

Parental Contribution to the Schooling of Differently-Abled Children in Mizoram

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Abstract

Parental contribution to the schooling of differently-abled children plays an integral part in their academic development. Parents serve as key advocates, ensuring that their children receive appropriate care and education tailored to their unique abilities. By collaborating with educators, healthcare professionals, and support networks, parents help create individualised learning plans that address their child's needs. Active parental involvement strengthens the child's academic performance, emotional well-being, and social skills. This collaborative approach in Mizoram helps build an inclusive community, empowering differently-abled children to achieve their full potential while receiving vital emotional and educational support. Thus, the study aims to investigate the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram.

Keywords: Parents, Contribution, Schooling, Differently-Abled Children, Mizoram.

Introduction

Schooling for differently-abled children is essential for their overall development, offering not only academic learning but also opportunities for social interaction and skill-building. It equips children with the tools needed for independence and confidence, while promoting their integration into society (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Parental contribution is a critical element in this process, as parents bring unique insights into their child's specific needs and abilities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Epstein et al. 2009). By actively participating in their child's education, parents help tailor learning approaches, ensuring they are personalized and effective. Their involvement creates a supportive, nurturing environment that enables children to excel academically, emotionally, and socially, ultimately empowering them to reach their full potential (Shammari, 2006; O'Connor et al., 2021).

Rationale of the study

The schooling of differently-abled children has begun to gain recognition in recent times. This positive development greatly contributes to the academic and overall well-being of these children. However, the success of this movement largely depends on the contributions of parents to their children's education. They require constant care, guidance, support, and encouragement from their parents. Thus, the present study aims to understand the extent of parental involvement in Mizoram in the schooling of their differently-abled children and their contributions to their success. Lastly, the study hopes to further enrich this field, providing valuable insights for other researchers and policymakers.

Review of related literature

The review of related literature for the present study are –

Shammari (2006) carried out a study called "Special education teachers' attitudes towards autistic students in the autism school in the State of Kuwait: a case study." This finding highlights the importance of parents' active participation in the education of their children with special needs. When parents are involved, teachers gain valuable insights into the unique needs and aspirations of these children, enabling them to provide more effective and tailored support.

Rodriguez et al. (2014) in their study titled, "Parents' Views of Schools' Involvement Efforts", reported that 96 parents of disabled students in 18 Miami schools felt that their child's educational decision-making process needed to be valued, respected, and understood in order to maximise their potential. By engaging parents in the decision-making process, the school can gain valuable insights and perspectives that can optimise the educational potential of these students.

Thakuri (2014) undertook a study titled "Stress and Coping Mechanism among the Parents of Intellectual Disable Children" in Kathmandu valley, Nepal. It was discovered that joint families had more parenting stress in comparison to nuclear families, as balancing the needs of the disabled child with the needs of other family members can be a delicate task, requiring open communication, understanding, and collaboration.

Ahmed (2015) completed a study known as "Child with Intellectual Disability and Parental Response: A Comparative Study of Nuclear and Extended Family Structures in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan." The study comprises 28 parents having children with intellectual disabilities in nuclear and extended families and 7 focus groups in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study comes to the conclusion that, in comparison to nuclear families, extended families are better suited to care for a child with disabilities.

O'Connor et al. (2021) initiated a study in Northern Ireland during the closure of special schools titled "Parental involvement during COVID-19: experiences from the special school." They discovered that nearly 25% of parents had taken unpaid time off from their jobs to look after their children. The majority of parents (83%) said their child's school sent them emails on a regular basis, including updates via Facebook, Zoom, and Seesaw, as well as emails from the principal and teacher.

Delimitations of the study

The delimitations of the present study are –

1. The study is delimited to the Mizo mothers' and in the absence of mother, the father or other immediate caregiver of differently-abled children.
2. The study is delimited to differently-abled children who are enrolled in an educational institution.
3. The study is delimited to five Districts of Mizoram namely Aizawl, Lunglei, Champhai, Kolasib and Mamit.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study are –

1. To study the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram.
2. To compare the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram with reference to family settings.

Hypothesis of the study

The hypothesis of the present study is -

There is no significant difference in the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram with reference to family settings.

Methodology and Procedure

Method of the Study: The present study employed Descriptive Survey Method

Population: The population for the present study comprises of parents of differently-abled children whose children are enrolled in an educational institution.

Sample: The investigator selected 350 (three hundred and fifty) parents in Mizoram using cluster random sampling method.

Tools Used: The investigator used the “Parent Involvement scale (PIS)” developed by Chopra & Sahoo (2007). The norms for interpretation of the tool are recalibrated to ensure maximum accuracy and reliability for the present study.

Procedure of Data Analysis: The investigator personally visits the home of the selected sample and collects the necessary data. For analyzing data, statistical technique such as Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ test were employed to find accurate results.

Analysis and Interpretation of the study

Objective No. 1: To study the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram.

The contribution of parents from the five districts of Aizawl, Lunglei, Champhai, Kolasib, and Mamit district is calculated and categorised in accordance with the four dimensions of school, home, involvement through PTA, and overall involvement.

The following tables and figures highlight the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram.

1.1: Dimension of School Involvement

The contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram on the dimension of school involvement is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Dimension of school involvement

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low Parent Involvement	15 and below	116	33.14
Average Parent Involvement	16 – 24	196	56.00
High Parent Involvement	25 and above	38	10.86
Total	-	350	100

Analysis of the data in Table 1, illustrates that out of the 350 parents, 116 (33.14%) have low school involvement, 196 (56%) have average school involvement, and 38 (10.86%) have high school involvement when it comes to the care and education of their differently-abled children. A large number of parents, i.e., 196 (56%) of them, appear to be moderately involved in their differently-abled children's education, according to this finding.

1.2: Dimension of Home Involvement

The contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram on the dimension of school involvement is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Dimension of home involvement

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low Parent Involvement	22 and below	188	53.72
Average Parent Involvement	23 – 34	142	40.57
High Parent Involvement	35 and above	20	5.71
Total	-	350	100

Based on the findings shown in Table 2, 188 (53.72%) out of the 350 parents have low home involvement, 142 (40.57%) have average home involvement, and 20 (5.71%) have high home involvement.

This data suggests that a larger proportion of parents—188 (53.72%)—have low involvement at home in contributing to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram.

1.3: Dimension of Involvement through PTA

The contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram on the dimension of involvement through PTA is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Dimension of involvement through PTA

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low Parent Involvement	14 and below	160	45.7
Average Parent Involvement	15 – 25	183	52.3
High Parent Involvement	26 and above	7	2.00
Total	-	350	100

An examination of the data presented in Table 3, indicates that out of the 350 parents, 160 (45.70%) have low PTA involvement, 183 (52.3%) have average PTA involvement, and only 7 (2.00%) have high PTA involvement.

It is clear that a significant number of parents—183 (52.3%)—have average PTA involvement, which indicates a moderate contribution to the education and schooling of their differently-abled children through parent-teacher associations.

1.4: Dimension of Overall Involvement

The contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram on the dimension of overall involvement is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Dimension of overall involvement

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low Parent Involvement	48 and below	166	33.14
Average Parent Involvement	49 – 80	209	59.72

High Parent Involvement	81 and above	25	7.14
Total	-	350	100

The findings provided in Table 4, present the total overall classification of parents' involvement in the care and education of differently-abled children. A total of 350 parents are involved; 116 (33.14%) have low involvement, 209 (59.72%) have average involvement, and 25 (7.14%) have high overall involvement. According to these findings, 209 parents (59.72%)—or the general public—are generally involved in contributing to the schooling of differently-abled children.

Objective No 2: To compare the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram with reference to family settings.

The parents are categorised into two groups: nuclear family and joint family. From the selected sample there are 226 parents coming from nuclear family and 124 parents are from joint family. The comparison is done using 't-test' analysis, the findings of which are presented in the following Table 5.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram with reference to family settings.

Table 5 Contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram with reference to family settings

Involvement	Type of family	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
School Involvement	Nuclear	226	19.89	4.53	10.26	0.01
	Joint	124	14.72	4.46		
Home Involvement	Nuclear	226	24.26	6.7	7.91	0.01
	Joint	124	18.65	5.66		
PTA Involvement	Nuclear	226	16.78	4.56	5.4	0.01
	Joint	124	14.07	4.22		
Overall Involvement	Nuclear	226	60.95	13.73	8.89	0.01
	Joint	124	47.52	13.1		

Table 5, highlights the comparison of parents' contribution to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram with reference to family settings.

It is found that, in all the dimension of involvement, there exist a significant difference between the contribution of parents from nuclear family and joint family (0.05 = 1.95, 0.01 = 2.59), whereby, parents from nuclear family contributed more as compared to parents from joint family.

Thus, the null hypothesis which state that there is no significant difference in the contribution of parents to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram with reference to family settings is rejected.

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are listed below –

Parents contribution to the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram differs in all the dimension of involvement.

In terms of school, PTA, and overall involvement, the largest group of parents contributed at an average level, followed by those with low contributions, while those with high contributions were the fewest in number.

In the dimension of home involvement, the largest group of parents had low involvement, followed by those with average and high involvement. This highlights the varying levels of parental contribution.

The contribution of parents from nuclear and joint families differs across all dimensions of parental involvement.

Discussion

The contribution of parents to the schooling of their differently-abled children in Mizoram is significant, with a moderate level of involvement across school activities, PTA engagement, and overall participation. This consistent contribution reflects a balanced commitment to supporting their children's education, which plays a crucial role in their development.

Furthermore, the contribution of parents differs between nuclear and joint families. In joint families, the shared responsibilities often lead to greater collective involvement, enhancing the support for the child's schooling, this study aligns with the finding of Thakuri (2014). On the other hand, parents from nuclear families typically take on more individual responsibility, resulting in more focused yet sometimes limited engagement. Regardless of family structure, parental involvement is vital for the success of differently-abled children's education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings highlight the essential role of parental contribution in the schooling of differently-abled children in Mizoram. Parents show moderate, consistent contributions across school, PTA, and overall engagement, indicating a balanced commitment to their children's schooling. Furthermore, the type of family structure influences the level of involvement, with joint families benefiting from shared responsibilities that lead to greater collective engagement, while nuclear families typically have more focused but sometimes limited contributions. Overall, these findings emphasise the importance of active parental contribution and participation, regardless of family structure, in fostering the educational success of differently-abled children.

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