

Involvement of Parents in the Upbringing and Education of Children with Special Needs in Kolasib District

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Abstract

Parents are the first teachers and first role-models for a child. They occupy an irreplaceable role in the life of a child. They influence their social, emotional, physical and mental development. This holds true for both abled and disabled children. The educational and overall well-being of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) is closely related with the level of parental involvement as it fosters a collaborative approach between parents, educators, and healthcare professionals. When parents actively participate in their child's education, they gain a deeper understanding of their child's needs and progress. This enables them to provide consistent support and reinforce learning strategies at home, ultimately contributing to the child's overall development and well-being. By working together as a team, parents can help create a nurturing and inclusive environment that empowers children with special needs to reach their full potential. Thus, the study aims to investigate the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of their CWSN in the district of Kolasib.

Keywords: Parents, Involvement, Children with Special Needs, Kolasib district.

Introduction

Parents of CWSN often serve as the primary advocates for their children, working closely with educators, therapists, and healthcare providers to ensure that their child's unique needs are being met. By actively participating in their child's education and treatment plans, parents can help to create a supportive environment that fosters their

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child's growth and development (Elkin, Van Kraayenoord & Jobling, 2003; Roberts and Kaiser, 2011). Their dedication and advocacy are essential in helping children with special needs thrive and reach their full potential. In addition to advocating for their children, parents of children with special needs also play a critical role in providing emotional support and encouragement. They often face unique challenges and obstacles, such as navigating complex healthcare systems, accessing specialized services, and managing day-to-day care routines (Hadjiyiannakou, Ioannou & Tzoigkourous, 2007). By offering love, understanding, and a sense of stability, parents create a nurturing environment that allows their children to feel safe, valued, and empowered to overcome obstacles and achieve their goals. This unwavering support and dedication from parents are fundamental in helping children with special needs navigate the complexities of the world around them and lead fulfilling lives (Bagadood, 2021).

Rationale of the Study

A successful upbringing of a child starts with parental support. Well-involved parents produce successful children who are less prone to participate in undesirable activities and behaviours. Their involvement in activities, whether social, intellectual, or otherwise, shows how successful and mature the child is because they are their first instructor and role model. Many parents, meanwhile, merely permitted their children alone to take care of themselves because they were unable to understand this viewpoint. In particular, CWSN required the greatest care and attention, it is impacting and detrimental when parents act irresponsibly. Thus, a study on the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN become crucial to shed light on the current status of CWSN in Kolasib district, Mizoram. Furthermore, it is hoped that the finding of this study will contribute to the existing knowledge and also provide baseline information for the growth and development of CWSN in Kolasib district, Mizoram.

Review of Related Literature

Some of the literature related to the present study are reviewed below –

Elkin et al., (2003) in their research on “Parents’ Attitudes to Inclusion of their Children with Special Need” in Australia revealed that more interactions between parents and qualified teachers would be advantageous to both parties. The school’s ability to comprehend and work with students who have special needs may be strengthened by these interactions and active participation. Enhanced Parent-teacher engagements through approaches like Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) offer several benefits.

Hadjiyiannakou et al., (2007) in their study named “Parents of Disabled Children: The Educational System and the Everyday Challenges” highlights the problems and barriers parents of disabled children faced in Cyprus. The absence of a support system

for parents of disabled children creates lot of problems. Parents of disabled children in Cyprus, in most cases they are left alone until their child will attend a school. Then parents are so overwhelmed with negative experiences, they are so tired, thus they failed to appreciate the guidance and the help that professionals offer them.

Roberts and Kaiser (2011) in their study called “The Effectiveness of Parent-Implemented Language Interventions: A Meta-Analysis” found that parental classify the benefits of parental involvement into four categories: to meet parental involvement positively impact the academic progress and overall well-being of disabled students. By actively participating in their child’s education, parents can provide the necessary support and encouragement that can help boost confidence, motivation, and self-esteem in students facing disabilities.

Bagadood (2021) stated in his study of “Parental Involvement and Education of Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Saudi Arabia” that parents must receive instruction and guidelines from the school on how to help their children with their homework. Whether or not their children attend school, parents’ ought to be involved in their education and extended an invitation to take part in all school-sponsored events. At its core, parents are the most significant individuals in their children’s lives, even though the school bears the responsibility for their academic progress during school hours. The experiences that parents’ expose their children to outside of school can greatly enrich their lives in a multitude of ways.

Delimitations

The delimitations of the present study are -

1. The study is delimited to Mizo mothers and in the absence of mother, the immediate caregiver of CWSN.
2. The study is delimited to only those CWSN who are enrolled in an educational institution.
3. The study is delimited to only one district of Mizoram, i.e., Kolasib district.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are listed below –

1. To find out the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN.
2. To compare the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on locale.
3. To compare the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on type of family.

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the present study are as follows –

1. There is no significant relationship between the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on locale.
2. There is no significant relationship between the involvement of parent in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on type of family.

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 CWSN in Kolasib district whose children are enrolled in an educational institution.

Sample

The investigator selected 53 (fifty-three) parents of CWSN in Kolasib district 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 visited the homes of the selected sample and collected the necessary data. For analyzing data, statistical technique such as Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation and ‘t’ tests were employed to find accurate results.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Study

Objective No.1: To find out the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN.

In order to find out the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN, their responses are categorized into four dimensions namely School Involvement, Home Involvement, Involvement through Parent’s Teacher Association (PTA) and Overall Involvement as per the manual of the scale employed for the present study.

Table. 1

School involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low involvement	15 and below	34	64.15
Average involvement	16-24	16	30.18
High involvement	25 and above	3	5.67
Total	-	53	100

A cursory glance at Table. 1, shows the school involvement of parents from Kolasib district. It is found that, out of the total 53 parents, 34 (64.15%) parents are having low involvement, 16 (30.18%) are having average involvement and the remaining 3 (5.67%) are having high involvement in school.

It can thus, be concluded that the highest numbers of parents are having low involvement in school, followed by those having average involvement and the parents having high involvement constitute the fewest in number.

Table. 2

Home involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low involvement	22 and above	49	92.45
Average involvement	23-34	4	7.55
High involvement	35 and above	0	0
Total	-	53	100

An examination of data vide Table. 2, shows the home involvement of parents in Kolasib district. From the selected 53 parents, 49 (92.45%) are having low involvement at home and the remaining 4 (7.55%) are having an average home involvement. Parents from the selected sample were not found to have high involvement at home.

In accordance with the data displayed above, majority of the parents have low involvement at home while the minority have an average level of involvement at home.

Table. 3

PTA involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low involvement	14 and below	37	69.82
Average involvement	15-25	16	30.18
High involvement	26 and above	0	0
Total	-	53	100

Table. 3, displays the PTA involvement of parents in Kolasib district. The data reflects that, among the 53 parents, 37 (69.82%) parents are having low involvement through PTA followed by 16 (30.18%) parents having an average PTA involvement. No parents were found to have high PTA involvement from the selected sample.

Considering the details shown in the aforementioned table, it is clear that there are more parents with low level of PTA involvement than there are with average level involvement. In Kolasib district, among the selected parents, there lack any parents having high involvement through PTA.

Table. 4

Overall involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN

Category	Range of score	Number of parents	Percentage of parents
Low involvement	48 and below	36	67.93
Average involvement	49-80	16	30.19
High involvement	81 and above	1	1.88
Total	-	53	100

The above Table. 4, presents the overall involvement of parents in Kolasib district. The obtained data reveals that, out of the total 53 parents, 36 (67.93%) parents are having low overall involvement, 16 (30.19%) parents are having average involvement and the remaining 1 (1.88%) parent is having high overall involvement.

As a result, it can be gathered that, from the selected 53 parents, that the majority are having low overall involvement followed by those having an average involvement while there is one parent having high overall involvement.

Objective No.2: To compare the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on locale.

To compare the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN, the parents are divided into two categories of rural and urban; wherein parents in the

neighbouring villages were labelled as rural locale and the capital district were labelled as urban locale. The comparison between the two groups of parents in all the dimensions of parental involvement is done by employing 't'-test which is presented below –

Table. 5
Comparison of school involvement of parents based on locale

Locale	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Rural	15	13.73	4.75	51	1.08	NS
Urban	38	15.28	4.69			

An examination of data vide Table. 5, shows the comparison of school involvement of parents based on locale. The finding reveals that the calculated mean score of rural locale is 13.73 with a standard deviation of 4.75, while the calculated mean score of urban locale is 15.28 with a standard deviation of 4.69.

The obtained 't'-value is found to be 1.08 which is smaller than the critical value of 't' at both level of confidence ($0.05 = 1.95$, $0.01 = 2.59$) indicating that the involvement of parents in school does not differ based on locale.

Table. 6
Comparison of home involvement of parents based on locale

Locale	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Rural	15	16.06	3.37	51	0.72	NS
Urban	38	16.87	3.75			

An observation of Table. 6, shows the comparison of home involvement of parents based on locale. The finding shows that the calculated mean score is 16.06 and 16.87 for rural and urban locale respectively. The standard deviation is found to be 3.37 and 3.75 for both rural and urban locales respectively.

The 't'-value is found to be 0.72 which is smaller than the critical value of 't' at both levels of confidence indicating that the home involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN does not differ based on locale.

Table. 7

Comparison of PTA involvement of parents based on locale

Locale	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Rural	15	12.86	3.46	51	1.21	NS
Urban	38	14.15	3.48			

Table. 7, shows the comparison of PTA involvement of parents based on locale. The finding shows that the calculated mean score and standard deviation for rural locale is 12.86 and 3.46 respectively. Likewise, the calculated mean score and standard deviation for urban locale is 14.15 and 3.48 respectively.

The 't'-value is found to be 1.21 which is smaller than the critical value of 't' at both level of confidence indicating that the PTA involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN does not differ based on locale.

Table. 8

Comparison of overall involvement of parents based on locale

Locale	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Rural	15	42.66	10.3	51	1.11	NS
Urban	38	46.32	10.8			

The above Table. 8, shows the overall comparison of parental involvement based on locale. The finding shows that the calculated mean score and standard deviation for rural locale is 42.66 and 10.3 respectively. Likewise, the calculated mean score and standard deviation for urban locale is 46.32 and 10.8 respectively.

The obtained 't'-value is found to be 1.11 which is smaller than the critical value of 't' at both level of confidence indicating that the overall involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN does not differ based on locale.

Therefore, the null hypothesis which holds that there is no significant relationship between the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on locale can be accepted.

Objective No.3: To compare the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on type of family.

To compare the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN, the parents are divided into two categories of nuclear and joint family based on the type of family settings they inhabit. The comparison between the two groups of parents in all the dimensions of parental involvement is done by employing 't'-test which is presented below –

Table. 9

Comparison of school involvement of parents based on type of family

Type of family	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Nuclear family	36	15.13	4.72	51	0.64	NS
Joint family	17	14.23	4.78			

It can be inferred from Table. 9, that the comparison of school involvement of parents based on the type of family does not have a significant difference. The above table reveals that the calculated mean score of nuclear family is 15.13 with a standard deviation of 4.72. Whereas the calculated mean score of joint family is 14.23 with a standard deviation of 4.78.

The obtained value of 't' as presented in the table, is found to be 0.64, which is smaller than the critical value of 't' at both 0.01 and 0.05 level of confidence. Thus, it can be stated that the school involvement of parents based on the type of family setting they inhabit does not have a significant difference in the upbringing and education of CWSN.

Table. 10

Comparison of home involvement of parents based on type of family

Type of family	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Nuclear family	36	17	3.97	51	1.05	NS
Joint family	17	15.88	2.71			

Table. 10, reveals the comparison of home involvement of parents based on the type of family settings they have. It is found that the mean score of nuclear family is 17 with a standard deviation of 3.97. Additionally, the calculated mean value of joint family is found to be 15.88 with a standard deviation of 2.71.

The obtained value of 't' as seen in the table, is 1.05, which is smaller than the critical value of 't' at both level of confidence (0.05 = 1.95, 0.01 = 2.59). This finding indicates that the home involvement of parents based on the type of family do not have a significant difference towards the upbringing and education of CWSN.

Table. 11

Comparison of PTA involvement of parents based on type of family

Type of family	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Nuclear family	36	13.91	3.64	51	0.37	NS
Joint family	17	13.52	3.22			

Table. 11, reveals the results of comparison made on the PTA involvement of parents based on the type of family settings they inhabit. As seen in the above table, the obtained mean score of nuclear family is 13.91, while the mean score of joint family is 13.52. Furthermore, the value of standard deviation for nuclear family is 3.64 while the value of standard deviation for joint family is 3.22.

It can be inferred that the obtained value of 't' which is 0.37, is smaller than the critical value of 't' at both level of confidence. Consequently, it can be denoted that the PTA involvement of parents based on the type of family settings they inhabit does not have a significant difference towards the upbringing and education of CWSN.

Table. 12

Comparison of overall involvement of parents based on type of family

Type of family	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig.
Nuclear family	36	46.05	11.43	51	0.75	NS
Joint family	17	43.64	9.34			

An examination of Table. 12, highlights the comparison of overall involvement of parents based on the type of family settings they have. The mean score as provided in Table. 12, are 46.05 and 43.64 for nuclear and joint family respectively. Likewise, the calculated value of standard deviation is 11.43 and 9.34 for nuclear and joint family respectively.

The above table reveals that the calculated 't' value is 0.75. This obtained 't' value is smaller than the critical value at both 0.05 and 0.01 level of confidence. Thus, it can be determined that the overall involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN does not differ based on the type of family settings they inhabit.

Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN based on type of family is accepted.

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are listed below –

1. From the present study it was found that out of the total 53 parents, 64.15% have low school involvement while 30.18% of them have an average involvement and the remaining 5.67% have high involvement towards the upbringing and education of CWSN. Therefore, the majority of parents have low school involvement.
2. In home involvement, the study found that the majority i.e., 92.45% have low involvement while 7.55% have an average involvement. This finding indicates that the greatest number of parents have low home involvement followed by those who have an average involvement. However, among the selected sample, no parents were found to have a high involvement at home.
3. The present study reveals that 69.82% have a low PTA involvement followed by 30.18% of parents having an average PTA involvement. No parents were found to possessed high PTA involvement.
4. The overall involvement of parents denotes that, the majority i.e., 67.93% have a low overall involvement, 30.19% of parents have an average involvement and the remaining 1.88% have high overall involvement.
5. The present study found that the involvement of parents based on their locale does not have significant differences based on their locale and type of family settings they exhibit.

Discussions

Involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN is of vital importance. The present study found that the involvement of parents in all the dimensions of parental involvement is at a low level of involvement. One possible explanation could be the lack of adequate resources, educational level, awareness, socio-economic status, infrastructure and supports required by the parents (Elkin et al., 2003; Hadjiyiannakou et al., 2007; Brekke et al., 2023). Additionally, Oranga et al., (2022) reiterates that parents failed to understand their role and thought that teaching their CWSN is solely the responsibility of the teachers. The study also found that the involvement of parents does not differ based on their locale and family settings. This finding is also supported by Sharma et al., (2022) who found that involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of CWSN does not have a significant difference based on locale, type of family settings, gender and settings of the school.

Conclusion

The issue of parents' involvement in the upbringing and education of CWSN had been gathering numerous attentions in recent years. The manner in which parents – or any adult who perform the act of taking care of the child, handle the situations, makes decision and implement actions have an impactful result on the growth and development of CWSN. In comparison to parents who are in denial of their children's disability, the ones who accept and seek ways of training and educating their disabled child in accordance to their disability reflects the love, dedication and their resolute mindset. These positive perceptions are often lacking in many parents of disabled children, who ultimately produced an incapable child unable to even tend for themselves. It is important to note that disability differs from one another, the degree of disability indicates the possibility of the disabled child being an educable or trainable individual. Further research could focus on ways to improve and provide remedy in order to encourage parents to be proactive and more involved in the upbringing and education of CWSN.

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