

Impact of Special Education Needs (SEN) program implementation on students' academic and behavioral outcomes at GonpaSingma Lower Secondary School.

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ABSTRACT : This qualitative case study investigates the implementation and impact of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) program at Gonpasingma Lower Secondary School (LSS), the first officially designated inclusive school in Pemagatshel district, Bhutan. The program aims to provide equitable education to children with different disabilities like autism, Down syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and learning disabilities since its beginning in 2015. The study is based on semi-structured interviews with four parents, four SEN teachers and four SEN provider teachers and classroom observations. The study investigates academic and behavioural outcomes, the quality of support services and perceptions of stakeholders. The results demonstrate that through the use of individualised strategies, visual aids, positive reinforcement and whole school collaboration, there are significant improvements in learners' communication, self-care, emotional regulation, social participation, confidence and early academic skills. However, progress is patchy, hampered by a lack of trained SEN staff, limited access to therapeutic services, lack of assistive resources and poor home-school partnerships. Parents said they wanted practical advice and capacity building to support learning at home, while teachers wanted more specialists, continuous professional development and adapted facilities. The study emphasises that authentic inclusion is more than just academics and includes functional independence and feeling like a part of the social fabric. The report recommends strengthening staffing, access to therapists, parent workshops, IEP-driven support and infrastructure to sustain inclusive education in rural Bhutan. These results contribute to the scant empirical literature on the implementation of SEN in Bhutan and inform policy revisions to meet national and global inclusion goals.

I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education and Special Educational Needs (SEN) programmes today stand as one of the significant cornerstones of global education policy. The guiding belief is simple yet powerful: every child, regardless of ability, background, or circumstance, deserves a meaningful and quality education (UNESCO, 2017). This vision is strongly supported by international frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); the Sustainable Development Goals—particularly SDG 4 on Quality Education; the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994); and the continuous efforts of agencies like UNICEF and the World Bank, all of which highlight equity, dignity, and reduced barriers for learners (UN, 2006; UNICEF, 2020).

Bhutan, with its holistic development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), has embraced inclusive education as a national priority. The Constitution (RGoB, 2008) ensures education as a right for all, including children with disabilities. In recent years, the Ministry of Education has made significant strides in translating this constitutional guarantee into visible action. The creation of a Special Educational Needs Division, adoption of the National Policy for Special Educational Needs (MoE, 2012), and integration of inclusive practices into Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres (MoE, 2021) reflect Bhutan's commitment to tailoring learning environments for children of varied needs.

SEN provisions in Bhutan seek to support children with diverse conditions such as autism, Down syndrome, ADHD, cerebral palsy, and learning disabilities (MoE, 2017). Through partnerships with UNICEF and UNESCO, the country has strengthened teacher training, community awareness, and professional development programmes (UNICEF, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). However, the challenges of limited specialised personnel, persistent social stigma, and resource constraints are still felt deeply, especially in rural schools (Dorji, 2018).

In 2015, Gonpasingma Lower Secondary School (LSS) became the first in its district to initiate an SEN programme. This step was not only a policy-driven initiative but also reflected local recognition of the need for an inclusive system that supports all children's overall growth and well-being. However, even with nearly a decade of operation, there remains a lack of empirical research on how the programme has shaped academic and behavioural achievements for students requiring SEN support. Understanding these impacts is critical not only for effective interventions at the school level but also for refining Bhutan's broader inclusive education agenda.

1.1 Context of the Study

Gonpasingma LSS is located in Zobel geog, Pemagatshel, and serves as the only officially designated inclusive school in the district. The SEN programme began by accommodating a few children with disabilities from nearby communities, opening a door for many families who previously lacked educational access for their children (MoE, 2017).

At the start, none of the teachers had advanced qualifications in special education, apart from shorter in-service and professional development trainings. In 2020, the ministry introduced a master's programme in inclusive education, through which the school welcomed five specialised teachers. Unfortunately, with subsequent transfers, only a few remain, leaving the school heavily dependent on generalist teachers who may lack confidence or adequate strategies for SEN-focused teaching (MoE, 2021).

This backdrop presents both opportunities and constraints. There is strong policy backing and recognition of inclusive principles, yet the strain of teacher turnover, constrained resources, and a still-developing community understanding of disability pose clear obstacles. Despite these, Gonpasingma LSS holds unique significance as a test case, offering valuable insights into the lived realities of implementing SEN programmes in Bhutan's rural context.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although Gonpasingma LSS has been running its SEN program since 2015, no in-depth evaluation has been conducted to assess its outcomes. Without evidence, stakeholders cannot reliably determine whether the programme helps, which aspects are effective, and where gaps remain. This absence of systematic assessment limits practical improvements and weakens policy discourse at the national level. Moreover, ongoing limitations—scarcity of trained staff, underfunding, and a lack of specialised resources—complicate the sustainability of inclusive education (MoE, 2021; UNICEF, 2020). This study aims to address this gap by examining academic and behavioural outcomes of SEN students, while also listening to the lived experiences of teachers, parents, and children themselves.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research will benefit multiple stakeholders. For policymakers, it provides evidence to refine strategies and allocate resources effectively. For the school and its teachers, the findings may inform training approaches, classroom practices, and local innovations. For parents and children, improvements in SEN implementation promise more supportive and inclusive learning environments, which in turn contribute to broader national goals rooted in the CRPD, SDG 4, and Bhutan's GNH philosophy. Beyond the case itself, the study contributes to the small but growing body of Bhutanese research on inclusive education and can inspire similar initiatives across the country.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the academic and behavioural outcomes of SEN students at Gonpasingma LSS since its establishment.
2. To evaluate the adequacy and quality of SEN-related services at the school.
3. To identify challenges and emerging best practices in sustaining inclusive programmes.
4. To offer recommendations to strengthen the inclusivity and effectiveness of such initiatives.

1.5 Research Questions

How has the SEN programme at Gonpasingma LSS contributed to the academic and behavioural development of students with special needs since 2015?

Sub-Questions:

1. What kinds of SEN-related services are being provided, and how effective are they?
2. How do teachers, parents, students, and communities perceive the SEN programme?
3. What challenges shape the delivery of SEN, and what strategies may help improve it?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Inclusive education for students with SEN has gained international attention, with research consistently linking it to broader educational equity goals (MoE, 2020). This chapter organises the literature under four themes: academic and behavioural outcomes; quality and adequacy of support services; challenges and best practices; and strategies for enhancing inclusivity.

Academic and Behavioural Outcomes

Meta-analyses suggest SEN programmes can improve students' social-emotional skills, academic engagement, and overall well-being (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2022; Learning Policy Institute, 2023). Students often demonstrate increased prosocial behaviour and reduced anxiety when such programmes are implemented effectively. However, outcomes differ across cultural and systemic contexts (Hassani et al., 2021). In Bhutan, government reports highlight encouraging trends where SEN programmes are active, though quantifiable evidence remains limited (MoE, 2020).

Quality and Adequacy of Support

High-quality support is essential for inclusive education to work. In many contexts, evaluation reports note significant shortfalls, including underfunded systems, inadequate staffing, and weak accountability (Ofsted, 2024; NAO, 2024). Bhutan has progressive SEN policies (MoE, 2020), but issues such as retaining specialised teachers, equitable resource distribution, and smooth inter-agency collaboration remain pressing concerns.

Challenges and Best Practices

The most commonly reported barriers globally include insufficient training, resource scarcity, overburdened teachers, and weak infrastructure (Inclusive Teach, 2025). Best practices identified in the literature emphasise consistent professional development for educators (Gidlund, 2018), whole-school collaboration (Ainscow & Miles, 2008), stigma reduction, and accessible learning spaces (Scanning Pens, 2022). In Bhutan, decentralised resource teams are expected to address local needs, though geographic and cultural barriers remain (Bhutan Foundation, 2023).

Enhancing Quality in Inclusivity

Improving inclusive education requires systemic shifts—leadership support, teacher readiness, community buy-in, and infrastructure investments (Van Miegheem et al., 2018; Ainscow, 2020). Bhutan's roadmap strongly acknowledges these aspects, but challenges in monitoring and knowledge-sharing persist (MoE, 2020).

Methodological Gap

Existing Bhutanese research on inclusion remains policy-heavy and lacks participatory, lived-experience accounts. Most impactful qualitative research elsewhere adopts case study approaches, triangulating interviews, observations, and documents (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014). Shrestha (2021) highlights explicitly the absence of such work in Bhutan, strengthening the rationale for this study.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section explained the research methods employed. Given the focus on understanding experiences and perceptions, a qualitative design was deemed most suitable.

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative case study design had been adopted to gather rich, detailed insights into the realities of SEN implementation at Gonpasingma LSS. Such an approach makes it possible to capture individual voices and lived experiences, offering depth where numerical data alone might be insufficient (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.2 Research Setting and Context

The study was set at Gonpasingma LSS, which has operated an SEN programme since 2015. The school's rural setting, policy backing, and evolving resource base create a blended context of opportunities and challenges.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

The participants involved in the study were parents of SEN children, teachers engaged in the programme, and students (with consent). A purposive sampling strategy ensured key informants with direct experiences (Palinkas et al., 2015). The sample size was 4-5 parents, up to 5 teachers, and 4-5 students.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. These methods helped compare perspectives across stakeholders and settings. Interviews and group discussions were audio-recorded with participants' consent.

3.5 Data Analysis

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model, transcripts were coded to identify patterns and emerging themes. Microsoft Word and Excel were used to assist in managing and organising the data for systematic analysis.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Several techniques were employed to increase trustworthiness, such as source triangulation, member checks with participants, peer debriefing, and keeping an extensive audit trail of analytic procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). These measures ensured that the results were representative of the participants' experiences and that the interpretation of the data was transparent, consistent and evidence-based.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study upheld strict ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms, voluntary participation, and institutional ethical approval. Children's participation was contingent upon parental and school consent.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Overview

The study included three groups: parents of learners with special educational needs (SEN), SEN teachers, and SEN provider teachers whose inclusive education (IE) lessons were observed. Data were collected from four parents, four SEN teachers through semi-structured interviews, and four IE lessons delivered by SEN provider teachers.

4.2 Positive Progress Amid Ongoing Needs

Both parents and teachers report that children with SEN at Gonpasingma LSS have made significant strides in a range of domains, thanks to their school participation and ongoing support. Parents consistently described their children's school experience as "very positive" or "positive." One parent stated, "My child's progress has drastically improved." Another said, "He has shown lots of improvement in every field." These accounts underscore that parents connect school with not only academic gains but also improvements in confidence, behavior, communication, socialization, and daily functioning.

Teachers echoed this, describing progress in self-care, communication, emotional regulation, following routines, participation, and early academics—when support was consistent and individualized. For example, one teacher recounted how a learner with autism began, "visiting the classroom and staying inside until I gave her permission to leave," and could now stand in line for meals, attend assembly, and indicate toilet needs verbally. These changes highlight progress toward independence and participation in daily school routines.

Other teachers shared similar stories: managing "tantrum behavior" through calm redirection and reinforcement, improvements in reading and writing, and young children learning to name shapes, colors, and numbers. Initially "very restless," these children became more patient with constant support.

However, both groups cautioned that progress is uneven and ongoing, individualized care remains essential. Parents noted persistent challenges in areas like communication, social interaction, attention, and conduct. P1 noted "difficulty to communicate with others," "not coping with teachers and friends," and "stays alone." She added, "The child demonstrates aggressive behavior when handling." Others cited "socialization problems," lack of participation, attention difficulties, and unclear speech. These comments suggest that, while eager to engage, many children struggle with clarity, confidence, or sustained social interaction.

Teachers confirmed these challenges. One explained, "I find it difficult to teach repeated topics to a child, and it takes a lot of patience." They described the need for repeated sessions, flexible pacing, and individualized support. Teachers also face challenges with behavior, attention, social communication, and a range of disabilities and learning levels in one classroom. The findings show that communication, behavior, attention, and social participation are deeply interconnected; difficulty with one can affect the others.

Inclusive education, therefore, should not be assessed solely by academic results but must include communication, self-care, emotional management, routines, social connections, confidence, and engagement. Teachers and parents agreed that with “careful, systematic, tailored and consistent support,” learners can make significant progress—but this requires continuous intervention.

Observation data triangulated these findings: all observed classrooms featured active participation, hands-on activities, positive reinforcement, clear routines, repeated instructions, frequent understanding checks, and customized activities. Teachers adapted tasks, provided one-on-one or small-group support, and followed IEPs—demonstrating that achievements are significant but not uniform, and many students require ongoing, individualized intervention.

Meta-analytic evidence (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2022; Learning Policy Institute, 2023) affirms that structured SEN and social-emotional interventions foster engagement and well-being, though improvement varies by context. Hassani et al. (2021) found outcomes differ based on cultural and institutional conditions, supporting the study’s finding that progress depends on the level and consistency of individualized assistance.

Interview data also align with Contreras et al. (2021), who argue that positive teacher-student relationships drive engagement. Teachers described using calm redirection and positive reinforcement to keep learners on task and communicative, illustrating the value of supportive relationships in Bhutan’s classrooms. Although literature generally presents positive evidence for inclusion, Bhutanese government reports (MoE, 2020) offer limited quantitative data. By triangulating interviews and observations, this study helps fill that empirical gap, documenting specific, observable learner progress at the classroom level.

4.3 Holistic, Individualized, and Whole-School Support

Findings show that support for SEN learners extends far beyond academics, encompassing learning, communication, behavior, emotional regulation, socialization, self-care, and participation in daily routines. Parents valued not only lesson-time support but also care provided “during play activities, playtime, and serving edible items from the mess.” These moments were seen as crucial for developing self-care, independence, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Parents appreciated support for social, behavioral, emotional, and communication needs. P2 explained teachers helped with “socializing, managing behavior, mood control, and speech therapy by the SEN team.” Benefits often transferred to the home: P3 shared, “A child who did not usually sing at home unexpectedly began singing—evidence of increased confidence.” P4 noted the child had learned to listen and follow instructions and was consistently supported by teachers. These examples show that skills developed at school—communication, self-regulation, routine-following—can generalize to home settings.

Teachers described using a wide range of individualized strategies: visual schedules, picture cards, PECS, play- and activity-based learning, peer support, consistent routines, and positive behavior management. These approaches make learning more accessible, especially for those with difficulties understanding spoken instructions or following routines. Calm redirection and positive support promoted engagement and reduced exclusion.

Observation data confirm these findings. Teachers used visual, auditory, and tactile materials; simplified instructions; scaffolding; alternative communication methods; and emotional and behavioral support. Observations demonstrate that inclusion encompasses not only academic learning but also communication, social participation, and functional independence. Both parents and teachers viewed inclusion as a shared responsibility, involving all of the school community. P2 said, “All supporting staff understand the child well and do support,” and P4 added, “Everybody at school is behind him.” Teachers called for a collaborative environment among general and special educators, support staff, and parents, plus SEN training for all staff.

Observation data documented collaboration between teachers and SEN teams, the use of teaching assistants, communication with specialists, and parent engagement. Effective inclusion thus depends on contributions from across the community. However, some learners require specialized support, such as pull-out classes or adapted curricula. Teachers’ suggestions reflect the need for flexibility—individual or small-group instruction can complement, not replace, mainstream participation.

This flexible approach aligns with Ainscow and Miles (2008) and Ainscow (2020), who advocate systemic, collaborative models for inclusion. The study’s findings also echo Gidlund (2018), showing teachers use adaptive, learner-centered strategies, and Van Miegheem et al. (2018), who note that mainstream and targeted interventions can coexist.

Yet, limitations remain: Gonpasingma LSS’s progress is constrained by shortages in specialist staff, one-to-one assistance, therapeutic services, and staff training—hindering their ability to implement a full whole-school inclusion model.

4.4 Parents Need Capacity and Partnership

Home-school partnership emerged as crucial for SEN support. Parents welcomed school help but felt they lacked the knowledge, confidence, time, and resources for developmental activities at home. As P1 put it, “We don’t know enough to help our own children.” P2 explained, “We just look after him. That’s not to say parents aren’t concerned—they want to help but need practical skills.”

Teachers similarly noted “lack of parental support” and “irregular communication.” One teacher said, “Some parents are not supportive, maybe because of lack of knowledge.” Both groups agreed that limited home involvement often stems from uncertainty and lack of information, not reluctance.

Parents sought advice from teachers: P1 asked, “If teachers could give advice to parents on how to take care of their children at home, it would be good for mothers.” Teachers advocated for “parental engagement programs” and workshops to train parents in supporting learning and reinforcing skills at home. There’s a shared need for practical skill-sharing and coaching.

Communication between school and home does exist—through meetings, phone calls, messages, and notes—but isn’t always organized or action-oriented. “Parents are reluctant to communicate,” admitted one, while another said, “Don’t know what actually is required.” Limited time and unclear expectations reduce meaningful engagement.

Organized communication—progress reports, visual proof, activity demonstrations, short written guidance, and regular discussions—would help parents reinforce school goals at home and keep teachers informed about students’ home progress.

Teachers employ personalized and visual learning techniques—individual instruction, visual schedules, image cards, PECS, play-based learning, and positive behavior management. Parents, however, report lacking resources, time, and ideas for similar home activities. “No play resources at home like school,” lamented P4. Teachers and parents both recognized that using simple, affordable tools—picture cards, routine charts, play activities—could help families support their children’s development at home.

Both groups stressed that inclusion requires collaboration among all stakeholders: teachers, support staff, therapists, and, crucially, parents. Teachers called for a “collaborative environment” and “SEN training for all staff,” as well as flexibility in support models (pull-out classes or adapted curricula where needed). Observations showed that teachers communicated achievements to parents, included IEP goals in instruction, and monitored progress, but the forms focused more on the presence of communication than its quality or utility. Interviews revealed that parents want tangible tools and regular coaching, affirming the need for a more systematic, action-oriented relationship.

The study builds on Ainscow and Miles (2008), showing that whole-school collaboration must include families. It also echoes Dorji’s (2018) findings on social stigma and resource gaps in rural Bhutan, suggesting that limited parental confidence may stem from broader community awareness and resource issues. The call for parent-teacher workshops reflects Bhutan Foundation’s (2023) advocacy for community engagement in inclusive education, translating policy into real, practice-based needs.

4.5 Perceptions and Requirements for Inclusion

Both parents and teachers described the school as supportive and increasingly inclusive. Parents called it “mostly inclusive” or “highly inclusive,” while teachers emphasized their commitment to SEN learners. However, both agreed that true inclusion requires adequate staff, personalized support, specialist services, assistive equipment, and structured opportunities for communication, play, and social contact.

Observations revealed practical, inclusive methods: differentiated teaching, simplified instructions, visual/tactile materials, task modification, one-on-one or small group support, IEP-linked goals, and accommodations for disabilities. Teachers also used visual cues, positive reinforcement, and non-punitive behavior management—demonstrating that inclusion is an ongoing process, not just placement.

A major concern was the shortage of skilled SEN specialists and support staff. Parents wanted more teachers to provide continuous one-on-one attention. “We need more teachers and more resources,” urged P2. “If there were more SEN teachers, the students would benefit a lot,” added P3. P4 agreed, “The school needs more SEN teachers to support students one-to-one.” These voices reflect satisfaction with current support, but a desire for improvement.

Teachers echoed these needs, calling for “more special education instructors, support personnel, access to therapists,” and “equitable distribution” of human resources. They emphasized that more staff would enable individualized teaching, targeted interventions, monitoring, and collaboration.

Teachers also noted the necessity of therapeutic services. One suggested, “Physio in the school is needed for pupils with cerebral palsy,” and recommended the school liaise with local health offices to deploy a therapist weekly.

Both parents and teachers highlighted the importance of adapted facilities and assistive materials. P1 requested a “particular pot to defecate in, not a European pot” and “Huggies”—pointing to the importance of dignity, hygiene, and self-care. Parents also called for behavioral management strategies and writing aids. Teachers wanted “more visual resources,” “a smart TV in the class,” “digital writing platforms,” and “assistive devices.” One teacher mentioned providing basics like “toothbrushes, socks, pens, and pencils” for underprivileged children—showing that inclusion involves both academic and daily functional needs.

Play and leisure opportunities were also seen as essential, not optional. Parents asked for “more play activities or programs,” “interactive programs,” and “more time in school to interact with other kids.” They believed games and sports help develop communication, listening, social skills, confidence, and peer connections. Teachers called for “accessible playgrounds,” “safe play zones for SEN students,” and “recreational areas”—recognizing the importance of secure, well-resourced spaces for mobility, social interaction, and play-based learning.

These combined findings point to a planned agenda for improvement: hiring more trained SEN teachers and assistants, enabling access to therapists, adapting facilities, providing assistive and digital learning materials, creating safe play spaces, and fostering communication and independence. Continuous collaboration with parents is crucial for supporting children’s development at both school and home.

However, observation instruments document the presence but not the sufficiency of support; parent and teacher testimonies highlight the ongoing need for professional staff, therapists, adapted facilities, and resources. This indicates that while inclusive practices exist, further investment is necessary for equitable, sustainable support.

The study’s findings mirror global patterns identified by Ofsted (2024), NAO (2024), and Inclusive Teach (2025), showing that staffing and resource gaps are common barriers to inclusive education. In Bhutan, despite national policies (MoE, 2020; Bhutan Foundation, 2023), parents and teachers report a lack of trained SEN teachers, therapists, and assistive devices at the school level. This highlights the disconnect between policy intentions and lived experience, supporting Ainscow’s (2020) call for ongoing monitoring and resource allocation to realize systemic inclusion.

V. CONCLUSION

The SEN program at Gonpasingma LSS offers a supportive pathway for learners with SEN, enabling access to education and fuller participation in school life. Parents and teachers report improvements in communication, confidence, self-regulation, behavior, routine participation, social interaction, independence, and academic skills. Observations confirm these reports, showing teachers use differentiated instruction, visual aids, positive reinforcement, activity-based learning, and tailored support.

Success for SEN learners should not be measured by academic outcomes alone; meaningful progress includes communication, self-care, emotional regulation, participation, and confidence—often representing major developmental gains. For many, these improvements increase participation at both school and home.

Effective inclusion at Gonpasingma LSS is comprehensive and a whole-school endeavor. Teachers, SEN staff, support staff, parents, peers, and specialists share responsibility for diverse learners. However, sustained individualized attention, specialized intervention, and adapted environments remain necessary, and mainstream and targeted support should be seen as complementary.

A key factor in progress is the home–school partnership. While parents value school support, many report limited knowledge, confidence, and resources for home-based learning and behavior management. Teachers also cite irregular communication and uneven parental involvement as barriers. Strengthening parent capacity and more structured engagement are essential for better learner outcomes.

In summary, Gonpasingma LSS has laid a solid foundation for inclusion, but long-term sustainability depends on improved staffing, professional development, access to specialists, adequate resources, and stronger parent engagement and progress monitoring.

Recommendations

- Increase trained SEN staff: Recruit sufficient SEN teachers, assistants, and support staff for individualized and small-group support.
- Ongoing staff training: Provide all staff with frequent training in disability awareness, differentiated teaching, positive behavior support, communication tools, and inclusive management.
- Professional services: Coordinate with educational and health authorities to access therapists, physiotherapists, speech and language specialists.
- IEP-driven support: Regularly update and refer to Individual Education Plans for classroom targets, home tasks, and parent communication.
- Home–school partnership: Run parent workshops, provide practical demonstrations, develop clear guide materials, deliver regular progress reports, and offer personalized consultations.

- Maintain individualized strategies: Continue tactics like visual schedules, image cards, hands-on learning, peer support, and positive reinforcement.
- Upgrade facilities and resources: Prioritize accessible facilities, adapted bathrooms, assistive equipment, digital and visual learning materials, sensory resources, and safe play areas.
- Systematic planning: Establish a formal whole-school SEN coordinating structure and ensure regular support from education authorities.

Limitations

This study focused on one school and a small, purposively selected group of parents, teachers, and learners. As such, findings reflect the specific context of Gonpasingma LSS and may not generalize to other schools or SEN programs in Bhutan. Broader research with more participants and multiple schools is needed for more representative evidence.

Data were mainly from qualitative interviews and classroom observations; while rich, these may be influenced by participants' perceptions or the desire to present the program positively. Observations confirmed inclusive methods but did not quantify their consistency or long-term impact.

The study did not include longitudinal academic records, standardized assessments, or systematic behavioral measurements to track changes over time, nor the views of external stakeholders like officials or therapists. Future research should be longitudinal, mixed-methods, and involve multiple stakeholders for robust data on outcomes, program effectiveness, resource needs, and long-term sustainability.

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