

Enrollment and Retention of Special Needs Children: Role of Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Eastern U.P

Dr. ADYA SHAKTI RAI

Associate Professor

Department of Visual Impairment
Faculty of Special Education, India

Dr. SHAKUNTALA MISRA

National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow, India

Abstract:

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) plays a pivotal role in education, rehabilitation, awareness generation and training programs for the persons with special needs. The planning and management of rehabilitation services need to be decentralized to make the delivery mechanism more effective. Panchayati Raj Institutions can facilitate development at grass root level of the country. (PRIs) are delegated to take care of 29 subjects including "Empowerment of Disabled". This study aims to find out the role of Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in enrollment and retention of Special Needs Children in Eastern U.P. Multi stage sampling technique has been adopted to select the sample for the study. Data have been gathered from 126 representative and authorities of all the three layers of PRIs. The findings of the study reveals that no significant work is being done by the PRIs in ensuring enrollment and retention of special needs children in Eastern U.P. The role and responsibilities of PRIs decreases as level of panchayat increases. The highest level of Panchayat (District level) has taken the least responsibilities in both the dimensions of the study and whatever minimal work had been done, is done by only the village level representatives.

Key words: Special needs children, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Retention, Special Needs Children, Education, Rehabilitation

The Government of India has initiated several schemes to include the excluded section of society in education system. However, the available data shows that more sincere efforts are needed to avail benefits and facilities provided under the schemes and program. The role of PRIs no doubt can be pivotal for the implementation of schemes at the grass root level. The 73rd amendment delegated the responsibilities upon Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to take care of 29 subjects including “Empowerment of Disabled” Therefore PRIs role is central in education, rehabilitation, awareness generation and training programs for the persons with special needs. The planning and management of rehabilitation services need to be decentralized to make the delivery mechanism more effective. Decentralization implies mobilizing and involving people to take the responsibility in identifying their own needs and participate in planning and management at different levels. According to (Varghese, 1996) as quoted by Tyagi(1999), *“This makes the planning process people friendly and participatory, plans more local specific and the educational institutions more efficient and effective”*. A centralized system of educational management does not respond to the educational needs of the people at the local level. The strategies of educational management followed over the years may fail to attract children to schools. Therefore, decentralization is advocated to make the delivery of educational programmes more effective. A study conducted by PRIA (2002) reports that the problem of education cannot be solved through centrally sponsored schemes and government efforts and it is necessary to involve community in educational planning.... Since gram panchayats are government at local level, the primary education related functions and responsibility of primary education institutions to panchayats becomes constitutional obligations. It is expected that the role of panchayats in providing education will address the issues of social and economic access as well as the quality of educational facilities. The community will be directly involved

and it will have to be directly involved and will not have to go to higher authorities for conveying its ideas, needs and aspiration for education. The direct involvement of panchayats in primary education will make the education system more accountable and transparent as panchayats are in closer proximity with community and they are answerable to the community through gram sabha. Keeping in view, the importance of decentralized management of education, national flagship program of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) committed to provide education to all through district based, decentralized special planning and implementation. Mathew (2002) quotes *“There is no other socio-political programme launched by the government in independent India which has generated as much enthusiasm and participation of the people as the panchayati raj institutions (PRIs)”*.PRIs envisage a bottom-up approach of planning as it reflects the reality at the grassroots level. PRIs as an instrument of local self-government will ensure greater participation of people and more effective role in education and rehabilitation of special need children. Community support is essential for successful implementation of the scheme for the benefit of the disabled children of village. PRIs are efficient to create a society conducive to the inclusion of disabled children, by enhancing the knowledge regarding the social nature of disability with the understanding that existing barriers to inclusion are social and not within the individual. PRIs can play a crucial role in modeling inclusive attitudes, promoting positive identity in disabled children and in combating discrimination and, and breaking down the prejudices of non-disabled children as they have direct reach at grassroots level.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY:

As per Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 Cr populations, about 2.68 Cr persons are ‘disabled’ which is 2.21% of the total population. The population of disabled in U.P. constitutes

15.50% of total population of special need children in India. Among them 76.16 % are habitants of rural area. The Census 2011 showed that 61% of the disabled children aged 5-19 years are attending educational institution. The rate of school attendance of disabled children (5-19 years) is higher in urban areas (65%) compared to rural areas (60%).In the rural areas, 49% of the disabled are literates while in urban areas, the percentage of literates among disabled population is 67%.Literacy rate of special needs person in UP is 52% as compared to 54.52% literacy rate of special needs persons in India. Despite several initiatives large population of special needs children are out of school. Average dropout in primary classes is 15.50% in U.P (Mehta, 2006)

Aim of “Education for all” is a partnership program between the central, state and local government. A constitution has given the power and authority to PRIs to function as institutions of self-government. It is PRIs responsibility to implement the schemes for economic development and social justice in general and “Empowering Children with Disabilities” which is one of the 29 subjects given in eleventh schedule of the constitution.

Towards Universalization of Elementary Education: Analytical Report 2007 states, that more schools in urban areas (58.07 %) arranged medical check-up than schools in rural areas (52.80%) that only 15.65 percent schools in India have ramp in the year 2005-06 (Mehta, 2007).

After a glimpse of the whole issue following questions emerged for interrogation:

- (i) What role is being played by PRIs in enrollment of special needs children?
- (ii) How effectively PRIs’s are playing role in ensuring the retention of enrolled special needs children in schools?
- (iii) What is the present role of PRIs in ensuring UEE of CWSN?

A detailed review to find answers to above questions revealed that , not even a single study has been conducted so far which can clearly reveal the answers. Hence, this study was undertaken.

Statement of the problem:

In light of the above rationale the problem was formally stated as follows:

“Enrollment and Retention of Special Need Students: Role of Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Eastern U.P”

Operational definitions: The key terms related to this study have been defined in following words:

Enrollment: This term means the total number of special needs participants in school.

Retention: This refers to act of holding the special need students in schools.

Special Needs students: Special needs students are those who differ from normal children in their physical, mental and social needs and require some extra care and resources for development and adjustment to life.

This will include the following categories of children:

- (i) Visually Impaired (VI)
- (ii) Hearing Impaired (HI)
- (iii) Orthopaedically Handicapped(OH)
- (iv) Mentally Retarded (MR)

Eastern UP: It incorporates following districts of eastern part of state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in India.

Table.1

Sidharth Nagar	Padrauna (Kushinagar)	SantRavidas Nagar	Azamgarh	Gazipur	Sonbhadra
SantKabir Nagar	MaharajGanj	Gorakhpur	Maunath-Bhanjan	Varanasi	Jaunpur
Basti	Chanduli	Deoria	Ballia	Mirzapur	

Objectives of study:

The specific objectives of this study were as follows:

- (i) To study the role of Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to ensure enrolment of special needs children
- (ii) To identify the intervention strategies adopted by the Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to improve retention status of disabled children in schools.

Methodology:

Method: Descriptive Survey method has been used.

Population: The population of the study comprised all three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Eastern Uttar Pradesh (U.P.).

Sample: Following steps were followed for the selection of the sample:

- Step 1. From each division of Eastern Uttar Pradesh one District was selected (the head quarter of the division).
- Step 2. Random selection of approximately 10% of blocks from each selected district.
- Step 3. Random selection of approximately 10% of Village Panchayats from each selected block.

Sampling Technique: Multi stage sampling has been used in this present study.

Table 2. List of Selected Zila Panchayats, Kshetra Panchayat and Gram Panchayats

State	Zila Panchayat	Kshetra Panchayat /Block (No of Village Panchayats)	Gram Panchayats
Eastern Uttar Pradesh	Azamgarh	Rani ki Sarai (68)	<u>Allipur, Bhandya</u> <u>Firuddupur, Ishwarpur</u> <u>Kotawa, Malik, shahpur</u> <u>Nadauli</u>
		Bilari Ganj (98)	<u>Akbarpur, Bankat, Bhawanpur</u> <u>Dharsan, Garhwal, Jalalpur</u>

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			<u>Kapsa, Manduri, Para, Tenduwat eipur</u>
	Basti	Sadar (85)	Sarai, Buxer, Pachisa, Ganeshpur, Rudhauri, Mahdev Gotawa, Nagara, Gaura
	Gorakhpur	Sahjanava (59)	Bharsar, Hardi, Jogiakol Siswa, Anantpur, Rampur
		Piparaich (62)	Agaya, Maharaji, Gopalpur Bela, Basantpur, Barsaini
	Mirzapur	Mazhwaan (38)	Aahi, Bajahan, Larvak, Chadiya
	Varanasi	KashiVidyapith(88)	Chhitupur, Bankat, Lohata Karoundi, Maheshpur, Akhari Tikari, Susuwahi, Keshripur

Selection of Respondents: The sample of respondents has been drawn from PRI representatives (Gram Panchayat, Kshetra and ZilaPanchayat. The list of ZilaPanchayat members was obtained from the officials of respective districts of Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, the list of Kshetra and Gram Panchayat members was obtained from the officials of blocks of Uttar Pradesh.

Following representative/authorities at all the three tiers i.e. Zila, Kshetra and Gram Panchayat were contacted for sample selection and tool administration.

Table 3. Representatives / Authorities at all three tiers contacted for data collection were as follows-

Sl.No.	Level/Tier	Representative elected by public	Authority appointed by Government
1.	District	President (District Panchyat)	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
2.	Block(Khestra Panchyachyat)	Block Pramukh	Block Development Officer (BDO)
3.	Village	Gram Pradhan	Village Development Officer(VDO)/ /Secretary

In all 126 representatives and authorities filled the questionnaire. Out of 126, the number of representatives and authorities at different levels were - Gram Panchayat level: 102, Block level: 14 and ZilaPanchayat level: 10

Tool: Researcher made questionnaire has been used to collect the data

Results and Discussions:

IDENTIFICATION OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE PANCHYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIs) FOR ENROLMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN.

Table 4. Summary of item, frequency and percent of public and government representatives

S. N.	Statement of Items	Represent ation type	Responses											
			Village				Block				District			
			Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	Conduct survey to check the status of enrollment	Public	13	26	38	74	2	29	5	71	0	0	5	100
		Govt	12	24	39	76	3	43	4	57	0	0	5	100
ii	Counsel parents to send CWSN to school	Public	16	31	35	69	2	29	5	71	0	0	5	100
		Govt	15	29	36	71	3	43	4	57	0	0	5	100
iii	Counsel principals/teachers to admit CWSN in school	Public	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
iv	Take action in case of rights of CWSN is hampered	Public	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
v	Ensure CWSNs are getting financial help under the SSA	Public	38	75	13	25	3	43	4	57	0	0	5	100
		Govt	37	73	14	27	3	43	4	57	0	0	5	100
vi	Home based training for severe/profound disabled	Public	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	00	00	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
vii	Guide parents about the options of educational settings	Public	5	10	46	90	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	05	10	46	90	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100

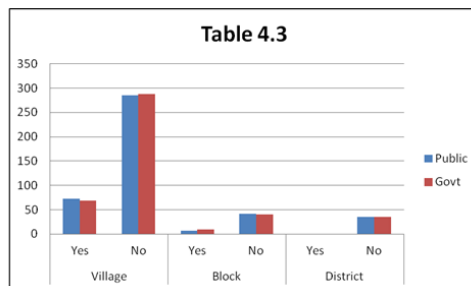


Fig. 1 Bar diagram showing participation of public and government representatives of PRIs at different levels in ensuring the enrolment of children with special needs

Interpretations

The above table 4 reveals the findings related to the role and responsibilities of PRIs members in the enrolment of children with special needs. At the village level 38 i.e. 74 % of public representation of PRIs members reported of not conducting survey to check the status of enrollment of children with special needs under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 13 i.e. 26% reported of conducting survey. At the block level 5 i.e. 71 % of public representation of PRIs members reported of not conducting survey to check the status of enrollment of children with special needs under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 2 i.e. 29 % reported of conducting those surveys. At the district level 5 i.e. 100 % of public representation of PRIs members reported of not conducting survey to check the status of enrollment of children with special needs. Similarly, 39 i.e. 76 % of Government officials of PRIs members at village level reported of not conducting surveys to check the status of enrollment of children with special needs under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 12 i.e. 24 % reported of conducting survey. At the block level 4 i.e. 57% of Government officials of PRIs members reported of not conducting survey to check the status of enrollment of children with special needs under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 3 i.e. 43% reported of conducting survey. At the district level 5 i.e. 100 % of Government officials of PRIs members reported of not conducting survey to check the status of enrollment of children with special needs. All positive responses indicated that survey had been conduct at the starting of session.

In response to the issue of counseling parents to send their children with special needs to school 35 i.e. 69% public members of PRIs at the village level responded that parents have not been counseled while 16 i.e. 31% responded that the counseling has been done. Members also reported that the counseling works were done only at the panchayat level. 5 i.e. 100% public members of PRIs at the block level as well as district level responded that parents have not been counseled to

send their ward to the school. Similarly, at the village level 36 i.e. 71% government officials PRIs members responded that parents have not been counseled to send their ward to school while 15 i.e. 29% responded that such work had been done. But government officers were unable to tell that where and when they counseled the parents to send their children to school. Similarly 5 i.e. 100% official members of PRIs at the block level as well as district level responded that parents have not been counseled to send their ward to school.

On being asked whether principals/ teachers are counseled to admit children with special needs in school under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan, all representatives of three tiers responded in negative.

At village level 51 i.e. 100% of public members and government officers responded in negative when they were asked that whether any action had been taken by PRIs in those cases where the rights of children with special needs were violated. Similarly at block level as well as at district level, 7 i.e. 100% of public as well government officers also responded in negative to this question.

At the village level 13 i.e. 25% public members of PRIs responded in positive when they were asked that whether children with special needs are getting financial help under the SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 38 i.e. 75% responded in negative. At the block level 4 i.e. 57% public members of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 3 i.e. 43% opined that they had made such provisions. At the district level 5 i.e. 100% Public members of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made. Similarly, at the village level 14 i.e. 27% Government officials PRIs members were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 37 i.e. 73% opined that they had made such provisions. At the block level 4 i.e. 57% of Government officials PRIs members were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 3 i.e. 43% said that they had made such provisions. 5 i.e.100% of government officials

PRIs members at the district level said that no such provision has been made. At village level it had been ensured by asking to parents of beneficiaries and at block level representatives ensured by asking to village representatives. 100% representatives at all the three tiers of public as well as government officials of panchyati raj institutions reported that no arrangements were made for the home based training for severe and profound disabled.

On the question regarding the guidance to the parents about the options of educational setting for children with special needs, 46 i.e. 90 % of public as well as government representatives of PRIs at village level responded that no such guidance was provided. The remaining 5 i.e. 10% said that they had provided the necessary guidance to the parents for choosing the options of educational setting. At the block and district level 5 i.e. 100 % of public as well as government representatives of PRIs responded that parents had not been guided.

Discussion:

Findings of the study show that at district level, members are not taking proper action for the enrolment of children with special needs and at block and village level also the work done has not been satisfactory. In fact, minimal work of survey to check status of enrollment of children with special needs under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan has only been done. No work had been done regarding counseling of teachers/principal to admit children with special needs in school under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan, any action in cases the rights of children with special needs were violated, regarding arrangements of home based training for severe and profound disabled and guiding parents about choosing the options of educational setting for children with special needs. Finding of this study is corroborated with findings of research conducted by many including Soni (2004) which reported that

unfortunately, Village Education Committees have not taken any step towards the education of disabled children in the selected schools. Alur & Timmons (2004) argued that the real challenge facing India is that ninety-eight percent of children and adults with disabilities receive no service at all. Dvivedi and Tripathi (2007) reported that the participation of village education committee, gram pradhan are more inclined towards factors like scholarship etc. than the education of their children. Mala (2004) reported that the numbers of students enrolled in primary schools of rural area is less than the number of enrolment of students in primary schools of urban area, which means that environment effects directly on the enrolment of students.

Results related to Objective (ii):

IDENTIFICATION OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY THE PANCHYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIS) TO IMPROVE RETENTION STATUS OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS.

Table 5. Summary of item, frequency and percent of public and government representatives

S. N	Statement of Items	Representation type	Responses											
			Village				Block				District			
			Yes		No		Yes		No		Yes		No	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	Any effort to know the reason of dropouts	Public	12	24	39	76	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	11	22	40	78	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
ii	Ensure the physical access of CWSN in school	Public	06	12	45	88	2	29	5	71	0	0	5	100
		Govt	7	14	44	86	1	14	6	86	0	0	5	100
iii	Ensure at least one Special trained teacher in school	Public	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
iv	Ensure preparation & maintenance of IEP	Public	00	00	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
v	Provide facilities mentioned under SSA	Public	15	29	36	71	3	43	4	57	0	0	5	100
		Govt	16	31	35	69	3	43	4	57	0	0	5	100
vi	Ensure availability of resource rooms at village /cluster	Public	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
vii	Any effort to develop resource room if unavailable	Public	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	00	00	51	100	0	00	7	100	0	0	5	100
viii	Arrange vocational training for CWSNs	Public	1	2	50	98	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	1	2	50	98	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
ix	Arrange counseling for CWSN studying in schools.	Public	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100

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x	Ensure visit by team (doctor, psychologist and spledu)	Public	8	16	43	84	1	14	6	86	0	0	5	100
		Govt	6	12	45	88	2	29	5	71	0	0	5	100
xi	recommend alternative options of school	Public	00	00	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	00	00	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
xii	Ensure that CWSNs are not ill treated in school	Public	2	4	49	96	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	3	6	48	94	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
xiii	Effort to identify special areas of assistance needed	Public	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100
		Govt	0	0	51	100	0	0	7	100	0	0	5	100

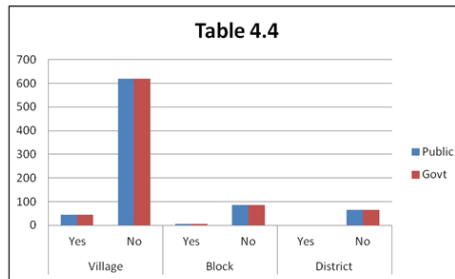


Fig. 2: Bar diagram showing participation public and government representatives of PRIs at different levels in improving retention status of children with special needs in schools

Interpretation

A perusal of table 5 reveals the findings related to the role and responsibilities of PRIs members to improve retention status of children with special needs in schools. At the village level 39 i.e. 76 % of public representation of PRIs members reported of not taking any effort to know the reason of dropout while 12 i.e. 24 % reported that effort had been taken to know the reason of dropout. Among the representatives who took effort to know the reason of dropout 11 i.e. 92 % reported that if parents meet then they ask and 1 i.e. 8 % reported that they visited home to know the reason of dropout. 40 i.e. 78 % of government officials of panchyati raj institutions at village level indicated of not taking any effort to know the reason of dropout while 11 i.e. 22 % reported that effort had been taken to know the reason of dropout. But they did not have any definite answer of this question. At the block as well as district level 100 % of public as well as government representation of PRIs members reported of not taking any effort to know the reason of dropout.

On the provision of ensuring the physical access of children with special needs in school. At the village level 45 i.e. 88% Public members of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 6 i.e. 12% opined that they had made such provisions. At the block level 5 i.e. 71 % Public members of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 2 i.e. 29% opined that they had made such provisions. At the district level 5 i.e. 100% Public members of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made. Similarly, at the village level 86% Government officials PRIs members were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 14% opined that they had made such provisions. At the block level 44 i.e. 86% of Government officials PRIs members were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 7 i.e. 14% opined that they had made such provisions. At the District level 5 i.e. 100% of Government officials PRIs members were of opinion that no such provision has been made.

On the role of ensuring at least one special trained teacher in school at all three levels of panchayat, public as well as government representatives responded that no such role had been undertaken. Preparation and maintenance of individualized educational plan of children with special needs is an important component of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan and at the grass root level panchayat members can play a pivotal role in ensuring the preparation and maintenance of IEP document. But finding shows that no representative at all the three level agreed that preparation and maintenance of IEP has been ensured by them.

At the village level 36 i.e. 71% of the public members reported that they did not provide facilities to children with special needs mentioned under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 15 i.e. 29% reported of ensuring that mentioned facilities have been provided. At the block level 4 i.e. 57% of the public as well as official members reported that they did not provide facilities to children with special needs mentioned under

SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 3 i.e. 43% reported of ensuring that mentioned facilities have been provided. At the district level 5 i.e. 100% of the public as well as official members reported that they did not provide facilities to children with special needs mentioned under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan. Similarly at the village level 35 i.e. 69% of the public members reported that they did not provide facilities to children with special needs mentioned under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan while 16 i.e. 21% reported of ensuring that mentioned facilities have been provided.

On the role of ensuring availability of resource rooms at village or cluster level and taking any effort to develop resource room if unavailable all panchayat public as well as government representatives reported that no such role had been undertaken.

On the provision of arranging vocational training for children with special needs. At the village level 50 i.e. 98 % of public as well as government representatives of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 1 i.e. 2% opined that they had made such provision. But they were unable to provide any definite answer. At the block and district level 100 % of public representatives of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made.

On the issue of arranging counseling for children with special needs studying in school public as well as government representatives at all the three levels reported that no such work had been done.

On the role of ensuring visit by team of doctor, psychologist and special educator at village level 43 i.e. 84% of public members responded that no such role had been undertaken while 8 i.e. 16% indicated that such role had been undertaken. At block level 6 i.e. 86% of public members responded that no such role had been undertaken while 1 i.e. 14% indicated that such role had been undertaken. At district level 100% of public members responded that no such role had

been undertaken. Similarly, when same question has been asked to government officials of PRIs at village level 45 i.e. 88 % responded that no such role had been undertaken while 6 i.e. 12 % responded that no such role had been undertaken. At block level 5 i.e. 71 % responded that no such role had been undertaken while 2 i.e. 29 % responded that no such role had been undertaken. At district level 5 i.e. 100 % responded that no such role had been undertaken. On being asked whether students are being recommended for alternative options of schools all representatives of three tiers reported a big “No”

On the provision of ensuring that children with special needs are not being ill treated in school. At the village level 49 i.e. 96% of public representatives of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 2 i.e. 4% opined that they had made such provision. Similarly 48 i.e. 94% of government representatives were of opinion that no such provision has been made while 3 i.e. 6% opined that they had made such provision. Representatives reported that only they ask only to principal that’s too when they meet. At the block and district level 100 % of public as well as government representatives of PRIs were of opinion that no such provision have been made. On the role of taking effort to identify special area of assistance needed by children with special needs all representative responded that no such role had been undertaken.

Discussion:

PRIs are seen as critical to the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the education for all. Implementation of the SSA and any other schemes in achieving its outcomes is significantly dependent on well-functioning gram, block and district level panchayats. Retention of children can be improved by creating effective schools and participation of community in school is essential for school effectiveness. As Panigrahi (2006) found

that high community participation is associated with increasing the school effectiveness. Role of PRIs is very important in improving the retention of enrolled children with special needs in inclusive settings because being the government local level PRI members are well acquainted with the problems at grass root level. But *findings of the study reveal that No work had been done by the PRIs regarding ensuring at least one special trained teacher in school, preparation and maintenance of individualized educational Program (IEP)*, ensuring availability of resource rooms at village or cluster level, taking any effort to develop resource room if unavailable, arranging counseling for children with special , recommending alternative options of schools, any effort to identify special area of assistance needed by children with special needs, ensuring visit by team of doctor, psychologist and special educator. Only few members that too only at village and block level took effort to know the reason of dropout and ensure mentioned facilities reaching to children with special needs. Only one representative arranged vocational training for children with special needs.

Conclusion of the Study:

On the basis of above discussions it can be concluded that the role of PRIs is very important in improving the enrollment and retention of enrolled special needs children in inclusive settings because being the government local level PRI members are well acquainted with the problems at grass root level. But findings of the study reveal that No significant work is being done by the PRIs in this regard. At district level, members are not taking proper action for the enrolment of children with special needs and at block and village level also the work done has not been satisfactory. In fact, minimal work of survey to check status of enrolment of children with special needs has only been done. No satisfactory work had been done by the PRIs to improve

retention status of disabled children in schools. Only few members that too only at village and block level took effort to know the reasons for dropout and ensure reaching of facilities mentioned for children with special needs.No work had been done regarding counseling of teachers/principal to admit children with special needs in school and arrangements of home based training for severe and profound disabled and guiding parents about choosing the options of educational setting for children with special needs. PRI members did not take any action in cases the rights of children with special needs were violated.

Therefore finally the study reveals that despite the comprehensive approach of SSA at ground level participation of PRIs in inclusion of special needs children in Eastern Uttar Pradesh is quite disappointing. Surprisingly, the role and responsibilities of PRIs decreases as level of panchayat increases. The highest level of Panchayat (District level) has taken the least responsibilities in all dimensions of the study and whatever minimal work had been done, done by only village level representatives.

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