

Problems Faced by Teachers in Special Schools of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The present investigation was undertaken to study the problems faced by teachers of special schools for speech and hearing impaired children in Himachal Pradesh. For conducting this investigation, survey method was employed and all the teachers serving in special school Dhalli (Shimla) and Sundernagar (Mandi) were included in the sample. The data was gathered with the help of a self-developed interview schedule for teachers which contained both close-ended and open-ended items. The data were analyzed by employing frequency count and percentage analysis. It was pointed out by teachers of special school Dhalli and Sundernagar that these schools are lacking in proper infrastructural facilities, subject-wise teaching staff and they are facing many other difficulties which has been explained in detail in this paper.

Keywords

Special school, Speech Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Special Teacher

Introduction

Special children are those students who require special education and related services. They need special education because they are markedly different from most children in one or more ways. They may have specific learning difficulties, emotional problems, physical disabilities, mental retardation hampering their learning, disordered speech or language, or special gifts or talents. So, Special children are the category of children who differ from average, to such an extent that they need some type of special instruction. In addition to family, most of the learning of the child takes place in the school. What he learns is as important as how he learns. One basic principle of educating the speech and hearing impaired children is that the education and training should start at a very early age so that child's organs could be trained and he/she may be able to make use of the instruction properly. A school for speech and hearing impaired children should be run by trained teachers. One more thing that should be kept in mind is the slow progress which a speech and hearing impaired child will show in his studies. An average deaf child takes about 8-10 years to reach the upper primary standard. As the degree of hearing impairment varies from child to child, Individual attention of the teacher to each child is very important.

The teacher for a disabled child is a special teacher. He/she has a multiple roles to discharge, such as teaching the child, counseling of the parents and acting as a welfare agent in the society. Teacher has to play a significant role in the process of integrating the disabled child in the society. For this purpose a special teacher himself/herself had to acquire special educational training, knowledge and skill to deal with disabled child. Some orientation programmes and refresher courses needs to be organized for the special teachers. This would refresh their knowledge skills and would acquaint them with the latest development in educating disabled children. In case of speech and hearing impaired children a teacher's role is very important. He should teach them hearing not through hearing but through gestures, expressions and signs. A hearing impaired should not be compelled to talk. Love and sympathy of teacher can contribute a lot in developing the speech of a child.

Review of Literature

Pranjpe (1994) found that the special education teachers placed more importance on the higher order needs of autonomy, self-

esteem and self-actualization and need fulfillment was positively related to quality of working life perception for feelings and conditions. Conrey (2004) examined the relationship between workplace domains, specific demographic factors and burnout of special education teachers in Colorado. Results revealed that the respondents indicated satisfaction with their work. Both middle and high school special educators demonstrated significantly more dissatisfaction with orderliness of the school environment than elementary and early childhood teachers. Meloncon (2012) examined the professional challenges, job satisfaction and intention to leave the profession of urban elementary special education teachers. Results of the study suggested that the professional challenges significantly influenced job satisfaction and attitudes about leaving the profession were significantly influenced by job satisfaction. Jyoti & Reddy (1998) reported that special teachers were not satisfied with the factors related to academic aspects. They were immensely satisfied with their profession on the aspects related to 'student' and on the aspects pertaining to interpersonal relationship. Medley (2009) explored self-contained and inclusive classrooms in different districts to show how special education services can be improved. It was revealed that smaller number of students in classroom tend to enhance educational quality and that both inclusive and self-contained classrooms have advantages depending upon the needs of the students. Luckner and Miller (1994) found that the general education classroom supplemented with itinerant services was an effective model for this type of students. Reddy (2000) conducted a study on role performance of special education teachers and reported that the role performance of all the teachers was low and the intensive training was required. Conners (2008) found that an in-depth knowledge within classroom management, pedagogy and content knowledge domain, an in-depth knowledge of disabilities and of individual students and a strong presence of teacher efficacy, motivation and belief system contributed as essential components for their expertise. Gupta and Sanwal (2000) revealed that the teachers who had dealt with hearing and speech impaired children said that the use of gestures and the blackboards as the best method whereas the teachers who had never dealt with hearing and speech impaired children said that the speech and hearing impaired children should be evaluated on the basis of their talents and aptitudes like dancing, painting etc. Koch and Katherine (2012) revealed that those parent-teachers,

who have children with disability, reported that they were better able to empathize with the parents of their students, have a better understanding of what it means to be a student with disability and can bring a broader knowledge of disability and disability intervention to the classroom.

On the basis of review of previous studies, it appears that in India a very few studies have been conducted in this area. In Himachal Pradesh studies conducted on speech and hearing impaired children are considerably less. There is a dearth of studies in this area. It is the need of the hour to investigate thoroughly major issues and challenges faced by teachers teaching in special schools. The study was undertaken with following objectives:

Objectives

1. To study the problems faced by teachers of special schools for speech and hearing impaired children in Himachal Pradesh in terms of the following:
 - Work load
 - Problems faced and their redressal with Head, Teachers, Students and parents
 - Job satisfaction

Methodology

In this paper survey technique under descriptive method of research was employed. Data was collected from the teachers serving in special schools for speech and hearing impaired children Dhalli (Shimla) and Sundernagar (Mandi), Himachal Pradesh. Under this exercise, all the teachers working in these institutions were included in the sample. Keeping in view the feasibility of the interview schedule for gathering information in educational research, an interview schedule regarding different problems being faced by teachers was developed and validated by the authors. This interview schedule comprised of 8 questions which were either close-ended or open-ended in nature. The content validity of interview schedule was appropriately ensured by the researcher. Data collected with the help of interview schedule was analyzed with the help of frequency count and percentage analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The analysis of data is presented under three headings i.e. A, B and C.

- A. Work load
- B. Problems faced and their redressal with Head, Teachers, Students and parents
- C. Job satisfaction

A. Work Load: The work load on teachers working in both the institutions varies from 4-6 periods per day. The detail has been depicted in the following table:

Table 1 : Work Load

Sr. No.	No. of classes taken per day	No. of teachers at Dhalli	%age	No. of teachers at Sundernagar	%age
1.	Upto 4 classes	7	87.5	3	50
2.	Above 5	1	12.5	3	50
	Total	8		6	

As per the table 1 it is evident that 87.5% of the teachers are

taking maximum of 4 classes per day and other 12.5% in special school Dhalli are taking above 5. On the other hand 50% of the teachers in special school Sundernagar are taking upto 4 classes daily and the other half percent of the teachers are taking more than 5 classes per day.

Therefore from the above description we can infer that teachers in both the institutions are facing a work load of 4 or more than 5 classes per day.

B. Problems being faced by the teachers of two institutions (Institution I, Institution II) and their redressal with head, teachers, students and parents are discussed below:

Institution I

The requisite information regarding the problems and their redressal as given by the teachers in special school Dhalli is as under:

Problems Faced

- Institution is lacking in a proper infrastructure.
- Speech therapists at special school Dhalli disclosed that school is lacking in teaching staff. They are overburdened as they have to take classes for other subjects out of their expertise. One of the teachers informed that teachers are facing problems in dealing with the children coming from normal children schools and getting direct admission in special school, teachers reported that such children use regional signs for communication and it creates lots of nuisance.
- Teachers also reported non-availability of extra teachers for students after school hours, when they are in hostel. Teachers at special school Dhalli also revealed non-availability of the teaching –learning material.
- Majority of the teachers disclosed about non-suitability of the infrastructure for the students. They also informed about non-availability of auditorium for conducting cultural programmes.
- Some of them said that they are working on contractual basis and are not being regularized by their concerned departments and this is the major cause for their dissatisfaction towards their job.

Redressal of Problems:

- **Discussion of problems with head:** Teachers when asked about interaction with head revealed that the head of the institution usually interact with them regarding the problems being faced by them.
- **Discussion of problems being faced by the students:** Teachers when asked about discussion with students regarding their problems informed that most of them interact with students regarding their problems. They also informed that the students usually discuss problems related to study, health, hostel issues and feeling of loneliness.
- **Parent Teacher Meeting:** Teachers disclosed that there is no fixed schedule for parent teacher meeting. They also reported that whenever parents are called for meeting, a few of them come to attend.
- **Establishment of Parent Teachers association:** Teachers at special school Dhalli disclosed about non-availability of any forum for redressal of various issues of parents. They mentioned ignorance, less interest and illiteracy among parents as major reasons for non- formation of PTA (Parent

Teacher Association).

Institution II

The requisite information regarding the problems and their redressal as given by the teachers in special school Sundernagar is as under:

Problems Faced

- Teachers at special school Sundernagar informed that school is lacking in a proper infrastructure.
- Teachers are overburdened as there is shortage of the teaching staff. Subject-wise teachers are not available.
- Teachers at special school Sundernagar also revealed that the curriculum is not according to the needs of the students. It is very vast so they are facing problems in teaching. Some of the teachers disclosed that they have been appointed on contract basis and they are not being regularized by the department, which is leading to dissatisfaction towards their job.

Redressal of Problems:

- Discussion of problems with head: Teachers when asked about discussion of problems with head told that the head of the institution usually interact with them regarding the problems being faced by them.
- Discussion of problems being faced by the students: Teachers when asked about interaction with students told that most of them interact with students regarding their problems. They also informed that the students usually discuss problems related to study, health and their day to day problems.
- Parent Teacher Meeting: Teachers disclosed that there is no fixed schedule for parent teacher meeting. But whenever they come to meet teachers they talk about the study related issues of their wards.
- Establishment of PTA: Teachers at special school Sundernagar disclosed about non-availability of any forum like PTA for redressal of various issues of parents.

C. Job satisfaction

The table showing the information regarding the satisfaction of teachers with their job is given in Table 2, as under:

Table 2: Job satisfaction

Sr.	Response	No. of teachers at Dhalli	% age	No. of teachers at Sundernagar	%age
1.	Satisfied	4	50	5	83.33
2.	Not-satisfied	4	50	1	16.67
	Total	8		6	

The above table shows that there are only 50% teachers in special school Dhalli who are satisfied with their job; whereas the remaining 50% are not satisfied with their job. As far as special school Sundernagar is concerned 83.33% of the teachers are satisfied with their job whereas 16.67 % of the teachers are not satisfied.

i. Willingness to shift to school of normal children

The table showing the information regarding the willingness of

teachers to shift to the schools of normal children is as under:

Table 3 : Willingness to shift to school of normal children

Sr.	Response	No. of teachers at Dhalli	% age	No. of teachers at Sundernagar	%age
1.	Yes	6	75	2	33.33
2.	No	2	25	4	66.67
	Total	8		6	

From the above table it is clear that 75% of the teachers at special school Dhalli showed their willingness to shift to normal children school whereas 25% of the teachers don't want to shift. As far as special school Sundernagar is concerned 33.33% of the teachers want to shift to normal children school whereas 66.67% of the teachers don't want to shift. On further discussion some of the teachers at Dhalli School revealed that they are working on contract basis and their salary is less so they will prefer to shift to normal children school if given an opportunity. It can be conclude that the teachers who are working in the school mainly for income are ready to shift to other schools. The number of such teachers was more at special school Dhalli.

Findings and Discussion of Results

The findings and discussion of results are presented below:

Special School Dhalli (Shimla)

- Teachers in special school Dhalli revealed that the institution is lacking in a proper infrastructure, teaching staff and facing problem in dealing with the children coming from normal children schools and getting direct admission in special school, teachers reported that such children use regional signs for communication and it creates lots of nuisance. Teachers also reported non-availability of extra teachers for students after school hours, when they are in hostel. Teachers at special school Dhalli also revealed non-availability of the teaching – learning material and majority of them disclosed about non-suitability of the infrastructure for the students. They also informed about non-availability of auditorium for conducting cultural programmes.
- All of them told that the head of the institution usually interact with them regarding the problems being faced by them. Most of them interact with students regarding their problems. They also informed that the students usually discuss problems related to study, health, hostel issues and feeling of loneliness.
- Teachers disclosed that there is no fixed schedule for parent teacher meeting. They also reported that whenever parents are called for meeting, a few of them come to attend. Teachers at special school Dhalli also disclosed about non-availability of any forum for redressal of various issues of parents. They mentioned ignorance, less interest and illiteracy among parents as major reasons for non- formation of PTA (Parent Teacher Association).

Special School Sundernagar (Mandi)

- Teachers at special school Sundernagar informed that school is lacking in a proper infrastructure. Teachers are overburdened as there is shortage of the teaching staff. Subject-wise teachers are not available.

- Teachers at special school Sundernagar also revealed that the curriculum is not according to the needs of the students. It is very vast so they are facing problems in teaching.
- Some of the teachers disclosed that they have been appointed on contract basis and they are not being regularized by the department, which is leading to dissatisfaction towards their job. All of them told that the head of the institution usually interact with them regarding the problems being faced by them.
- Teachers told that they also interact with students regarding their problems and students usually discuss problems related to study, health and their day to day problems.
- All of them disclosed that there is no fixed schedule for parent teacher meeting. But whenever they come to meet teachers they talk about the study related issues of their wards. Teachers at special school Sundernagar also disclosed about non-availability of any forum like PTA for redressal of various issues of parents.

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