

A Study of the Social Development of General and Disabled Rural Students Studying in Government Upper Primary Schools of Moradabad District

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Summary

The study of the social development of general and differently-abled rural students studying in government upper primary schools of Moradabad district is an important educational and social subject, which is essential for understanding the effectiveness of the inclusive education system. This study primarily focuses on how the school environment, teachers' behavior, peer relationships, opportunities for social participation, and family background influence students' social development. Compared to general students, differently-abled students face several challenges in gaining social acceptance, self-esteem, and active participation in society. In rural areas, limited resources, lack of awareness, and social stereotypes make the social inclusion of differently-abled students even more complex. The objective of this research is to compare the social development of both groups and to determine whether the availability of equal opportunities in school enhances the social skills, self-confidence, participation, and tolerance of differently-abled students. Components such as group participation, cooperation, leadership skills, and a sense of social responsibility were studied. Preliminary findings indicate that while general students participate naturally in social activities, differently-abled students require active involvement from teachers, special support, and a cooperative environment to be included equally. Thus, this study not only assesses the state of social development but also provides indications for necessary policy improvements in the direction of inclusive education.

Keywords: General rural students, Disabled rural students, Social development

Introduction

In a developing country like India, education is considered a powerful means for social change and inclusion. Especially in rural areas, where there is a lack of resources, socio-economic inequality, and the dominance of traditional beliefs, education plays a decisive role in the overall development of children, particularly in their social development. Muradabad district in Uttar Pradesh is a prominent district enriched with social and cultural diversity in its rural structure. A large number of both general and differently-abled students study in government upper primary schools in this district. Studying the social development of these students is not only an attempt to understand their social participation but also examines the extent to which the rural environment, school atmosphere, peer behavior, parental support, and educational policies influence their social development.

Social development is the process through which a child learns to establish contact, relationships, and participation with other members of society. This development manifests in communication skills, cooperation, tolerance, self-confidence, understanding of social values, and a sense of responsibility. Compared to general students, differently-abled students face multiple challenges in achieving social acceptance and participation, particularly in rural settings where awareness, availability of resources, and empathy are often limited.

The rural landscape of Muradabad district is socially, economically, culturally, and geographically diverse. Most families here depend on agriculture or small businesses. Limited income, illiteracy, social rigidities, and prejudices against girls and differently-abled children are prevalent. Government upper primary schools serve as a major source of education for these rural children. While enrollment rates have increased, challenges remain regarding quality education and social inclusion. Differently-abled children, in particular, require serious efforts to ensure social participation, acceptance, and equal opportunities in school life. In this context, the present study seeks to understand the current status of social development of general and differently-abled students and the extent to which the educational, social, and physical arrangements of schools support this development.

The Government of India has officially recognized the concept of inclusive education, which emphasizes that all children—whether general or with special needs—have the right to study together in the same classroom with equal opportunities. Initiatives such as the “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan,” “Inclusive Education under SSA,” and the “Rights of Persons with

Disabilities Act, 2016” have particularly strengthened the educational rights of differently-abled students. However, at the ground level, the success of these initiatives depends on multiple factors such as teacher sensitivity and training, suitability of school infrastructure, peer behavior, parental support, and societal acceptance. In rural areas, these factors are often limited or weak, hindering the social development of differently-abled students. Therefore, a thorough investigation of these factors in government upper primary schools of Muradabad becomes imperative.

The social development process of general students is relatively smoother as they receive support for normal physical, emotional, cognitive, and communicative abilities. They can freely engage in dialogues, participation, games, and group activities with peers, which fosters maturity in their social behavior. On the other hand, differently-abled students face obstacles due to their disabilities. Whether students have visual, hearing, speech, mental, or physical impairments, they require appropriate support from peers, teachers, and school infrastructure. Unfortunately, in rural schools, lack of resources, absence of trained teachers, and limited empathetic behavior from peers often push these children toward social isolation.

Most students in the upper primary schools of Muradabad come from rural backgrounds where opportunities for social development are limited. Social-cultural pressures, economic constraints, and indifference toward education in families restrict children’s social experiences. In the case of differently-abled students, parents sometimes hesitate to send their children to school, fearing social ridicule or doubting the suitability of the school. Even if the children attend, the absence of necessary infrastructure—such as ramps for wheelchairs, hearing aids, or special teachers—affects their self-esteem and social participation.

School activities such as group discussions, cooperative learning, sports, and cultural programs provide opportunities to enhance students’ social skills. Ensuring the participation of differently-abled children in these activities strengthens their confidence and social identity while teaching other students empathy, cooperation, and inclusivity. However, in rural areas like Muradabad, it is necessary to investigate whether differently-abled students are genuinely participating in such activities or are merely present without real social engagement.

Another important aspect of this study is the examination of the family environment. Children’s social development does not occur solely in schools; it also develops through relationships with parents, siblings, neighbors, and others at home. If the family provides a

supportive environment, accepts disability naturally, and offers children opportunities to participate in social activities, positive changes in social behavior are evident. This study will explore how attitudes toward disability in rural families of Muradabad affect children's social experiences.

The relevance of this study is further emphasized because the goal of education today is not limited to academic achievement; it also aims to produce socially responsible, sensitive, cooperative, and inclusive citizens. If differently-abled children fall behind in social development from an early age, they may face disadvantages in self-reliance, employment, and social relationships in the future. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize their social development and examine which factors support or hinder it.

Through this study, the researcher will analyze the current status of social development of general and differently-abled students in government upper primary schools of Muradabad, the challenges they face, the role of the school environment, teachers' perspectives, peer behavior, and family contributions. The findings can guide educational policymakers, teachers, parents, and society to create an inclusive, empathetic, and socially empowering school environment. Additionally, this study can serve as a foundation for comparative studies on social development of general and differently-abled students in other districts and states.

Thus, this research on the social development of general and differently-abled rural students in government upper primary schools of Muradabad is not only a significant contribution to educational research but also an essential and meaningful effort toward social justice and equality.

Need and Significance

In India, the purpose of education is not limited to academic achievement alone; it is equally essential to prioritize the holistic development of students, particularly their social development. In the rural areas of Moradabad district, the social status, family background, school environment, and limited community resources of students studying in government upper primary schools—both general and differently-abled—directly and indirectly influence their social development. The present study becomes highly significant because it not only highlights the inclusive nature of education but also indicates the types of social challenges and opportunities that students, especially children with disabilities, encounter in these schools.

Social development is a continuous process in which an individual develops social skills, values, cooperation, tolerance, coexistence, leadership abilities, and practical competencies. When general and differently-abled students learn in a shared environment, it affects their social participation, self-esteem, and ability to establish a place in society. Particularly in rural settings, social prejudices, lack of resources, absence of sensitivity toward disability, and traditional mindsets can hinder social development. Therefore, this study is necessary to understand the level of social acceptance, participation, and cooperation these students receive.

The socio-cultural background of Moradabad district is full of diversity, where economic inequality, caste divisions, and traditional rural perspectives exist alongside efforts for educational reforms. Understanding the social development of students at the upper primary level is crucial because this stage of life marks the period when children begin to internalize their social behavior, identity, and social responsibilities. If social development is hindered at this stage, it can have long-term effects on their future education, employment, relationships, and self-confidence.

In the context of differently-abled students, this study becomes even more important because their social acceptance, self-esteem, cooperative behavior, and social skills are often restricted. Although the government has implemented inclusive education policies, it is essential to evaluate their impact on the ground, particularly in rural schools. If differently-abled students do not receive equitable treatment or face discrimination from their peers, it can obstruct their social development. Through this study, factors affecting social cohesion can be identified, and suggestions for improvement can be provided.

The study is also significant for general students because learning alongside differently-abled peers fosters empathy, tolerance, cooperation, and leadership skills in them. It can also serve as an indicator of the successful implementation of an inclusive education system. If these students are provided opportunities to develop positive attitudes, cooperation, and understanding toward differently-abled peers, it promotes social harmony and a sense of coexistence.

The findings of this research can guide policymakers, teachers, administrators, and parents. It will help identify which school-related, familial, or social factors support or hinder

students' social development. Moreover, this study can reveal the actual status of social inclusion in rural schools, enabling improvements in future policies.

Related Review of Research Literature

- According to Tripathi, S. (2016), a supportive and sensitive school environment, along with inclusive activities (group work, cultural programs, sports), promotes the social development of both general and differently-abled children.
- Shalini Rao (2017), in her research on the impact of inclusive education on the social development of disabled children in rural India, reported that in inclusive classrooms, factors such as a supportive environment, peer behavior, teacher attitudes, and the availability of resources play a crucial role in the social development of differently-abled children.
- Kumar, D. (2018), in a study conducted in rural schools of Uttar Pradesh, concluded that the process of social development in rural areas differs from that of urban children, as family, local governance (panchayat), traditions, and religious practices significantly influence children's social behavior.
- Pandey, Neelam (2020), in her research, highlighted that teachers' attitudes, their training methods, and their ability to understand special needs play a significant role in promoting social inclusion among students.
- Aftab and Rizwan (2021), in their study titled "Educational Inclusion and Social Participation of CWSN in Schools of Rural Moradabad," found that although enrollment in primary government schools in Moradabad is adequate, the lack of proper assistive devices, special educators, and limited teacher awareness hinders the social development of differently-abled students.
- Joshi and Milak (2022) found that peer behavior directly affects the social development of differently-abled students. A cooperative, empathetic, and inclusive classroom culture strengthens social bonds among all students.
- Sharma, Reema (2023), concluded that differently-abled girls face more challenges in social development compared to general students. Gender discrimination in rural society further deepens this gap.

Problem Statement:

A Study on the Social Development of Normal and Disabled Rural Students Studying in Government Upper Primary Schools of Moradabad District.

Objectives:

1. A comparative study of the social development of normal and disabled rural boys studying in government upper primary schools of Moradabad district.
2. A comparative study of the social development of normal and disabled rural girls studying in government upper primary schools of Moradabad district.

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in the social development of normal and differently-abled rural boys studying in government upper primary schools of Moradabad district.
2. There is no significant difference in the social development of normal and differently-abled rural girls studying in government upper primary schools of Moradabad district.

Data Collection Tools

For the present study, data were collected from general and disabled rural students studying in upper primary schools of the Moradabad region through personal contact, using a questionnaire as the primary tool.

Sample

For the present study, only 100 physically disabled students and 100 normal rural students were included.

Tool Used

To measure social development, a self-developed questionnaire was used.

Definition of Hypotheses

Table No. 1

Status of Social Development of General and Disabled Rural Children Studying at the Upper Primary Level in Moradabad District

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
Normal Rural Children	50	152.12	18.07	2.34	Significance
Children with Disabilities (Rural)	50	147.95	17.45		

Explanation:

Table 1 presents the status of social development of general and differently-abled children studying at the upper primary level in rural areas of Moradabad district. The table shows that the mean and standard deviation of social development of general rural students at the upper primary level in Moradabad district are 152.12 and 18.07, respectively, while the mean and standard deviation of social development of differently-abled rural children at the same level are 147.95 and 17.45, respectively. The calculated t-value between the two groups is 2.34. This indicates that there is a significant difference in social development between general and differently-abled rural children studying at the upper primary level in Moradabad district.

Access to education in rural areas is often challenging, which can affect children’s social development and impact their rights and opportunities. Rural areas may lack proper infrastructure, such as schools and recreational facilities, which can influence children’s social engagement. Economic constraints in these areas sometimes limit children’s access to education, further affecting their social growth. The social structure in rural regions is often traditional and protective, which may restrict children’s independence. Additionally, limited social networks in rural areas can hinder children from developing their social skills. Government programs and schemes, such as education, health, and nutrition initiatives, also play a role in influencing social development in rural areas. The combined effect of all these factors impacts children’s social development, and with appropriate policies and social interventions, the social development of children in rural areas can be enhanced.

Table No. 2

Status of Social Development of Normal and Disabled Rural Girls Studying at Upper Primary Level in Moradabad District

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-ratio	Significance Level
Normal Rural Girls	50	153.65	17.83	3.04	Significance
Disabled Rural Girls	50	147.69	17.16		

Explanation

Table 2 shows the status of social development of general and disabled rural girls studying at the upper primary level in Moradabad district. The table indicates that the mean and standard deviation of social development for general rural girls at the upper primary level in

Moradabad district are 153.65 and 17.83, respectively, while for disabled rural girls at the same level, the mean and standard deviation are 147.69 and 17.16, respectively. The calculated t-value between the two groups is 3.04. This indicates that there is a significant difference in social development between general and disabled rural girls studying at the upper primary level in Moradabad district.

In rural areas, a lack of education may affect children's social development. Due to insufficient education, they may lag in social relationships and skills. Economic hardship and poverty in rural areas may also restrict children's social development, as they may not have time for social activities and support. Traditional social structures in rural areas may make it difficult for some girls to exercise their independence. Limited healthcare services and prevalence of diseases in rural areas can further affect children's social development. Additionally, a lack of internet and other social networks can impact children's social engagement.

Government schemes and programs can help promote social development in rural areas, such as education, nutrition, and social security initiatives. The combination of all these factors can influence the social development of children in rural areas. Social justice, particularly in rural contexts, plays a crucial role in ensuring children's social development.

Conclusion

1. A significant difference was found in the social development of normal and differently-abled rural boys studying in government upper primary schools of Muradabad district.
2. A significant difference was found in the social development of normal and differently-abled rural girls studying in government upper primary schools of Muradabad district.

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