



Educating Children With Disabilities In Mizoram: Parents' Occupation As A Major Determinant

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Abstract: Parents play a fundamental role in both the schooling and raising of their children. They serve as advocates, ensuring their children receive appropriate education and support (Hou et al. 2022). Parents play a crucial role in their children's lives by providing daily care, emotional support, and fostering their education and social development, essential for their overall growth and success. If parental engagement is crucial for typically developing children, its importance is even greater in the schooling and raising of children with disabilities. According to Duhaney and Salend (2000), active parental engagement in the schooling and upbringing of their disabled children is indispensable. Thus, the present study aims to study the engagement of parents in educating their children with disabilities in Mizoram with reference to occupation.

Keywords: Parents, Education, Children with Disabilities, Occupation, Mizoram.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2009, India enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, ensuring that all children, including those with disabilities, receive free and compulsory education up to elementary level in local neighborhood schools. India is also known for its supportive legislative framework for disabilities, with a strong emphasis on the education of children with disabilities, referred to as Children with Special Needs (CWSN). SSA, India's flagship program aimed at enhancing access to and improving the quality of education for all children aged 6-14 years (Singal, 2016), highlights the government's commitment to improving the schooling and education of children with disabilities in the country.

However, despite these efforts, several factors affect the education of these children. One such factor is the occupational status of parents which greatly affect and influence the quality of care and educational opportunities available to children with disabilities (Newman, 2005). The occupational status of parents profoundly affects the education of children with disabilities. Higher occupational status typically provides greater financial resources, access to support services, and flexibility in parental engagement. It also correlates with better advocacy skills and social networks that can enhance educational opportunities for these children. Addressing these disparities is essential for ensuring equitable access to education across all socioeconomic backgrounds.

II. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Ensuring access to education for children with disabilities is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it promotes equality by providing all children, regardless of their abilities, with the opportunity to learn and develop to their full potential. Inclusive education also fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance within society, breaking down barriers and challenging stereotypes. It empowers children with disabilities by equipping them with essential knowledge and skills, enhancing their confidence and independence. Moreover, it reflects a legal and ethical commitment to human rights, as enshrined in laws such as India's Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act. Parents play a pivotal role in advocating for their children's educational rights and creating a supportive home environment. Ultimately, inclusive education benefits society by

reducing stigma, promoting social inclusion, and enabling all individuals to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

There has been no research conducted in Mizoram regarding the education of children with disabilities, particularly in relation to how parents' occupation affects their educational opportunities. This lack of study highlights a significant gap in understanding the challenges these children encounter in accessing quality education, which in turn hampers the development of informed policies, targeted interventions, and community awareness needed to support their educational needs effectively. Addressing this gap through research is crucial for advancing inclusive education initiatives and improving outcomes for children with disabilities in Mizoram.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Some of the related literature for the present study are listed below—

Newman (2005) in his report titled “Family Involvement in the Educational Development of Youth with Disabilities” found that the income and the educational attainment of mothers of students with disabilities are strongly related to family involvement. Wealthier families are less likely to be involved at home, which might be due to their hiring tutors to help with homework. Children with better-educated mothers are more likely to have families who are involved in their education across multiple settings—at home, at school, and in the IEP process. Having more family resources—higher incomes or higher levels of parental educational attainment—is associated with higher levels of involvement of all kinds.

Singal (2016) studied parents of children with disabilities in low-income rural South Indian communities. The research titled “Schooling children with disabilities: Parental perceptions and experiences” found that mothers highly valued education for its short- and long-term benefits but expressed concerns over the inadequate quality of available educational services. Children with disabilities in these areas faced barriers accessing necessary resources and support, limiting their educational opportunities and overall development. Additionally, insufficient services contributed to feelings of isolation, low self-esteem, and reduced social integration among disabled children in rural settings.

Walter (2018) conducted a study in Kipkelion Sub-County, Kenya, examining how parental occupation and income influence students' academic performance in public day secondary schools. The research revealed that students' academic achievement was consistently below average (mean score of 4.70, C-) over several years, based on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results from 2007 to 2012. The study aimed to identify reasons for these low academic outcomes and found that, students from lower parental occupational levels tended to perform worse, likely due to limited access to learning resources at home. In contrast, students from middle occupational levels performed better, possibly because their parents invested more in educational materials. Surprisingly, students from higher occupational levels performed poorly, possibly due to factors like complacency or insufficient investment in educational resources at home.

Hou et al. (2022) conducted a study called “A Qualitative Study on Parental Experience of Involvement in the Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School for Chinese Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities” in China. The study identified three key themes: “active” parental engagement, factors affecting changes in involvement, and “thoughtful” parenting approaches. Participants discussed their perceptions, attitudes, and parenting behaviors during their children’s transition to primary school, emphasising the need for supportive interventions for parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) during this pivotal time.

IV. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The delimitations of the present study are as follows:

(i) The study is delimited to only five districts of Mizoram i.e., Aizawl, Lunglei, Champhai, Kolasib and Mamit districts.

(ii) The study is delimited to Mizo’s parents having disabled children who enrolled their children in an educational institution.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are –

(i) To find out the occupation of parents having children with disabilities in Mizoram.

(ii) The influence of parental occupation in educating children with disabilities in Mizoram.

VI. HYOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The hypothesis of the present study is –

(i) There is no significant influence of parental occupation in educating children with disabilities in Mizoram.

VII. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

Method of the Study

The present study employed Descriptive Survey Method

Population and Sample

The population for the present study comprises of parents of children with disabilities in Mizoram whose disabled children are enrolled in an educational institution.

Sample

The investigator selected 350 (three fifty) parents of children with disabilities in Mizoram using cluster random sampling method due to the geographical dispersion of the parents.

Tools Used

The investigators used the Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS)" developed by Singh, Shyam & Kumar (2006) and Parent Involvement Scale (PIS) developed by Chopra & Sahoo (2007).

Procedure of Data Analysis

The investigators personally visit the home of the selected sample and collects the necessary data. For analysing data, statistical technique such as ANOVA (one-way) and Tukey Kramer post hoc analysis were employed to find accurate results and lastly, descriptive interpretations were made to draw conclusions.

VIII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STUDY

Objective 1: To find out the occupation of parents having children with disabilities in Mizoram.

For the present study, 350 parents of children with disabilities who enrolled their children in an educational institution were selected. The occupations of these parents are greatly categorised into three groups of Homemaker, Self-employed and Government (Govt.) employed. The categorisation of these parents is given in the following table:

Table 1
Occupation of parents

Sl. No	Occupation	Number	Percentage
1.	Homemaker	126	36
2.	Self-employed	169	48.28
3.	Govt. employed	55	15.72
4.	Total	350	100

As per the data provided in Table 1, it is evident that parents who are self-employed constitute the largest group with 48.28%. This group of population is followed by parents who are homemaker constituting 36% of the total population and the minority of parents are found to be govt. employed i.e., 15.72%.

Objective 2: The influence of parental occupation in educating children with disabilities in Mizoram.

The study aimed to analyse how parents' occupations influence the education of their disabled children. Parents' occupations were categorised into three main groups: homemakers, self-employed individuals, and government employees, identified using the SESS. These groups were compared based on their involvement in educating their disabled children, assessed using the PIS. An ANOVA analysis was conducted to determine if there were significant differences in parental engagement among these occupational categories. Subsequently, Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis was employed to perform pairwise comparisons, identifying specific occupational groups that showed significant differences in their level of parental engagement.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of parental occupation in educating children with disabilities in Mizoram.

1.1. Comparison of parental school involvement with reference to occupation.

The parents' school involvement in relation to educating their disabled children is analysed by utilising ANOVA (One-way), the findings of which is presented in Table 1:

Table 2

Comparison of school involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Dimension	Group	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
School Involvement	Between groups	5818.93	2	2909.47	301.8	0.01
	Within groups	3344.83	347	9.639		
	Total	9163.76	349			

The analysis, as seen in Table 2, yielded a calculated 'F' value of 301.8, which exceeds the critical 'F' value at a 0.01 level of significance. This suggests that noteworthy disparities are evident in parental school engagement among the three occupational categories. Put differently, parental occupation emerges as a significant determinant of their involvement in their children's educational pursuits.

1.2. Multiple comparisons of parental school involvement using Tukey Kramer post hoc analysis is laid down below:

Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis is utilised to ascertain the mean difference in parental school involvement across various occupations. The findings regarding this comparison are presented in the table below:

Table 3

Multiple comparisons of school involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Sl No.	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig
1.	Homemaker vs Self-employed	126	13.06	2.99	-6.71	0.36	0.000 (0.01)
		169	19.78	3.38			
2.	Homemaker vs Govt. employed	126	13.06	2.99	-11.28	0.5	0.000 (0.01)
		55	24.34	2.35			
3.	Self-employed vs Govt. employed	169	19.78	3.38	-4.56	0.48	0.000 (0.01)
		55	24.34	2.35			

Upon examining the data provided in Table 3, it becomes apparent that there are notable differences in the school involvement of parents based on their occupations. Specifically, when comparing parents who are homemaker to those who are self-employed, a significant discrepancy in school involvement is observed. The mean scores indicate that self-employed parents tend to exhibit greater involvement in school activities compared to homemakers.

Similarly, significant differences are also observed when comparing parents who are homemaker to those who are govt. employed, as well as between parents who are self-employed and govt. employed. In both cases, the latter groups of parents demonstrate higher levels of school involvement compared to the former groups.

These findings suggest that parental occupation plays a significant role in determining the extent of their involvement in their children's schooling. Specifically, self-employed, and govt. employed parents appear to be more actively engaged in school-related activities compared to homemakers.

1.3. Comparison of home involvement of parents with reference to occupation.

The home involvement of parents from the five districts is compared based on three groups of occupations. The findings are laid down below:

Table 4
Comparison of home involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Dimension	Group	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Home Involvement	Between groups	6622.78	2	3311.39	115.49	0.01
	Within groups	9949.34	347	28.67		
	Total	16572.12	349			

Table 4 highlights the comparison of the home involvement of parents based on their occupation. As displayed in the table, the calculated 'F' value is 115.49, which is greater than the table value of 'F' at the 0.01 level of confidence. Thus, it can be stated that the home involvement of parents based on their occupation has a significant difference among the three groups of occupations.

1.4. Multiple comparisons of home involvement of parents with reference to occupation.

The Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis is employed to determine the mean difference between the home involvement of parents based on their different occupations. The findings regarding the comparison are presented in the following table.

Table 5
Multiple comparisons of home involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Sl No.	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig
1.	Homemaker vs Self-employed	126	16.9	4.38	-7.22	0.63	0.000 (0.01)
		169	24.13	6.01			
2.	Homemaker vs Govt. employed	126	16.9	4.38	-11.98	0.86	0.000 (0.01)
		55	28.89	5.24			
3.	Self-employed vs Govt. employed	169	24.13	6.01	-4.76	0.83	0.000 (0.01)
		55	28.89	5.24			

Table 5, reveals the multiple comparisons of parents' home involvement based on their occupation. The table shows that the home involvement of parents based on their occupation has a significant difference. The comparison between parents who are homemaker and parents who are self-employed implies that the latter group is more involved at home as compared to the former group of parents. Similarly, the comparison made between parents who are homemaker vs. govt. employed and parents who are self-employed vs. govt. employed shows that the latter groups of parents are more involved at home as compared to the former groups of parents.

1.5. Comparison of PTA involvement of parents with reference to occupation.

The PTA involvement of parents from the five districts of population is compared based on the three groups of occupations. The findings are laid down below:

Table 6
Comparison of PTA involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Dimension	Group	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
PTA Involvement	Between groups	1968.24	2	984.1	62.85	0.01
	Within groups	5432.78	347	15.65		
	Total	7401.02	349			

An observation of the data presented in Table 6, displayed the comparison of PTA involvement among parents based on occupation. The table shows that the calculated value of 'F' is 62.85, which is greater than

the table value of 'F' at a 0.01 level of confidence. Consequently, it can be concluded that there are differences in the PTA involvement of parents among the three occupational categories.

1.6. Multiple comparisons of PTA involvement of parents with reference to occupation.

To determine the mean difference between the PTA involvement of parents based on their different occupations, Tukey Kramer post hoc analysis is employed. The comparison results are given below:

Table 7

Multiple comparisons of PTA involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Sl No.	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig
1.	Homemaker vs Self-employed	126	12.8	3.51	-4.22	0.46	0.000 (0.01)
		169	17.02	4.14			
2.	Homemaker vs Govt. employed	126	12.8	3.51	-6.25	0.63	0.000 (0.01)
		55	19.05	4.31			
3.	Self-employed vs Govt. employed	169	17.02	4.14	-2.03	0.61	0.000 (0.01)
		55	19.05	4.31			

The examination of the data provided in Table 7, shows the findings of multiple comparisons of the PTA involvement of parents based on their occupation. There is a significant difference between parents who are homemaker and parents who are self-employed. The latter group appears to be more involved through PTA compared to the former group. This result is also in line with the comparison made between parents who are homemaker vs. govt. employed and parents who are self-employed vs. govt. employed, where the latter groups of parents are more involved through PTA as compared to the former groups.

1.7. Comparison of overall involvement of parents with reference to occupation.

The overall involvement of parents in the five districts of population is compared based on the three groups of occupations. The findings are laid down below:

Table 8

Comparison of overall involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Dimension	Group	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Overall Involvement	Between groups	40474.6	2	20237.3	189.6	0.01
	Within groups	37025.2	347	106.7		
	Total	77499.8	349			

A cursory glance at Table 8, shows that the calculated value of 'F' is 189.6, and this obtained value is greater than the table value of 'F' at the 0.01 level of confidence. It may be concluded, then, that the three categories of occupations have different levels of overall parental involvement, depending on their line of work.

1.8. Multiple comparisons of overall involvement of parents with reference to occupation.

The table below presents the findings of the Tukey-Kramer post hoc analysis, which was used to analyse the mean difference in overall parental involvement across various occupations.

Table 9

Multiple comparisons of overall involvement of parents with reference to occupation

Sl No.	Occupation	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig
1.	Homemaker vs Self-employed	126	42.85	9.59	-18.06	1.21	0.000 (0.01)
		169	60.92	11.19			
2.	Homemaker vs Govt. employed	126	42.85	9.59	-29.45	1.66	0.000 (0.01)
		55	72.3	9.11			

3.	Self-employed vs Govt. employed	169	60.92	11.1 9	-11.38	1.6	0.00 0 (0.01)
		55	72.3	9.11			

An observation of Table 9, highlights the multiple comparisons of overall parental involvement based on their occupation. The comparison between parents who are homemaker versus those who are self-employed shows that self-employed parents tend to be more involved compared to homemakers. This finding is also consistent with the comparison between homemaker versus govt. employed parents and self-employed versus govt. employed parents, where the latter groups tend to be more involved than the former.

A careful examination of all the comparisons made across the four dimensions of parental involvement implies that parental engagement in educating their disabled children differs according to the three occupational groups. Thus, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis, which claims that there is no significant influence of parental occupation in educating children with disabilities in Mizoram is rejected.

IX. MAJOR FINDINGS

(i) The study revealed that the largest proportion of parents of disabled children in Mizoram are self-employed, accounting for 48.28% of the total population studied. Following them, homemakers make up 36% of the group, while government-employed parents constitute the smallest segment at 15.72%.

(ii) The study identified variations among parents of disabled children in Mizoram based on their occupations. These differences were observed in terms of how they engage, involve, and educate their children.

(iii) It was found that parents employed by the government are the most involved, indicating they are the most engaged and active in the education of their disabled children. They are followed by parents who are self-employed, and lastly, by those who are homemakers.

(iv) The study discovered that occupation of parents greatly influences the education of children with disabilities in Mizoram.

X. DISCUSSIONS

The study conducted in Mizoram revealed that parents of disabled children often face challenging economic circumstances, with a majority being self-employed. This emphasises significant financial disparities within this demographic. The research also highlighted that parents' occupational status has a significant impact on their involvement in their children's education. Those with higher occupational status tend to exhibit greater engagement, likely due to factors such as increased financial resources, more flexible schedules that allow for greater participation in educational activities, and better access to support services.

This finding aligns with the research by Newman (2005), which emphasises that families with more resources, such as higher incomes or higher levels of parental education, are generally more involved in their children's education. In the context of Mizoram, these insights highlight the critical role of occupation in shaping the educational outcomes of children with disabilities. Addressing economic disparities and providing targeted support could potentially enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for these children.

Overall, the study stresses the complex interplay between socio-economic factors and parental involvement in the education of disabled children in Mizoram. It suggests that policies and interventions aimed at supporting these families should consider occupational dynamics and strive to mitigate financial challenges to promote better educational outcomes for disabled children in the region.

XI. SUGGESTIONS

Parents of disabled children should receive greater recognition and support, both economically and emotionally. It is crucial that they are informed about their rights regarding the education of their children with disabilities. This includes ensuring access to inclusive education opportunities, advocating for appropriate educational accommodations, and receiving necessary financial assistance or subsidies to cover the costs associated with their children's special needs education.

Mentally, parents should be provided with counselling and support services to help them navigate the challenges of raising a child with disabilities. This support should encompass not only educational aspects but also emotional and psychological well-being, helping parents to cope with the stresses and uncertainties they may face.

Moreover, awareness programmes and community initiatives can play a vital role in empowering parents, fostering a supportive environment, and combating stigma associated with disabilities. By equipping parents with knowledge, resources, and emotional support, societies can ensure that they are better equipped to provide the best possible care and education for their disabled children.

In summary, recognising the rights of parents and providing them with comprehensive support—financially, emotionally, and through education—can significantly enhance the well-being and educational outcomes of disabled children, fostering a more inclusive and supportive society overall.

XII. CONCLUSION

It is crucial to acknowledge that the current study's findings may not fully represent the entire state. While results could potentially differ, dismissing these findings would be ethically inappropriate. Thus, the study emphasises that parents' occupations have a profound influence on the education of disabled children in Mizoram, highlighting the significant impact of financial factors on their educational outcomes. This suggests that addressing economic disparities is vital to improving educational opportunities for disabled children in the region.

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