



RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016: A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AIZAWL, MIZORAM, INDIA

N. Lalpianpuia¹, Dr. Abha Shree²

¹ Assistant Professor, Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE), Aizawl, Mizoram

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram

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ABSTRACT

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 has been implemented in various states of India and this article analyzed how this Act is being implemented in selected secondary schools in Aizawl city, Mizoram. The descriptive and reflective data of observation field diary doubted the standard of the infrastructural facilities over the issue of feasibility as per the needs of differently-abled students. The majority of the school did not have the proper environment for students with disabilities and due to a lack of research, it was difficult to understand and improve the learning process of differently-abled students in the local context. It was also found that due to topological conditions of Mizoram, implementation of the RPWD Act, 2016 is an arduous task but almost all secondary schools did not have an attitudinal barrier and the authority's showed sensitivity towards differently-abled students.

KEYWORDS: *Differently-abled students, RPWD Act, Implementation, Challenges, Aizawl, School*

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The constitution of India provides the right to education to all citizens, including students with disabilities. Article 29(2) of the Constitution provides that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid from state funds. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) was the first statutory body to suggest that education of disabled children has to be organized not merely on humanitarian grounds but also on the grounds of reality. The commission emphasized that the education of disabled children should be an inseparable part of the general education system. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 attempts to address the barriers that curriculum, pedagogy and teaching-learning resources can impose on inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 1966).

The government of India set up segregated workshops, and vocational schools separated from mainstream schools. Most of these segregated schools were expensive and were in cities resulting in further marginalization of the person with special needs. The Kothari commission was constituted to improve the education system. The Plan of Action (PoA) that followed included the concerns of people with disabilities, but unfortunately, the government never implemented it. It reads, "We now turn to the education of disabled children. Their education must be organized not merely on humanitarian grounds but on the grounds of utility. Proper education generally enables disabled children to overcome their handicaps largely and make them into useful citizens. Social justice also demands an overall view of the problem; however, we feel that experimentation with integrated programs is urgently required, and every attempt

should be made to bring in as many children in integrated programs."

In 1974, the ministry of welfare initiated the Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme. This program provided children with special needs "financial Support for books, school uniforms, transportation, special equipment's and aids". But due to major problems such as lack of training and experience of teachers as well as lack of availability of equipment and educational materials, the scheme could be implemented in only 10 out of 29 states. The NPE 1986 stated in contradiction to article 45 that only children with mild disabilities should be included in the mainstream classroom. In contrast, children with "moderate to severe" disabilities are placed in segregated special schools.

The 1992 PoA created to implement the 1986 NPE clarified that "a child with special needs who can be educated in general school should not be placed in special schools". The Year 1992 was also the year of the rehabilitation council of India (RCI) Act. It provides standards for rehabilitation professionals with the inclusion of Special educators as well. In 1995, the Person with Disability Act was passed, which covered all aspects of disability-related areas ranging from building to education as well as jobs, but it defined the disabilities quite narrowly. It only listed seven categories. The act addressed the issue of teacher training for special educators and required that all schools have facilities that accommodate students with various needs. But due to lack of funds, the PWD Act was virtually impossible to implement.



The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was enacted to give effect to the proclamation on the full participation and equality of the people with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. Under this Act, persons with disabilities are defined as those with less than forty percent (40%) disability and identified seven categories of disabilities, namely, blindness, low-vision, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation, and mental illness and leprosy cured. Over time, the conceptual understanding of the rights of persons with disabilities has become clearer, and there has been a worldwide change in approach to handling the issues concerning persons with disabilities. The United Nations adopted its convention on the rights of persons with disabilities laying down the principles to be followed by the State parties for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. India also signed the said convention and then notified the same on the 1st day of October 2007 (Annual Report 2018-19, Office of Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Govt. of Mizoram).

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), for the first time, recognizes that disability is the right of the disabled and is a function of the social environment. The Convention changes the way disability was conceptualized. Traditionally, understandings of disability have been oriented towards the medical (diagnostic) model. The focus has been on individuals' physical or intellectual limitations and their therapeutic and other medical needs. By eliminating the traditional approach to disability, the UNCRPD focuses on awareness aspects that the issues raised are not just personal but societal. It also invites us to think about people 'with disabilities' rather than 'disabled' people.

The convention came into effect on the 3rd day of May 2008. Being a signatory to the convention, India has an international obligation to comply with the provisions of the said convention, which requires entirely new legislation. An Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Sudha Kaul, Vice-Chairperson, India Institute of Cerebral Palsy, Kolkata, was constituted in 2010 and submitted its report in 2011. After the draft, Bill was extensively debated upon at various levels involving State Governments and Union Territories, and various stakeholders, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2014, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. The said Bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament in December 2016. The Act, known as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, came into effect on 19th April 2017. This new Act (RPWD Act, 2016) replaced the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act, 1995 (Disability Act, 2016). The RPWD Act 2016 has defined disability based on an evolving and dynamic concept: According to its definition, 'person with disability' means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others; "person with benchmark disability" means a person with not less than forty percent of a specified disability where specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms and includes

a person with disability where specified disability has been described in measurable terms, as certified by the certifying authority. 'Person with disability having high support needs' means a person with benchmark disability, who needs high support certified under section 58 (2) of the RPWD Act, 2016.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Das and Kattumuri (2011) conducted a qualitative study on 'Children with disabilities in private inclusive schools in Mumbai: Experiences and challenges based on discussions with children with disabilities in private inclusive schools in Mumbai, India. They had employed the case study method as it allowed an intensive study (Shepard 2003) within its real-life context of children with disabilities. It provided an in-depth and systematic way of looking at events and helped in gaining a sharpened understanding of causality, and provides a sound base for extensive exploration in future research (Bent 2006). A total of ten in-depth interviews were conducted from seven inclusive schools in Mumbai. It discussed the development of self-concept, elucidates the benefits and challenges of children with disabilities in inclusive education. According to the results, the study also suggested a recommendation to have resource teachers in the school to be proportionate with the needs of the children with disabilities to provide adequate support. It also found that sometimes, children with disabilities displayed some conditions which may require a constant collaborative effort of the regular and resource teacher in the classroom. For instance, a child with an acute hyperactivity disorder may need a resource teacher in the school. Thus, the study also suggested that the recruitment policy of resource teachers in inclusive schools must ensure that the ratio of resource teachers was commensurate with the extent of disabilities of children enrolled.

Ferrante (2012) conducted a study on 'A Case Study of Inclusion, Respect and Dignity: Whole School Approach Using the Social Model of Disability'. A case study approach is used to evaluate this school's inclusion process and its ramifications on stakeholders. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to triangulate questionnaires, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and observations. A thematic analysis supported by descriptive statistics was used within an interpretative approach of hermeneutic phenomenology. This research contributes theory to the offering a different model for an inclusive school, the use of innovative structures in school management and the changes brought about by valuing the education of disabled students. The findings showed a generally positive attitude towards inclusive education. They suggested that inclusive education heightened the awareness of each interrelated aspect of the school as a community, challenges stereotypes and promotes contextually relevant research.

Kumar and Kumar (2018) published a paper on 'RPWD Act, 2016 and School Education: Concerns and Challenges'. The paper included the specific provisions with their implications regarding teachers, special teachers and school administration. It also covered the concerns and challenges emerging from the act. The



authors argued that the act was based on the assumption that disability was an integral part of human diversity; therefore, the act was a powerful legal instrument to include PWD in the community's socio-cultural, economic and political life by removing physical and attitudinal barriers. The number of disabilities increased from seven to twenty-one in this activity, and a number of new provisions and institutional arrangements, therefore, presents many challenges before school education. According to this paper, the Act showed our resolve to serve the most un-served, unseen and marginalized section of the society.

Ahuja (2019) conducted a study on 'Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016-Inclusive Education: Implementation Perspective based on the primary and secondary data published in government documents. The researcher applied both observation and analytical techniques. The study reviewed the literature online and offline relating to the welfare of persons with disabilities. This paper discussed the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. It portrayed the infrastructural requirements and assistive devices for various categories of disabilities. The study recommended that though there were no specific infrastructural requirements for these types of disabilities, modification in class-arrangement, furniture, and Teacher Learning Material was necessary. The findings also suggested that remedial class must be given in the Resource Room, a well-decorated, colorful and attractive room, where the CWSN feel free to do their work/task in their manner.

Chauhan et al. (2021) conducted a study on "Caregiver's perception of barriers to implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 in India" that was planned to study caregiver's perception of barriers to implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 in India. An online cross-sectional survey was carried out among parents of children with disabilities. A pre-validated structured and semi-structured questionnaire was used. Results of structured items were summarized as mean (SD), frequencies and percentages. For open-ended questions, responses were analyzed by manual content analysis; results were presented in the form of a framework. From 316 responses, 44.8% of respondents availed of disability certificates; however, utilization was largely limited to travel and educational settings. 82.2% of respondents were not aware of any of the national health schemes. Only 6.2% of children could engage in play activities at the playground. According to the findings, accessibility, health issues, and social stigma were the main barriers to recreation for children with disabilities. While 25.8% of children did not attend school, 58.1% of children attending normal school were facing difficulties due to lack of appropriate school infrastructure, transportation issues, and untrained teachers. Responses to open-ended questions were predominantly related to needs of homegrown research, better infrastructure and trained teachers in schools, life security of child and development of a national registry for better health information. The study also highlighted the importance of implementing concrete strategies at every level of policy

decisions to create more awareness regarding the RPWD Act in India.

AREA OF THE STUDY

Mizoram is one of the states of Northeast India, with Aizawl as its capital city. The name is derived from Mi (people), Zo (lofty place, such as a hill) and Ram (land), and thus Mizoram implies "*Land of the hill people*". Like several other northeastern states of India, Mizoram was previously part of Assam until 1972, when it was carved out as a Union Territory. It became the 23rd state of India, a step above Union Territory, on 20 February 1987. Mizoram's population stood at 1,091,014, according to a 2011 Census. It is the 2nd least populous state in the country. Mizoram covers an area of approximately 21,087 square kilometers. About 91% of the state is forested. About 95% of current Mizoram population is of diverse tribal origins who settled in the state, mostly from southeast Asia, over waves of migration starting about 16th century but mainly in 18th century. This is the highest concentration of tribal people among all states of India, and they are currently protected under Indian constitution as a Scheduled Tribe. The tribes converted from Animist religions to Christianity over the first half of 20th century. Mizoram is one of three states of India with a Christian majority (87%).

Aizawl district alone has a population of 4, 04,054, comprising of 22.58% in the rural and 77.42% in the urban areas. Aizawl city has reported the highest percentage of urban population in Mizoram i.e., 3, 12,837. Therefore, the study focused on the secondary schools in Aizawl City, Mizoram.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE KEY TERMS

The key terms used in this study are given below:

Status: In the proposed study, it refers to the present condition of implementing the RPWD Act 2016 in secondary schools of Mizoram.

Implementation: In the present study, it refers to the enactment and execution of the RPWD Act 2016 in the secondary schools of Mizoram.

Secondary Schools: It refers to the schools having 9th and 10th standards operationalized under the Mizoram Board of Secondary Education (MBSE) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

RPWD Act, 2016: This study refers to the provisions given in chapter 3 of the RPWD Act.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act, 2016) defines "inclusive education as a system of education wherein students with and without disability learn together, and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities".



Every child has a right to free education compulsorily up to the elementary stage of schooling as per the Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE Act, 2009). The Right to Education is built on the principles that all children should be in school. The study aims to find out the implementation status of the RPWD Act 2016 among secondary schools of Aizawl.

RPWD Act, 2016 protects all people with disabilities against discrimination and promotes equal opportunity and accessibility. All establishments-government, private and Non-Government Organizations-are covered under the Act, and there are specific mandates for them to comply with. Appropriate penalties and punishments to have been laid down in the Act for individuals/organizations for non-compliance and violation of the law. The first step for implementing or seeking implementation of the Act would be to become aware of its provisions. Hence, a Manual to explain The RPWD Act was envisaged by National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), a national level advocacy organization promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. The development of the Manual is supported by the American India Foundation (AIF), a not-for-profit organization with a national presence that is working closely with local communities and partnering with Non-Government Organizations to develop and test innovative solutions with governments that are scalable and have a sustainable impact.

There are 1181 differently-abled secondary students enrolled in Mizoram. Awareness has given in certain forms, but less effort has been taken for the differently-abled students. It is essential that students, teachers and parents must be aware of the RPWD Act 2016. The Act might sound but still vague to many of us in India. No study has been conducted among secondary students in Mizoram based on RPWD Act 2016. It gives a challenging opportunity to determine how the RPWD Act 2016 has been implementing in secondary schools of Mizoram and the students, teachers, and parents' perception about the Act. The study also aims to determine whether there are any differences in gender, locality, educational qualification, income, and training. This study will give a picture of the present situation regarding implementing the RPWD Act 2016 in Mizoram and will point out what steps should be taken to improve in implementing the RPWD Act 2016.

Considering the RPWD Act 2016 and its importance, the researcher found no study related to this field in Mizoram. Therefore, it is needed to have a comprehensive research study that discovers different angles and aspects of implementing the RPWD Act, 2016 in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. Simultaneously, the present study also tries to find out the problems faced by the schools and students in an inclusive setting school. Knowing the problem is not the end of the study, so this study endeavors to suggest an effective measure for implementing the RPWD Act, 2016 in Aizawl.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the implementation status of the RPWD Act, 2016 in secondary schools of Aizawl.
2. To analyze the problems faced by the secondary schools in an inclusive setting.
3. To suggest measures for further policy implications for proper implementation of the RPWD Act, 2016 in secondary schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges faced by the secondary schools to implement RPWD Act 2016 in an inclusive setting?
2. How can RPWD Act 2016 be effectively implemented in secondary schools of Aizawl?

METHODOLOGY

The study was based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through two self-constructed instruments, first observational checklist with field notes and second semi-structured interview schedule to assess the implementation status of the RPWD Act 2016 in secondary schools of Aizawl city. An observational checklist under RPWD Act 2016 was also employed to collect data on the infrastructural facilities of the schools. Six (6) secondary schools were randomly selected from the study area, they are- Govt. Mizo High School, Govt. Republic High School, Govt. Chaltlang High School, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Govt. Synod High School and St. Joseph High School. A total number of 222 teachers and 4 principals were selected as respondents from these schools. Secondary data was obtained from books, articles, government publications, annual reports and other relevant e-resources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To meet objective one, i.e., the implementation status of the RPWD Act, 2016 in secondary schools of Aizawl, the researcher used an observational checklist and field notes. In addition, principals also provided their viewpoints on the infrastructural and instructional facilities for children with disabilities through face-to-face interviews. Through the series of interviews with secondary school principals, the researcher found no study has been conducted related to the RPWD Act 2016 so far in their schools. However, principals agreed that all the teachers in their respective schools were aware of the RPWD Act, 2016. Generally, all schools reported that they had students with visual and hearing impairment as well as physically handicap based on previous years data. In the current academic year, they mentioned that no student with a disability enrolled.

The majority of the school did not have the proper accessible environment for students with disabilities. On the other hand, Kendriya Vidyalaya school has all the necessary facilities per the RPWD Act, 2016. The principals of secondary schools stated that teachers and students are always ready to help students with disabilities achieve their learning difficulties. Besides, they mentioned that class teachers provided seats in the first row and



also provided proper spectacles as per their needs through Samagra Shiksha. Further, they help them learn with encouragement, motivation, patience and understanding of their learning styles and pace. Students with mild vision loss were given books with bold and large font sizes along with required spectacles. It was found that schools provided financial assistance to increase students' attendance with disabilities and reduce the drop-out rate. Students with disabilities (in most cases only mild vision loss) came to school like normal students with provided spectacles. Almost all the principal reported that they have no severe disability except low vision students and students with locomotor disability. Thus, they offered them bold and enlarged printed learning materials.

The findings obtained from the observation checklist to know the status of implementation of RPWD Act 2016 in secondary schools of Aizawl given in Appendix- 1 below. As per the finding, out of six secondary schools of Aizawl, 50% of them were developed with adequate and suitable infrastructural facilities along with a ramp to support the differently-abled students in their respective schools. But descriptive and reflective data of observation field diary doubted the standard of these constructions over the issue of feasibility as per the needs of differently-abled students. The researcher also observed that some of the constructions made for differently-abled students were for the namesake only and practically of no use to provide any assistance to differently-abled students. On the other hand, in the previous years, secondary schools did not get the significant enrolments of students with disability therefore they were not realized the actual need and requirement of their existence. Eighty-three percent of schools have had stairs with handrails that were fortunately suitable for all in general but reflective data says that all the facilities for differently-abled students were not constructed keeping in mind the norms and criteria for height, texture and forms of handrail that make it appropriate of differently-abled students.

As per the findings of the observation checklist, there was an absolute absence of signage design in secondary school premises, indicating that modification and constructions in light of the RPWD Act 2016 were not done to make a differently-abled friendly environment. Additional only 50% of participant secondary schools have barrier-free washrooms with the partial fulfilment of norms for washrooms of differently-abled. The emergency call button was found nil in every secondary school observed. Both observation checklist and field diary support that there was no problem regarding the accessibility of water, sanitation and hygiene in secondary schools for students with disabilities.

There were 66.67% of secondary schools have accessible playgrounds for differently-abled students, but they were not covered with grass and paved pathways. Reflection from the field diary reveals that no secondary schools have adapted physical education teachers, adapted sports and games for differently-abled students. If any school have a physical education teacher,

he was unaware of adapted physical education and incompetence to modify the game as per the suitability of differently-abled students. No secondary schools have promoted differently-abled students for Para Olympics and Special Olympics in the past. One more reflection found that teachers were not aware of these Olympics and how differently-abled students could participate. One secondary school reported that they have an accommodation facility for differently-abled students as the school has both facilities, i.e. boarding and day school. No participant secondary schools have had transport facilities for differently-abled students and not for their attendants.

Only one school reported that they provide braille-printed books or large printed books, enlarging magnifiers, word cards, ball holders, audiobooks, e-text readers, low or high-tech communication aids and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities. There were 33.33% of secondary schools responded positively to modification in the curriculum for differently-abled students. It includes alteration and organization of seating arrangement, flexible timetable, extra time for the exam, facility of the scribe, and exemption from second and third language subject. There were 83% of secondary schools reported appropriate light near the blackboard and in the whole classroom; however, only 50% of secondary schools have an accessible board for differently-abled students. There were 66.67% of secondary schools that had disabled-friendly science laboratories, but fire alarm systems were not installed in the laboratory. Besides, 100% of science laboratories have had water access.

Reflections from the field diary ensure that almost all secondary schools did not have an attitudinal barrier and the authority's showed sensitivity towards differently-abled students. There were 66.67% of secondary schools that provided seat reservations for differently-abled students in taking admission as per the RPWD Act, 2016. Cent percent school appointed teacher in charge for redressal of grievances to tackle the problems of differently-abled students.

The Directorate of School Education, Government of Mizoram, informs the secondary schools about the RPWD Act 2016 and the provisions of differently-abled students. The school principals play leadership role in the enrolment of disabled students in their schools. They reserved seats for students with a disability as per the RTE Act, 2009 and RPWD Act, 2016. The secondary school teachers have usually undergone for identification of disabled students in the school itself. The schools adopt the teaching-learning process as per the needs of children with disabilities for inclusive settings.

To placate objective two, i.e. to analyze the problems faced by the secondary schools in an inclusive setting, the content analysis of the semi-structured interview questionnaire on the RPWD Act, 2016 has been done. Besides, through semi-structured interviews, the researcher also collected detailed information through observation field notes. In secondary schools of Aizawl, it found that attitudinal barriers were not the challenges for taking



admissions of differently-abled students without discrimination. However, infrastructural facilities were available but not up to the norm that makes secondary schools appropriate for differently-abled students. Only six schools were taken as samples for the reality check, including basic requirements like ramp, handrails, signage design, and transport facility and accommodation facility under the RPWD Act, 2016.

Principals reported that due to a lack of research, it was difficult to understand and improve the learning process of differently-abled students in the local context. It was found that due to topological conditions of Mizoram, implementation of the RPWD Act, 2016 is an arduous task. Therefore, Principals mentioned that providing books for low vision and arranging wheelchairs is not the complete justice for differently-abled students. It was found that thinking beyond the braille, sign language and assistive devices were also a challenge for secondary school teachers.

The appointment of special educators and training the existing ones were also a challenge for secondary schools. Differently-abled secondary school students lack high-tech assistive devices that hinder their learning outcomes. It was also found a challenge to retain students with disabilities with poor financial assistance. So, stipends and scholarships are needed to lower the drop-out rates of students with disabilities. In an inclusive set-up, all the teachers need to understand the educational needs of students with disabilities and teach core subjects. It was also found that students with disabilities did not get homework and additional activities due to the teachers' attitude of underestimating their capabilities. Teachers usually did not give extra time and energy to assist during tests, homework and other activities for evaluations.

To get the findings of objective three concerning suggestive measures for policy implication for the proper implementation of the RPWD Act, 2016 in secondary schools, the researcher used the secondary school principal's point of view in this regard. They reported that reasonable accommodation is needed to ensure that students with disabilities can participate and gain education equally. Further, they explained that reasonable accommodation includes infrastructure, activities, learning materials, teaching methods, assistive technologies, curriculum and assessments.

School principals also mentioned that for better implementation of the RPWD Act, 2016, provisions must be made to sufficed students with disabilities. Under assistive technology, students with disabilities can have magnifiers, screen readers, writing aids, braille display, note-taking devices, tape recorders, adapted chairs, and desks under assistive technology. Secondary school teachers need to be trained in Sign Language, Braille, training in assistive technology and augmentative communication. Some principals brought the urgency of the appointment of para-professionals for providing counselling and occupational therapy to students with disabilities. In addition, they emphasized the

requirement of individualized educational planning with flexible assessment procedures and curriculum.

As suggested in the RPWD, Act 2016 schools should adopt the universal design for infrastructural facilities such as the accessible playground, inclusive science laboratories, library (audiobook, braille book, textbook, e-book), barrier-free lavatories, ramp, handrails, and signage. But the topological condition of Mizoram demands a considerable amount of funds to build universal infrastructure. The location of secondary schools in Aizawl was challenging. Therefore, the government should allocate substantially more funds to construct school buildings/premises with universal design under samagra shiksha.

For better implementation of the RPWD Act, 2016, pre-service teacher training programmes such as B.Ed. and M.Ed. need to include special educational needs of differently-abled students in their curriculum. In addition, intensive professional development training is required for in-service secondary school teachers to teach in an inclusive setting. Moreover, universal design for learning comprises universal objective for learning, universal teaching-learning methods, and universal assessment techniques having utmost importance for secondary schools to teach inclusively.

CONCLUSION

RPWD Act 2016, a revolutionary step in the history of the Indian Constitution, implemented for the upliftment of differently-abled persons. The data indicate that the teachers in Aizawl city have a moderate level of concerns to implement inclusive education related to RPWD Act, 2016 in their schools. However, RPWD Act, 2016 is rights-based legislation, yet the statute's success will tremendously depend on the proactive steps taken by the respective state governments on its effective implementation. To review such a new act concerning educational provisions for children with disabilities has great significance for further implementation of the RPWD Act and also to formulate strategies for further policy implications.

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Appendix 1: Observation Checklist for Secondary Schools to Implement RPWD Act, 2016

S.N.	QUESTIONS	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6		Total Frequency of Yes
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
1.	Availability of ramp as per the need		√		√	√		√		√		√		3
2.	The school develop adequate and suitable infrastructures and facilities to support disabled students		√	√		√			√		√	√		3
3.	Stairs with handrail		√	√		√		√		√		√		5
4.	Signage Design (informational signs, directional signs, identification signs, warning signs)		√		√		√		√		√		√	0
5.	Barrier-free washrooms	√		√			√		√		√	√		3
6.	Accessible water, sanitation and hygiene	√		√		√		√		√		√		6
7.	Accessible playground		√	√		√			√	√		√		4
8.	Transport facility		√		√		√		√		√		√	0
9.	Accommodation facility for students with disability		√		√	√			√		√		√	1
10.	The school provided braille-printed books/ large printed books/ enlarging hardware and software, handheld magnifiers, word cards, ball holders, audiobooks, e-text reader, low or high-tech communication aids, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities		√		√		√		√		√	√		1
11.	Modification in Curriculum		√		√		√		√	√		√		2
12.	Appropriate light near blackboard and in the whole classroom	√		√		√			√	√		√		5
13.	Accessible board		√		√	√			√	√		√		3
14.	Science laboratory disabled-friendly		√	√		√			√	√		√		4
15.	School provides a seat reservation for disabled students in taking admission as per the Act	√		√		√			√		√	√		4
16.	The school appoint redressal of grievances - Teacher in charge to tackle the problems of disabled students	√		√		√		√		√		√		6

Source: Field Survey