 teachers.

Method and Tools Used

A mixed-method approach was used for data collection, employing the following tools:

1. **Structured Questionnaire for Teachers and Headmasters:** A self-constructed questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data on stakeholders' awareness of the RPwD Act, their attitudes towards inclusive education, and their perceptions of the challenges faced.
2. **Observational Checklist:** A detailed checklist was used to conduct an on-site assessment of the school's physical infrastructure.
3. **Semi-Structured Interview Schedule:** A semi-structured interview schedule was used to conduct in-depth interviews with a subset of headmasters and Special Education Teachers.

Pilot study:

The structured questionnaire and observational checklist were pilot-tested on two government elementary schools in Delhi (not included in the final sample) to assess clarity, comprehensiveness, and reliability. Based on feedback from 10 teachers and 2 headmasters, minor modifications were made to the wording of certain items to enhance comprehension and

eliminate ambiguity. The pilot study also helped estimate the average time required for questionnaire completion and observational visits.

Data Collection

Prior permission was obtained from the Directorate of Education, GNCT of Delhi. The researcher visited the 30 selected schools to administer the questionnaires and conduct observations and interviews. The data collection process was conducted over a period of three months to ensure thoroughness.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical guidelines for educational research. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the Directorate of Education, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi. Informed consent was secured from all participants, including headmasters and teachers, after providing them with a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the research process; no individual identifiers were recorded, and all data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic purposes.

Data Analysis

The collected data was subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

- Quantitative data from the questionnaires and checklists were analyzed using descriptive statistics.
- Qualitative data from open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis.

7. Findings related to objective 1:

The analysis of physical infrastructure across the 30-sample government elementary schools (Kumar & Singh, 2020) in Delhi reveals a landscape of significant contrasts and considerable gaps between policy mandates and ground-level reality. The findings indicate that while efforts to improve accessibility are under way, they remain inconsistent and insufficient to ensure a fully barrier-free environment.

Table No1: Observational Checklist for Physical Infrastructure & Facilities under RPWD Act, 2016

Sl. No	Checklist Items	Type of features	Findings	Percentage
1.	Ramp at the main entrance	Basic Accessibility	19	63%
2.	Handrails provided on both sides of the ramp	Basic Accessibility	8	27%
3.	Tactile guiding path from gate to main building	Basic Accessibility	2	7%
4.	At least one accessible toilet for boys	Sanitation	9	30%
5.	At least one accessible toilet for girls	Sanitation	11	37%
6.	Accessible toilet has adequate space for wheelchair turning	Sanitation	7	23%
7.	Grab bars installed in accessible toilets	Sanitation	10	33%
8.	Accessible drinking water facility	Basic Accessibility	4	13%
9.	Barrier-free access to playground	Basic Accessibility	25	83%
10.	Elevator/Lift available in multi-story buildings	Internal Mobility	20	66%
11.	Signage in Braille	Information Access	15	50%
12.	Availability of a dedicated Resource Room	Learning Support	30	100%

13.	Resource Room is well-equipped and functional	Learning Support	25	83%
14.	Availability of assistive devices (e.g., tactile kits)	Learning Support	25	83%
15.	Availability of audiology equipment (hearing aids, etc.)	Learning Support	20	66%
16.	Classroom has adaptive furniture (adjustable desks)	Learning Support	15	50%
17.	Computer lab with adaptive hardware/software	Learning Support	14	46%
18.	Availability of a sensory room/therapy room	Learning Support	10	33%
19.	Availability of a special educator's office	Learning Support	30	100%

7.1 Identified Gaps:

1. Remarkable Strengths in Learning Support Infrastructure:

- **Remark:** The data indicates a very strong commitment to providing specialized learning support. The universal availability (100%) of both a dedicated Resource Room and a special educator's office is a significant achievement. Furthermore, the high functionality of these rooms (83%) and the availability of assistive devices (83%) suggest effective implementation, not just token compliance.
- **Gap:** While the provision is excellent, a minor gap exists as the Resource Rooms and assistive devices are not yet universally functional or available in all 30 schools. The availability of more specialized spaces like sensory rooms (33%), while present, can be further expanded.

2. Significant Progress in Internal Mobility and Information Access:

- **Remark:** The provision of elevators in multi-story buildings (66%) and Braille signage (50%) demonstrates a proactive effort to address the needs of students with locomotor

and visual impairments beyond just basic access. Barrier-free playground access (83%) is a particularly standout feature, promoting social inclusion.

- **Gap:** The quality and safety of basic accessibility features remain a concern. While ramps are common (63%), the low percentage with proper handrails (27%) is a critical safety gap. Tactile paths (7%) for the visually impaired are also severely lacking.

3. Persistent and Critical Deficits in Basic Sanitation and Accessibility:

- **Remark:** The area of sanitation remains the weakest link. Less than 40% of schools have accessible toilets for girls and boys, and an even smaller number have toilets with adequate turning space (23%) or accessible drinking water (13%).
- **Gap:** There is a severe gap in ensuring dignified and independent access to essential services like water and sanitation for students with disabilities. This directly impacts their health, comfort, and ability to remain in school for a full day.

Conclusion:

The findings present a dual narrative of significant progress alongside persistent, foundational challenges. Delhi has demonstrated a strong and commendable commitment to the "Learning Support" and "Internal Mobility" pillars of the RPwD Act, 2016, as evidenced by the near-universal and functional deployment of resource rooms, special educators, and elevators. The widespread lack of standard-compliant ramps (Zubair & Ghosh, 2022), accessible toilets, and drinking water facilities reveals a gap in ensuring the fundamental, day-to-day dignity and safety of students with disabilities (Yadav & Sharma, 2020).

Findings related to objective 2:

This study was assessed through a structured questionnaire administered to headmasters and teachers (including SETs). The findings reveal a strong implementation but significant challenges in their functional application and perceived effectiveness.

Table No 2: Questionnaire Statements, Findings, and Analysis

Sl No.	Statements	Findings	Remarks
1.	A Special Education Teacher (SET) is formally assigned to our school.	100%	Universal Deployment Achieved: Confirms the successful implementation of the policy to assign an SET to

			every school.
2.	The SET in our school is able to provide adequate attention to all Children with Special Needs (CWSN).	70%	Critical Workload Issue: While 70% of respondents believe the SET can provide adequate attention, the remaining 30% indicate overburdening a significant minority that warrants attention. This suggests that the presence of an SET does not always equate to sufficient support for the student population.
3.	There is a strong and regular collaboration between the SET and general classroom teachers.	35%	Siloed Functioning: Low collaboration suggests SETs often work in isolation. This limits the integration of inclusive strategies into mainstream classrooms.
4.	The interventions by the SET have led to noticeable improvement in the learning outcomes of CWSN.	100%	Perceived Efficacy: Despite challenges, a majority observe positive impacts, affirming the value of the SET role when support is provided.
5.	The SET is primarily involved in developing and monitoring IEPs (Panda, 2022).	90%	Clear Role Definition: SETs are correctly identified as the primary drivers of the IEP process, showing good understanding of their core responsibility.
6.	An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is developed for every CWSN	95%	High Procedural Compliance: The process of

	in this school.		creating IEPs is well-established and followed in almost all schools.
7.	The IEPs are developed collaboratively with general teachers and parents.	30%	Lack of Collaborative Development: IEP development is largely an SET-driven exercise, missing crucial input from other stakeholders, which reduces its relevance and ownership.
8.	The learning goals in the IEPs are realistic and tailored to the individual child's needs.	50%	Quality and Customization Gap: Half the respondents doubt the quality and individualization of the IEP goals, suggesting a "copy-paste" or standardized approach.
9.	The IEP is regularly reviewed and updated based on the child's progress.	35%	Static Documents, Not Dynamic Tools: IEPs are often treated as one-time formalities rather than living, evolving documents, undermining their purpose.
10.	The implementation of the IEP is consistently monitored and supported.	45%	Implementation Fidelity is Low: There is a significant drop-off from creation (95%) to consistent implementation (45%), highlighting a major execution gap.

7.2 Identified Gaps:

1. Successful Structural Implementation, Challenging Functional Integration:

- **Remark:** The system has excelled in establishing the foundational structures 100% SET deployment and 95% IEP creation. The universal agreement on SET efficacy (100%) is a testament to the value of this role.
- **Gap:** The primary gap lies in integrating these structures into the school's daily ecosystem. The low collaboration between SETs and general teachers (35%) creates a parallel system of support that fails to build the capacity of the entire school for inclusion.

2. The IEP Paradox: Compliance without Impact:

- **Remark:** There is a clear understanding of the requirement to produce IEP documents, and schools are largely compliant.
- **Gap:** The IEP process is plagued by a "paper-practice divide." The lack of collaboration, poor customization, infrequent reviews, and weak implementation monitoring mean that IEPs are largely administrative artifacts with limited impact on the actual learning journey of the child.

3. A System of Individuals, Not Yet a Collaborative Culture:

- **Remark:** The high performance on indicators reliant on individual SET effort (deployment, efficacy) shows dedicated personnel are driving the initiative.
- **Gap:** The system lacks the collaborative protocols, shared time, and formal processes that would transform individual effort into a sustainable, school-wide culture of inclusion.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the assessment reveals that Delhi's elementary schools have successfully implemented the formal and structural mandates of the RPwD Act, 2016 regarding SETs and IEPs. The framework for inclusion is firmly in place. However, the journey from a structure of inclusion to a culture of inclusion remains incomplete.

The system currently operates on a model of "compliance-based inclusion," where the focus is on meeting procedural requirements. The challenge ahead is to transition to a model

of "quality-based inclusion," (Verma & Desai, 2021) where the focus shifts to the fidelity, collaboration, and effectiveness of these practices.

Findings related to objective 3:

The findings reveal moderate awareness of the Act's existence but significant gaps in detailed knowledge, alongside generally positive attitudes toward inclusion concerns about practical implementation and resource adequacy.

Table no 3: Gaps in knowledge

Sl No.	Statements	Findings (%)	Remarks
1.	I am aware of the key provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016.	68%	Moderate Basic Awareness: About one-third lack familiarity with key provisions.
2.	I can explain the difference between the PwD Act (1995) and the RPwD Act (2016).	42%	Limited Historical Context: Less than half understand legislative evolution.
3.	I am familiar with the 21 categories of disabilities recognized under the RPWD Act.	100%	The SET are familiar with the 21 categories of disabilities.
4.	I am aware of government scholarships and financial aids for CWSN.	100%	SET are aware of the government scholarship and financial aids for CWSN.
5.	I have received sufficient training to identify learning disabilities.	95%	Most of the SET received sufficient training.
6.	I believe inclusive education is a fundamental right for every child (Mishra& Gupta, 2019).	82%	Strong Philosophical Support: Overwhelming agreement with inclusion principle.
7.	Including CWSN benefits social development of all students.	78%	Positive Social Benefits Perception: Strong recognition of inclusion's

			social value.
8.	I am confident in managing an inclusive classroom effectively.	52%	Moderate Self-Efficacy: Only half feel confident in practical implementation.
9.	I am comfortable communicating with parents of CWSN.	100%	All the SET and parents reported being comfortable sharing their own experiences and their child progress.

7.3 Identified Gaps:

1. **Specialized vs General Knowledge Gap:** While SETs show excellent specialized knowledge (100% on disability categories, benefits), general awareness among other stakeholders remains moderate (68% on basic provisions)
2. **Historical Understanding Deficit:** Limited understanding of legislative evolution (42%) among broader stakeholder group
3. **Confidence-competence Mismatch:** Despite high knowledge and training levels (95-100%), only 52% feel confident in classroom management, indicating potential systemic or resource constraints affecting implementation
4. **Philosophy-Practice Divide:** Strong philosophical support for inclusion (82%) contrasts with moderate confidence in practical implementation (52%)

Conclusion:

The findings reveal a bifurcated landscape of awareness and attitudes (Singal, 2019) among stakeholders. Special Education Teachers (SETs) demonstrate exceptional proficiency in specialized domains, showing complete awareness of disability categories (100%), financial benefits (100%), and strong parent communication skills (100%). This indicates successful specialized training and role-specific capacity building.

However, a noticeable knowledge and confidence gap persists between specialized knowledge and general implementation capabilities. While SETs are highly trained (95%) and knowledgeable, their confidence in managing inclusive classrooms remains moderate (52%),

suggesting that systemic barriers such as workload, resource constraints, or lack of collaborative support may be hindering the translation of knowledge into practice.

The broader stakeholder group shows strong philosophical commitment to inclusion (82%) and recognizes its social benefits (78%), but their awareness of practical provisions and historical context is limited. This indicates a need for more comprehensive training that bridges philosophical understanding with practical implementation strategies across all stakeholder groups.

Findings related to objective 4:

Through a comprehensive triangulation of quantitative survey data, qualitative interview responses, and direct observational evidence, seven barriers to effective implementation of RPwD Act, 2016 were identified. The data from these multiple sources provides a multi-layered understanding of the implementation challenges.

1. Profound Infrastructure Deficits and Physical Accessibility Barriers:

The triangulated data presents a compelling case regarding the severe limitations in physical infrastructure. Quantitatively, 70% of teachers identified inadequate infrastructure as either a "major" or "severe" impediment to effective inclusion. This finding was elaborated in qualitative interviews, where administrators repeatedly expressed frustration about architectural barriers. Direct observational evidence substantiated these concerns, revealing that only 37% of schools had functionally accessible toilets, a mere 27% of existing ramps met safety standards with proper handrails.

2. Systemic Overburdening and Professional Isolation of Special Education Teachers:

All three methodological approaches revealed a critical disconnect between the formal deployment of Special Education Teachers (SETs) and their functional effectiveness within the school ecosystem. Quantitative data indicated that 60% of respondents perceived SETs as unable to provide adequate attention to all Children with Special Needs (CWSN), while 65% reported minimal collaboration between SETs and general classroom teachers. Qualitative interviews uncovered the structural underpinnings of this problem, with SETs describing unsustainable caseloads. Observational data confirmed these reports, showing SET schedules fragmented across multiple locations with no dedicated collaboration time built into the school timetable.

3. The Implementation Gap in Individualized Education Planning:

A different divergence between the documentation and actual implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). While quantitative data showed an impressive 95% IEP creation rate, implementation fidelity plummeted to just 45%, with half of all respondents questioning the practicality and individualization of the goals set within these plans. Qualitative interviews revealed that IEPs were widely perceived as bureaucratic exercises rather than functional educational tools. Physical inspection of IEP files provided incontrovertible evidence supporting these perceptions, showing generic, copy-pasted goals with minimal evidence of progress monitoring or meaningful parental involvement in approximately 70% of cases.

4. Inadequate Teacher Preparation and Professional Development:

The data reveals a self-perpetuating cycle wherein insufficient training leads to diminished confidence, which subsequently impedes effective classroom implementation. Quantitative measures showed that only 52% of teachers felt confident in their ability to manage an inclusive classroom, and a mere 38% believed they had received adequate training to identify different types of disabilities. Qualitative interviews revealed that existing professional development opportunities are often perceived as theoretical and disconnected from classroom realities.

5. Limited Parental Engagement and Community Awareness:

The study identified a crucial gap in parental involvement and community sensitization. Quantitative survey results showed that only 35% of parents of CWSN regularly participated in school activities or IEP meetings, while 60% of teachers reported limited parental engagement in their children's educational planning. Qualitative interviews uncovered underlying reasons for this disconnect, with parents expressing feelings of being overwhelmed and under-informed. Observational data from parent-teacher meetings confirmed low participation rates of parents of CWSN and minimal use of accessible communication strategies by school staff.

6. Resource Allocation and Financial Constraints:

The triangulation analysis identified chronic resource limitations as a cross-cutting barrier affecting multiple aspects of RPwD Act implementation. Quantitative data from school

administrators indicated that 72% reported insufficient budgets specifically allocated for inclusive education initiatives. Qualitative interviews with state-level officials revealed that while funds were theoretically available through central schemes, accessing them required navigating complex bureaucratic procedures that many schools found prohibitive. Financial records analysis further revealed that less than 40% of the allocated funds for inclusive education were actually utilized within the academic year, primarily due to procedural complexities.

Conclusion:

The implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016, in Delhi's elementary schools presents a dual narrative of commendable structural progress alongside significant qualitative challenges. The study concludes that while the foundational framework for inclusion is firmly in place evidenced by the universal deployment of Special Education Teachers and Resource Rooms, the system struggles with the depth and consistency of its execution.

A gap exists between policy intent and ground-level reality. Critical physical infrastructure, particularly accessible sanitation, remains inadequate, creating fundamental barriers. Furthermore, key initiatives are hampered by systemic issues: Special Education Teachers are often overburdened and professionally isolated, and the Individualized Education Plan process has become a ritual of paperwork compliance rather than a dynamic tool for learning. While there is strong philosophical support for inclusion among educators, this has not fully translated into widespread confidence or competency in inclusive classroom practices.

In essence, Delhi has successfully built the architecture of inclusion but has not yet fully activated its ecosystem. The journey has moved from a phase of establishing basic compliance to a critical juncture where the focus must shift to enhancing quality, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that every provision of the law translates into meaningful educational experiences for children with disabilities.

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