

# Analysis Of The Strategies Adopted By Government Of Mizoram For The Implementation Of Rpwd Act 2016 At The Elementary- Level Of Education

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**Citation:** Lalrochami Ralte, (2024), Analysis Of The Strategies Adopted By Government Of Mizoram For The Implementation Of Rpwd Act 2016 At The Elementary- Level Of Education, Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30(7), 633 - 639  
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i7.6765

## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

The Mizoram government has implemented strategies to promote inclusivity and equal educational opportunities in elementary education. This includes transitioning from the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) to the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Samagra Shiksha. Resource rooms have been established across 26 blocks to cater to the needs of disabled students, equipped with assistive devices and resources. The government has also introduced Braille paper and other assistive technologies to facilitate learning for visually impaired students. It also extended its efforts to children facing unique challenges, implementing therapy facilities and home-based education programs. Training and orientation programs have been conducted to build capacity and create a supportive ecosystem for inclusive education. An annual survey and assessment program has been initiated to identify areas requiring attention, ensuring responsiveness to the evolving needs of students with disabilities. The Government has also addressed broader societal challenges faced by individuals with disabilities through social welfare programs like ID Camps, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to inclusive education.

This paper seeks to delve into the strategies implemented by the Government of Mizoram in aligning with the RPWD Act 2016 at the elementary level of education.

**Keywords:** Elementary Education, Strategies, Assistive Devices, Technology, Fostering Inclusivity

## INTRODUCTION:

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016, in India, is a monumental legislative framework crafted to safeguard and enhance the rights and interests of individuals with disabilities. Operating across diverse domains, including education, employment, accessibility, and social protection, the Act represents a significant stride towards inclusivity and equal opportunities. This comprehensive legislation replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act of 1995, and since its inception, it has served as the cornerstone for the development and implementation of rules, regulations, and policies at both the central and state levels.

The central government, wielding a pivotal role in the formulation of national policies and guidelines for the RPWD Act, provides the overarching structure within which states customize and execute plans considering local needs and challenges. This decentralized approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the diverse landscapes within the country, fostering a more effective and targeted implementation of disability rights. To streamline these efforts, many states have established dedicated bodies, such as state disability cells, tasked with coordinating and monitoring the execution of the RPWD Act.

One of the hallmark features of the RPWD Act is its explicit focus on inclusive education for children with disabilities. Recognizing the pivotal role education plays in shaping the trajectory of an individual's life, the Act underscores the necessity for accessible schools and educational institutions. This emphasis is not just symbolic; it translates into concrete initiatives like the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) program. This program is designed to facilitate the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream educational settings, fostering an environment where they can learn and grow alongside their peers.

Beyond the legal framework, the RPWD Act recognizes the importance of societal attitudes in shaping the experiences of individuals with disabilities. To this end, both central and state governments actively engage in awareness campaigns and sensitization programs. These initiatives seek to challenge preconceived notions, dispel stereotypes, and foster an environment where people with disabilities are not just tolerated but fully embraced as valued members of society. The aim is not merely compliance with the law but a transformation of societal attitudes towards a more inclusive and empathetic perspective.

Moreover, the RPWD Act encourages the infusion of technology and innovation to enhance accessibility and inclusion. In a world where technology plays an increasingly central role, harnessing its potential becomes imperative. From assistive technologies that facilitate better communication for those with hearing impairments to innovations in mobility aids, the Act acknowledges the transformative power of technology in levelling the playing field for individuals with disabilities. As the RPWD Act unfolds in its implementation, it becomes evident that its impact extends far beyond the legal realm. It is a catalyst for a broader societal shift—a paradigm where inclusivity is not an exception but a norm and where the rights of persons with disabilities are not viewed as concessions but as integral components of human rights. The Act is a testament to the idea that true progress is measured not just by economic indicators but by the inclusivity and compassion embedded in the fabric of society.

Furthermore, the success of the RPWD Act hinges on the collaboration of various stakeholders. Government bodies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society all play indispensable roles in the realization of the Act's objectives. Collaborative efforts that leverage the strengths of each stakeholder can amplify the impact and create a more cohesive and supportive environment for individuals with disabilities.

### **MIZORAM:**

In Mizoram, significant strides have been taken by the state government to implement the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act. A pivotal initiative in this regard is the establishment of the State Disability Cell, which serves as a focal point for executing policies and programs aimed at benefiting individuals with disabilities. Notably, the government now facilitates the issuance of disability certificates, a prerequisite for availing of the numerous benefits and initiatives outlined in the RPWD Act.

Mizoram state government has embarked on a comprehensive implementation of the RPWD Act. The Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) program exemplifies this commitment, as it encompasses special schools designed for children with impairments. This program goes beyond mere academic support, offering aid, transportation facilities, and various support services to ensure that children with disabilities can seamlessly participate in the educational process.

Furthermore, the Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) scheme has been introduced to provide financial assistance to students with disabilities, enabling their attendance at mainstream secondary schools. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) program, a broader initiative targeting inclusive education for all children, has also been implemented by the Mizoram government. Under the SSA program, educators receive training in inclusive education, schools undergo enhancements to become barrier-free learning environments, and children with disabilities receive aid and other necessary support.

The journey toward inclusivity, however, extends beyond the confines of classrooms and educational institutions. Mizoram recognizes that societal attitudes play a pivotal role in shaping the experiences of individuals with disabilities. To this end, awareness campaigns and sensitization programs become instrumental tools in the state's arsenal. The State Disability Cell takes the lead in orchestrating these initiatives, aiming to challenge stereotypes, dispel misconceptions, and foster an environment where individuals with disabilities are not defined by their impairments but celebrated for their unique abilities and contributions.

The infusion of technology and innovation into Mizoram's approach to disability rights is a notable facet. The RPWD Act's encouragement of technology as a tool for enhancing accessibility finds resonance in Mizoram's initiatives. Whether it's the development of assistive technologies that facilitate communication or innovations in mobility aids, the state actively promotes the transformative power of technology in levelling the playing field for individuals with disabilities.

However, challenges inevitably emerge as Mizoram strides in its journey towards inclusivity. The diverse topography, coupled with infrastructural constraints, presents hurdles to ensuring universal accessibility. In remote areas, where the echoes of progress are faint, the need for targeted efforts to bring the benefits of the RPWD Act to light becomes even more pronounced. Mizoram's commitment to inclusivity requires not just legislation and initiatives but a tireless effort to bridge the gaps that may exist, ensuring that no individual is left behind.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

**Mohapatra (2018)** conducted a study "A Study on Challenges for Implementing Inclusions". The study found that funding has to be increased for better school infrastructure and that an effective policy from the government is needed for good implementation to run inclusive education more effectively. The researcher proposes that in order to increase the number of special educators and regulate them effectively through the implementation of their recruitment strategies, the State governments must make the necessary arrangements. Also recommended for improved access to teaching-learning activities are assistive

technology- enabled devices.

**Abheera C. A and Vanitha C (2019)** conducted a study on “A Review of Rights of Persons with disability act (RPWD Act) 2016 with a special focus on the provisions for capacity enhancement of children with disabilities”. The investigator reviewed the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD Act) 2016 with a specific focus on the provisions pertaining to the capacity enhancement of persons with disabilities in the current study. The investigator critically reflected on entire articles in the RPWD Act 2016, provided a synthesis of Chapter III, Chapter IV, Section 29 of Chapter V, Sections 31 and 32 of Chapter VI, and Section 42 of Chapter VIII of the act, and analyzed the provisions pertaining to the capacity enhancement of people with disabilities.

**Sharma R and Gupta S (2020)** conducted a study on “Overview of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act–2016 with special reference to inclusion in education”. The study objective is to find RPWD Act-2016 with special reference to inclusion in education, the study found that the most effective law for advancing and elevating people with disabilities is the RPWD Act, 2016. It generously aids inclusive education in swiftly and more simply achieving its set objectives. To determine the impact of the RPWD Act, 2016 on our social and political milieu, more research must be done. Only when inclusive education enables all students to participate in all elements of the classroom on an equal or nearly equal basis is it deemed to be good? Education professionals, parents, and community leaders must all work together to successfully implement inclusion and remove barriers.

#### **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY:**

The purpose of the study is to find out the Analysis of Mizoram Government Strategies for the Implementation of RPWD Act 2016 in Elementary-Level of Education.

While recognizing the significance of the RPWD Act, it has come to the researcher's attention that there is a dearth of studies in this particular domain. Consequently, there is a need for a comprehensive research study that delves into various perspectives and facets concerning the strategies employed by the government in the implementation of the RPWD Act 2016 at the elementary level of education.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the status of the implementation of the RPWD Act 2016 in the Elementary level of education?
2. What are the strategies that have been implemented by the Government at the Elementary level of education?

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

The statement of the problem has been stated as “Analysis of the Strategies Adopted by Government of Mizoram for the Implementation of RPWD Act 2016 at the Elementary-Level of Education”

#### **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS:**

**Analysis:** Analysis is a systematic and methodical process of examining and studying complex information, data, or phenomena to understand its components, structure, and nature, resulting in insights, conclusions, and pattern identification.

**Strategies:** Strategies are well-planned plans or methods developed to achieve specific objectives, address challenges, exploit opportunities, or guide actions toward a desired outcome in various contexts.

**Implementation:** Implementation is the act or instance of putting something into action: the process of making something active or effective.

**RPWD Act:** Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD Act) legislation that aims to empower persons with disabilities and promote accessibility in Indian society. is an important inclusivity and

**Elementary level:** The "elementary level" is the foundational stage of education, typically for children aged 6-12, corresponding to grades 1 through 5, and is the first stage of formal schooling in most educational systems.

#### **DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:**

The proposed study will be delimited to the Government's elementary level of education.

#### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

1. To study the strategies adopted in Mizoram for the implementation of the RPWD Act 2016 with a focus on the needs of Children with Special Needs (CWSN).
2. To study the strategies adopted for the implementation of the RPWD Act 2016 at the Elementary level of education.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

**Method of the study:** The research employs a qualitative research design to gather information.

**Source of data:** The findings and analysis presented in the study are based on secondary data, specifically sourced for this research. The researcher personally engaged with employees from SAMAGRA to gather the necessary information for this paper.

## FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE ONE:

Objective one conducted a comprehensive study to examine the strategies employed in Mizoram for the effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016, with a specific focus on addressing the needs of Children with Special Needs (CWSN). The study revealed that among the total number of elementary schools in Mizoram, which stands at 3925, there have been notable improvements, including the installation of ramps, ramps with handrails, provision of toilets, and ensuring their functionality to meet the standards stipulated in the RPWD Act 2016.

### Number of Elementary Schools having facility for Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

Facility	Total no of Elementary Schools	No of schools having the facility	Percentage
Ramp	3925	1734	44.18 %
Ramp with handrail	3925	708	18.04 %
Toilet	3925	711	18.11 %
Functioning toilet	3925	575	14.65 %
Total no of schools having the facility		3728	94.9 %

Source: DISE Data 2020-2021

## FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE TWO:

Objective two conducted a study on the implementation of the RPWD Act 2016 at the elementary level of education which resulted in Implementing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act of 2016 in elementary education is a complex task that demands a nuanced and comprehensive strategy. Mizoram, a state in India, has emerged as a beacon of success in this endeavour, showcasing a multi-faceted approach that intertwines infrastructure development, technological integration, capacity building, and continuous improvement mechanisms. This holistic strategy is aimed at creating an inclusive educational landscape that caters to the diverse needs of children with disabilities.

### Strategies adopted for the implementation of the RPWD Act 2016 at the Elementary level of education:

#### 1. The evolutionary shift in Education Frameworks:

The transformation from the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) to the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and subsequently to Samagra Shiksha signifies an unwavering commitment to embracing change and aligning with national educational policies. This dynamic transition underscores a dedication to evolving educational frameworks in response to the ever-changing landscape of education.

#### 2. Establishment of Resource Rooms:

Creating resource rooms across 26 blocks is a proactive step toward providing specialized support for students with disabilities. These rooms, operated by trained educators and support personnel, signify a tangible effort to cater to the diverse learning needs of differently-abled students.

#### 3. Inclusive Learning Environments:

The focus on inclusive learning environments, as evidenced by the infrastructure in resource rooms (ramps, toilets, and assistive devices), reflects a holistic approach to ensuring that physical and environmental barriers do not hinder the participation of students with disabilities.

#### 4. Accessible Toilets:

Implementation of specially designed toilets to cater to the needs of individuals with disabilities, ensuring a barrier-free environment.

#### 5. Visual Aids:

Distribution and provision of glasses and other visual aids to enhance the visual experience for students with visual impairments, fostering a conducive learning environment.

#### 6. Hearing Devices:

Integration of hearing aids and other assistive devices to facilitate effective communication and engagement

for students with hearing impairments

### **7. Crutch and Mobility Support:**

Accessibility to crutches and mobility aids to assist students with mobility challenges, promoting independence and ease of movement within the learning environment.

### **8. Wheelchair Accessibility:**

Implementation of wheelchair-friendly infrastructure to enable seamless mobility and access to all areas of the educational facility.

### **9. Large Print Textbooks:**

Provision of large print textbooks from Class 1 onwards, accommodating the needs of students with visual impairments, and ensuring equitable access to educational materials

### **10. Braille Paper and Assistive Technologies:**

The introduction of the Braille paper for visually impaired students and the emphasis on assistive technologies, such as talking computer software, indicate a commitment to leveraging technology to facilitate inclusive education and address specific needs.

### **11. Beyond Classroom Initiatives:**

The incorporation of therapy facilities and home-based education for children unable to attend regular schools signifies an understanding of the diverse challenges faced by students with disabilities. This approach ensures that educational opportunities extend beyond the conventional classroom setting.

### **12. Training and Orientation Programs:**

The provision of training facilities in each block and orientation programs for key stakeholders, including principals, educational administrators, teachers, and guardians, underscores the importance of capacity building and creating a supportive ecosystem for inclusive education.

### **13. Continuous Improvement through Surveys and Assessments:**

The initiation of an annual survey and assessment program reflects a commitment to continuous improvement. This proactive approach allows for the identification of areas that require attention and ensures the responsiveness of special schools and other educational institutions to the evolving needs of students with disabilities.

### **14. Social Welfare Programs (ID Camps):**

Social welfare programs like ID Camps indicate an understanding of the broader societal challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. Providing support and resources through such initiatives contributes to creating an inclusive and supportive environment.

## **CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, Mizoram's strategies for implementing the RPWD Act of 2016 in elementary education exemplify a comprehensive and dynamic approach. Through infrastructure development, technological integration, capacity building, and continuous improvement mechanisms, the state has crafted an inclusive educational landscape that prioritizes the diverse needs of children with disabilities. Mizoram's journey offers valuable insights and inspiration for regions globally seeking to embark on the path of inclusive education, demonstrating that with commitment, collaboration, and adaptability, it is possible to build educational systems that leave no child behind.

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