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Exploration of Teachers' Role in Resource Class: A Case from an Integrated School

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the teacher's role in resource class especially focusing on how resource teacher contributes to mainstreaming of children with disability. For this purpose, the researcher applied hermeneutics phenomenology as a research design. Five resource teachers from two integrated school from Kathmandu valley were selected as research participants by purposive sampling. The researchers adopted in depth interview and class observation to gather the rigorous information. Data analysis had been carried out along with the categorization of themes of collaboration, observation of activities of resource teachers and understanding of service delivery model. From the interview protocol the responses were transcribed and basic themes had been organized. Main themes were extracted from the basic themes. Main theme had been discussed with thematic network to draw final conclusion. The findings showed that the roles and responsibility of resource teachers are to support general teacher, to teach basic adaptive skills for children with the disability, creating collaborative environment with the parents and professionals. Therefore, the resource teacher's roles to identification of need for children with disability, co-operation with parents and general teachers that contributes to transition planning in the individualized education plan. The findings provided implications that produced a plan to assist in the collaboration between the two educational environments.

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Introduction

When we visited a community school having resource class in Kathmandu valley, we found disabled students were enjoying in their learning activities with their appropriate intervention. Particularly visually impaired students were performing a leading role in their learning. The teachers in the resource class were delivering the skills related to the need of learners. Moreover, the teachers were found to be engaging providing knowledge about the life skill for students. This scenario in the resource class inspired to dig out the essential feature in the role of resource teachers. Kobayashi & Kuboyama, (2003) have stated that resource teacher plays primary role not only in child's guidance, but also in serving the needs of their parents.

Resource program along with the role and responsibility of resource teacher have been increased at speedy over the last decade (Hanushek, 1997). The resource room concept implies a partnership between the regular educator and the special educator for both planning and implementation. An educational program for disabled students' implementation of PL 94-142 mandates that regular class teacher is required to accept the responsibility of educating children with disability (Wang & Birch, 1984). Most of them are formally assigned to self-contained special education classroom. In analyzing the transition phase, importance is required to give for inspecting and evaluating support service provided by the resource room teachers. Ironically, almost of the research reports have shown on the effectiveness of mainstreaming program focusing the children with disabilities (Lightfoot, 2005). Curriculums carrying out life skills are often providing as fundamental courses as career and technical education centers or in self-contained special education classrooms (resource class) and occasionally as elective courses in regular high school. These types of programs particularly include functional jobs related skills, independent skills and social skills (Bonanni, 2015).

The resource teacher needs to inform about institution for disabled child in local areas for related pre-service provision such as early intervention system, the mother child health care system and initial screening practice. The quality of relationship between parents and resource teacher has influence on child. The reciprocal responsibility of the family and resource teacher is to observe and participate in the care that disable students need. The resource teachers

are needed to be encouraged to work together as partner in providing support for children with disability (Bubpha et al., 2012).

A classroom with distinct setting where disable students are equally enjoying in classroom in their learning is known as effective resource class. Vaughn et al. (2001) have stated that the effectiveness of teaching in resource room for enhancing performance of children with disability increases the acceptance and self-esteem in community. It shows that in the effective resource class all sorts of students need to be satisfied with their pleasure. Student's basic needs and environment need to be identified and managed well appropriate utilization and respect to them is essential for self-esteem in community. The effective resource room support service strengthens affirmativeness in reading, writing, calculation and self-determination skill and also reduces the unaccepted behavior. The children adapting in resource room are able to achieve the mastery of fundamental skill in early extent of life (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2016). Students require education in mainstream classes with multidimensional judgment including psychological and behavioral examination. The students usually receive extra academic supports from a resource teacher in the resource room. The school is required to provide training for general teacher to handle and cope with children with special needs by adapting flexible inclusion strategies in the least restrictive environment (Ali et al., 2006) in general, teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education. They agreed that inclusive education enhances social interaction and inclusion among the students and thus, it minimizes negative stereotypes on special needs students. The findings also show that collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important and that there should be a clear guideline on the implementation of inclusive education. The findings of the study have significant implications to the school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders who directly and indirectly involved in implementing inclusive education (Ali et al., 2006).

Resource teacher is seen as reasonably skilled and knowledgeable person. Teachers training needs to focus more on consultation. High level skill such as managing hyper behavior, managing attention deficit, using assistive devices etc. are important for making children with disability success in the mainstream (Friend, 1984). The inclusion in the mainstream school classroom leads to inclusion in the community for children with disability. Placements in the resource class, special class are best means to the end of inclusion in the community (Hornby, 2015).

In the context of Nepal, the resource classes are not properly managed from the government sector. Constitution of Nepal has delegated authority of educational management in the local government (source) but present scenario is, the policy implementers are still in confusion where the departure is. In such a context, this study seeks the way out of effective resource class management along with the roles and responsibility of teacher. The roles and responsibility of resource teacher have been explored in this study and way out for effective management of resource class in the community school in Nepal. Moreover, this document becomes relevant and supportive for policy implementation and reforming process.

Research question

In context of Nepal, the resource classes are not properly managed from the government sector. Constitution of Nepal has delegated an authority of educational management to the local government but they are still in confusion where the departure point is? In such context, this article aimed at exploring roles and responsibility of resource teacher for effective management of resource class. For this purpose what are the roles of resource teacher in teaching to children with disability in resource class is the research issue for this study.

Vygotsky's constructivist view on disability as theoretical framework

This theory is built on the basis of promoting educational intervention in which there is less space between normal and special education. As a result, normal education is developed as inclusive education (Boris, 1995). Resource room support service is the form of additional support provided for the learners with special needs. Resource room support service bridges the gap between child and mainstream education providing basic skill such as Braille, sign language etc.

Vygotsky's theory on disability includes cultural historical theory (CHAT) and theory on dysontogenic (theory of distorted development TD). Both CHAT and TD concerns with the characteristics and peculiarities of infant psychological development, the zone of proximal development, developmental education, sociocultural origin of disability, applying dynamic approach to disability, emphasizing the importance of the social situation of development.

This theory is significant for the practice of inclusive education. This theory provides wide range of perspectives and approaches to upbringing, educating and evaluating children with disability. Vygotsky's developmental approach includes the concept of ZPD, social situation development, concept of leading activity, age related psychological new formation, the dynamics and socio-culture approach to disability. Vygotsky's social constructionist view is basically opposed to quantitative diagnostic investigation which also labeled as arithmetic conception of a handicapped condition. He asserted that this is a new understanding of handicaps in developmental process rather than static condition not as the sum of defects and shortcomings. He focuses on the dynamic nature of disability is very significant for special didactic aspects taking into account the constant change in structure and content of disability taking place in the development process influenced by education and remediation (Koda, 2006).

According to Vygotsky, disability is considered as social aberration regardless of biology. He also urges that social aberration springs from children's changing social, environmental relation causing disturbance in social behavior.

Impact of sociocultural approach to disability in inclusive education

Vygotsky urges the importance of dynamic, socio-cultural nature of disability for the methodology of inclusive education. He also stresses about the importance of social learning in the upbringing and educating children with disability. He says that disability is not tragedy. Psychological and physical insufficiency is determined by certain social setting, arrangement or aberration, hindering children from normal socialization. He criticized the parents, teacher, and psychologists regarding pathological approach to child abnormality. He focused on child health not on disorder.

In this study the teacher's role and responsibility construct meaning from the social situation within resource class. The education intervention explores the meaning of social interaction between children with disability and resource teacher. This study stresses how the resource teachers' roles for the creation of the academic environment with the collaboration between stakeholders. By applying the Vygotsky's social constructivism along with ZPD the resource teachers create meaning of roles and responsibility for educating children with disability.

Method

This study has adopted the hermeneutics phenomenology as a research design which studies lived experiences and shared meaning of similar experiences (Creswell, 2009). This design helps to study the teacher's lived experience in resource class in the integrated school of Nepal. The experience and feeling of resource teachers are drawn from the participatory school. The teachers who were participated in this study had long years' experience in teaching to the students with disability. By purposive sampling five resource teachers teaching in two integrated secondary schools from Kathmandu valley were selected as research participants. To overcome ethical dilemma, informed consent was taken from the participants. In depth interview and class observation methods were adopted to gather the robust information. Data were analyzed with the themes of collaboration, observing an activity of resource teacher. Interviews with the participants were recorded by audio recorder. Recorded interviews responses were transcribed as verbatim and developed code. Similar codes were organized to generate several themes. The similar themes were organized as a main theme of the study. Themes were illustrated on the basis of ground data and they were compared and contrasted with data to data and data to literature.

Result and discussion

In this section the information drawn from the respondents in the course of in depth interviews were discussed and analyzed thematically as below:

Early intervention skills

The essential skill required for children with disability to run their daily life in school are termed as intervention skills. Such as food habit, socialization skills, self-protective skills, and independent skills. These skills are helpful for the adaptation of children with disability for independent living. In this relation participant resource teacher, R1 asserted as:

In my resource class student in the age of nine years came and have a class. In the beginning, they are completely non sense and some time they may fall down in the sideways. I teach to the visual impaired children from the basic skill of Braille. How to hold stylus and adjust slate are the fundamental skill for them. Sometimes they feel to be bored and make them relaxed with music.

From the above assertion, the child with disability needs basic skills for surviving at home. Some of the basic skills such as taking bath,

communication skill, clothing, food habit and self-care skill are essential skills that are appropriate for running their life at minimum stage (Bonanni, 2015). The children with disability require complex additional assistance for independence and participation at community with individual support at home as well as school to ensure the best outcomes. The complex additional support requirement is provided to children with disability through period of school transition which is considered to be as social process (Kobayashi & Kuboyama, 2003). In the same assertion another participant R2 stated:

In my class the students from different backgrounds come and stay together. The administration is dividing the students according to the level of severity and its nature. Some students exhibit the problematic behavior and it is difficult to control them. The students with intellectual disability and cerebral palsy urinate in the class and sometimes excrete stools. In such condition, I feel problem to teach in resource class.

In above statement, the resource teacher highlights that resource class in the present context are categorized on the basis of nature of disability and level of severity. In the situation of non categorization, children with one type of disability can distract to teach another type because they are not benefitted by the same treatment. In the sense of other side, the resource teachers are not prepared for teaching adequately to all types of learners with diverse needs. So resource room support service is needed to be facilitated on the basis of categorization and assumption of multiple prospective on the support service with professional service (Gray, 2005).

Interaction with general teacher

In every aspects of teaching to the students with disability by both general and special teachers, they required to have inter-mutual relationship for way forward. In this regard, a teacher shared his experiences as:

I teach the basic socialization skills to the children with disability who exhibit unaccepted behaviors by prompting method. The basic skills acquired by children are not recognized by general teachers and they use traditional methods due to lack of training. According to the voice of disables, the general teachers behave irritably with them and sometimes they show irresponsible behaviors. They feel bored with them and the children with disability are underestimated (Dyson, 1996).

In the above assertion, the teachers in the general class are unable to manage the diversity and ensure the indicators of inclusion. The heterogeneous

natures of students are not addressed by instructors in the classes. A conventional method of teaching obstructs the learning opportunity for diverse learners. Child friendly inclusive environment is required to maintain for ensuring justice in the class for providing equal opportunity to all types of learners (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2012). The general education teachers need to understand diversity management and equity pedagogy. The general education teachers is to be fed with new and advanced methods of learning in multicultural approach, culturally responsive pedagogy and sharing of responsibility are highly appreciable in the transition of children with disability from resource to general class.

In the same statements the respondent R3 urged as:

I teach in heterogynous class without availability of materials in general class have lack of knowledge about essential skills to be taught to disabled children. In the job attachment, I was able to join with traditional and theoretical knowledge of normalization has no knowledge of Braille and sign languages. The normal students can entertain in my traditional way of teaching. But the disabled children feel uneasy in the course of teaching.

In the above statement, the general education teachers lack knowledge of disability and know how to impart essential skills required for their daily living. Every aspects of school culture is required to affix welcoming environment for all learners. Pre-service training is needed as prerequisite to job placement. The teachers are launched demand based and refreshment training at certain interval of time. The training matter is completely supported to the need of diverse learners to fulfill the educational goal incorporating to local knowledge embodiment (Wang & Birch 1984). The commitment and responsibility for sharing skills related to disability matter are strictly reflected to classroom context after the training package.

Identification of disability

In resource room, support services are provided on the basis of severity and nature if not so the common service cannot support to the children in their life course. Relating to this matter, participant R4 stated as:

In the beginning when I start teaching in integrated classroom, I cannot detect of all types of disability. Some of the disabilities are hidden and may occur with associated disability. Some students of multiple disabilities are exhibiting the common characteristics such

as intellectual disability and autistic disorder. The children with disability are not provided differentiated curricula and methods of instruction. We teachers of resource class are not provided special training except 45 days but not sufficient.

In the above statement, the children are to be diagnosed by assessment and screening for the effective supplement services. The eligibility criterion for children with disability is essential for imparting authentic and basic knowledge for children with disability. If the level of severity and nature of disability are not detected in massive way, the service may be mismatched and the intervention will not be functional in the favor of differently able children. In the proper identification of children with disability, individualized education plan formation process become smooth and the children get appropriate education whatever they need in running their life (Cook et al., 2018) or how they live with and manage their autism. This qualitative study explored experiences of learning, friendships and bullying of girls with autism. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 girls with autism, aged 11-17 years, and one parent of each girl. Thematic analysis identified key themes relating to motivation to have friends, challenges for girls with autism and the notion that many girls tend to mask their autism, which had both positive and negative consequences. Overall, the girls were motivated to have friends, but often encountered social difficulties and were sometimes targeted for bullying. Findings pointed to the need for interventions such as staff training and programmes to support the social interaction of girls with autism based on their specific perceptions of friendship (Cook et al., 2018). By highlighting the above argument participant teacher R3 asserted as:

I have been teaching in resource class for the last two years. The resource room facilities are overlapped for all types of disability. Sometimes my feelings are not supporting to learners in the absence of micro detection and eligibility criteria for special education. Some of the instructional contents are overlapped due to the cross categorical feature of resource class.

On the above feeling of resource teacher, the common curricular content can not address the specific need of children with disabilities. Some students need one type of skill according to their nature and other may need another (Walker et al., 2011). This is not adequate for their life running activity. So, the resource room support services are required to categorize on the basis of characteristics exhibited by handicapped children. In doing so, the requirements of individual learners are addressed without any restriction.

Cooperation with parents

For the success of resource room support service for children with disability in resource class the special teacher needs to cooperate with parents. In the partnership between teachers and parents the present level of performance and eligibility criteria of students can be obtained that makes easier to make individualized education planning. In this context the participant R5 stated as:

In the beginning, teaching children with disability in resource room is a difficult job. I could not recognize their intention in the behavior. I used to teach a kind of matter for them but they showed unaccepted behaviors. They could not tolerate in the duration of resource class. The parent did not consult about the study of children what exactly they need according to their family environment.

In the above statement, the instruction of resource teacher is unsuccessful if the collaboration about teacher and parent did not occur. The information about differently able children and their exhibited characteristics support the instructional planning and organization of content for instruction. The resource teacher develops the strategies to overcome the abnormal attributes of children. Therefore, the parents of disabled children need to share the overall features of child to the resource teacher and cooperate with him for the modification of behavior of child (Somaily et al., 2012). Focusing on the same premises participation R2 asserted as:

Teaching to students of diverse needs, it is uneasy by single teacher. The variation of nature in disability cannot be addressed by one teacher because the teacher is not well trained on how to address the diverse learning needs. The forty-five days training for teacher is inadequate for setting up inclusive environment in class. If the class room is run by more than one teachers, the students of diverse needs will be benefited effectively.

In the above statement, the resource room instruction is not fruitful by single instruction. The resource teacher is unable to address varieties of needs if the responsibilities are not shared by more than one teacher (Bonanni, 2015). For the betterment of teaching on specific skills, co-teaching is an inclusive service model that involves co-planning, co-instructing, and co-assessing to teaching specific content across the curriculum. For successful instruction, co-teaching is essential that the school head teacher is required to plan and support the service delivery model for sharing and teaching to co-teaching partners (Hanushek, 1997).

Student support

It refers to the support mechanism adopted by the teachers for the children with disability in resource class. Before planning to determine the sets of activities to be taught to the students, the teachers need to identify what type of skills are essential for promoting their daily activity and improving their social responsibility. In this regard, participant R3 stated as:

I have been teaching students with visual impairment for the last five years. In my class students with visual deficit come and have the class. I teach Braille script for them to prepare for integrated class. Sometimes, they come to resource class and have music rather than life skills. We are not provided adequate equipment for such imparting aforesaid skills to the disabled children.

By the above experiences of teacher, it is clear that the resource teacher teaches Braille for visually impaired for the transition into integrated class. There is no need assessment mechanism for children with visual impairment in resource class. In the integration with regular class, when student feel problem in mathematics and science like geometry, algebra, demonstration, they go to resource class for music. In such scenario, the roles of resource teacher should not be like bridge for mainstream class. The resource teachers need to seek alternative option to fulfill the gap of above knowledge for the students with visual impairment (Al-Zoubi & Rahman, 2012).

In the same issue participant R4 agreed with R3 and stated as:

I teach in resource class in a very limited condition. I understand that teaching Braille script is only the responsibility of resource teacher. I have not obtained any training for transition management with essential skills. Sometimes, I spend most of the class hours to control the problematic behaviors of children in resource room.

Above statement clarifies that the resource teachers are teaching only in nominal scale. They are not imparting knowledge whatever is essential for children with disabilities. The teachers need to prepare by insight what they need to teach in the resource class besides the traditional attitude. In the beginning of teaching, the resource teacher is required to think about transition planning strategies. The resource teacher needs to be prepared mentally to teach essential skills required for his/her students. Besides this, the teachers require to think about assessment planning to evaluate whether the students are qualified or not.

Teacher support

The resource teacher assists general teacher about how to address the diverse needs of learners by gathering and sharing information with respect to modeling strategies, co-teaching, planning for an implementation of relevant educational intervention. In this regard, participant R4 expressed as:

I teach some of students in regular class. They do not like to attend in normal class. The students perceived not supported class for disabled children. In resource room I interpret some of the writing of students from regular class which I found not sequential but fragmented. Sometimes, the dictation is found to be deviated from the particular situation and particular subject matter is becoming superficial.

In the above version of teacher, the resource teachers are feeling unsatisfactory about the normal class. In regular class, the general teacher was unable to address the needs of diverse learner. So, the student lacked to grasp the matter whatever general teacher instructs. If the teacher did not know the sign language, the students with hearing problem will not benefit from the regular class. In such context, the resource teacher is required to support general teacher and they have to cooperate for universal learning. The collaboration between resource teacher and general teacher is highly appreciable to impart knowledge for handicapped child (M. C. Wang & Birch, 1984). In this regard, participant R5 urged as:

Inclusive education policy is not functioning well due its poor implementation. The policy implementation is very weak in the reference of teacher training, resource room management, inclusive placement, diversity management in the contemporary situation of education. The forty-five days training for inclusive teacher is inadequate in the inclusive class. Some of the general teachers are unaware of language of disability. Therefore, they face difficulty in managing inclusion in the classroom.

In the above assertion, the flexibility in policy implementation is creating obstacles for educating children with disability. In policy the teachers with adequate knowledge are deployed in service. Generally, teachers are overloaded with particular trainings. But practice is not running in this way in the field of inclusive education. To overcome the above issue, the recruitment is required to adopt from the specialization of relevant subject rather than short term training. The diversity of children demands

that teacher use various instructional strategies rather than one size -fits all approach (Elkins, et al., 2003). The teachers in the classroom need to plan actively for appropriate education program that enhances the full participation of students with disability (Bubpha et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Resource room support service is a milestone for welcoming students with disability who are out of mainstream education. Affirmative action can be launched by promoting the efficiency of facilities in the resource class with effective leadership and effective management. The students with disabilities will be highly benefitted if resource teacher is enthusiastic to reflect their performance on the basis of need assessment. To convert their performance more insightful, the resource teachers need to cooperate with parent in every aspect of education for disability. The major roles of resource teachers are concerning to identification of need for children with disability, cooperation with parents and general teachers, and contribute to transition planning. The essential roles and responsibilities are derived from this study are teacher support, student support, leadership, management and many more actions. The implications will not only provide recommendations for special and integrated education teachers and parents, but also for students with disabilities and their families to assist in the transition to community and mainstream education.

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