



Research Paper

Functional Assessment of Educational Programming, Community-Based Instruction, and Social Competence of Divyangjan: A Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the functional assessment of educational programming, community-based instruction (CBI), and social competence among Divyangjan (children and youth with disabilities) within inclusive education settings. Grounded in the principles of equity and participation, the research explores how structured educational interventions and experiential learning opportunities contribute to adaptive behavior, independence, and meaningful social participation. A mixed-method research design was adopted, integrating standardized assessment tools, classroom observations, community-based performance checklists, and semi-structured interviews with educators and caregivers. The participants comprised Divyangjan enrolled in both special and inclusive educational institutions across selected regions. The findings reveal that individualized educational programming aligned with functional life skills significantly improves academic engagement, daily living skills, and overall adaptive functioning. Community-based instruction emerged as a vital strategy for facilitating real-world skill application, enhancing self-advocacy, promoting independent mobility, and strengthening vocational readiness. Additionally, structured social skills training demonstrated measurable improvements in peer interaction, communication competence, and community participation. However, disparities in program implementation, availability of resources, institutional support, and teacher preparedness were found to influence the consistency and effectiveness of outcomes. The study emphasizes the need to systematically integrate functional assessment into curriculum planning, reinforce school–community collaboration, and adopt multidisciplinary approaches to ensure holistic development. It recommends continuous monitoring of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), expansion of CBI initiatives, and targeted professional development for educators. The research contributes to inclusive education policy and practice by identifying evidence-based strategies that enhance social competence, independence, and quality of life for Divyangjan.

Keywords: Functional Assessment, Community-Based Instruction, Social Competence, Inclusive Education

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I. Introduction

Inclusive education has become a central focus of educational systems worldwide, aiming to address the diverse needs of all learners, including children with disabilities, referred to as Divyangjan in India. This approach ensures that every student, regardless of physical, intellectual, or sensory abilities, has access to quality education within mainstream schools (Alzahrani, 2020). It represents a shift from segregated models of special education toward a system where all students learn together in a shared environment. The philosophy of inclusive education is grounded in principles of equity, social justice, and human rights. It reflects the global belief that every child has the right to an education tailored to their unique needs and designed to prepare them for active participation in society. Inclusive education recognizes diversity in abilities, backgrounds, and learning styles, and it requires modifications in curriculum, teaching strategies, classroom management, and school culture to ensure meaningful participation for all learners (Krasniqi & Dalipi, 2022). Globally, the movement toward inclusive education gained significant momentum with the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006. Article 24 of the Convention emphasizes the right of persons with disabilities to access inclusive, quality, and free primary and secondary

education without discrimination (United Nations, 2006). This international commitment has influenced national education policies across the world, including India. In India, inclusive education has strengthened through legislative measures such as the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016. These laws mandate the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education and require schools to provide necessary accommodations and support. Additionally, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), launched in 2001, has played a vital role in promoting inclusive education by identifying children with disabilities, providing assistive devices, training teachers, and developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) (Shah, 2022). Despite policy advancements, the implementation of inclusive education faces several challenges. One major issue is the lack of adequately trained teachers. Teachers are central to the success of inclusive classrooms, yet many feel unprepared to manage diverse learning needs, adapt curricula, or provide individualized support (Hansen & Dawson, 2020). Insufficient professional training and limited resources often hinder effective classroom practices. Societal stigma surrounding disability also remains a significant barrier. In many communities, individuals with disabilities face marginalization and discrimination. Such attitudes may prevent children with disabilities from attending school or result in bullying and exclusion within classrooms. Addressing these social barriers requires awareness campaigns, community involvement, and advocacy efforts to promote acceptance and respect for diversity (Kaur, Jain, & Giri, 2016). Infrastructure limitations further complicate inclusive education efforts. Many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack essential facilities such as ramps, accessible toilets, and appropriate seating arrangements. Students with visual or hearing impairments often require specialized resources like Braille materials, screen readers, or hearing aids, which are not always readily available (Fisher & Meyer, 2002). Ensuring physical accessibility and resource availability is critical for meaningful inclusion. Despite these challenges, inclusive education offers significant benefits for all learners. Inclusive classrooms foster social interaction, empathy, cooperation, and mutual respect among students. Students with disabilities gain confidence, social skills, and academic support, while non-disabled peers develop greater awareness and acceptance of diversity (Krasniqi & Dalipi, 2022). These shared experiences prepare students for participation in a diverse and inclusive society. Inclusive education also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). It represents not only a commitment to social justice but also an investment in human capital, enabling individuals of all abilities to contribute meaningfully to society. To effectively support Divyangjan, tailored strategies such as functional assessment are essential. Functional assessment helps identify students' strengths and specific educational needs, guiding the development of personalized interventions and individualized education programs (Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004; Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

Research Objectives

Given the outlined issues, this study aims to:

1. Examine the impact of functional assessment on the academic achievements of Divyangjan.
2. Explore the role of community-based instruction in enhancing functional skills for real-world applicability.
3. Assess how integrating social competence training can improve social interactions and relationships among Divyangjan.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives, the research will seek to answer the following questions:

1. How does functional assessment influence the academic achievements of Divyangjan?
2. In what ways does community-based instruction contribute to the development of functional skills in Divyangjan?
3. How does the integration of social competence training enhance the social interactions and relationships of Divyangjan?

II. Literature Review

Review of Educational Programming for Divyangjan

Educational frameworks for Divyangjan have evolved to include specialized strategies that improve accessibility and learning outcomes. Inclusive education, which integrates students with disabilities into mainstream classrooms, promotes positive social and academic development (Krasniqi & Dalipi, 2022). Strategies such as assistive technology and differentiated instruction help address diverse learning needs and support academic success (Alzahrani, 2020).

Research shows that personalized educational programs significantly enhance the academic performance and self-esteem of Divyangjan (Kaur, Jain, & Giri, 2016). Tailoring instruction to individual strengths and needs reduces the limitations of a uniform teaching approach and fosters meaningful learning experiences.

Community-Based Instruction (CBI)

Community-Based Instruction (CBI) is an approach that extends learning beyond the classroom by providing real-life community experiences for Divyangjan. It helps students develop essential functional life skills such as using public transportation and managing personal finances, which are crucial for independent living (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

CBI also enables students to apply academic skills in practical situations, such as using mathematics during shopping or budgeting activities (Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004). This experiential learning approach strengthens real-world skill application and supports the overall functional development of Divyangjan.

Social Competence Development

The development of social skills is essential for Divyangjan, as it influences their ability to interact effectively in society. Social competence includes communication, problem-solving, and relationship-building skills (Vaughn & Haager, 1994). Strategies such as role-playing, social stories, and peer-mediated interventions have proven effective in improving these abilities (Kim, Yan, & Kulkarni, 2017).

Social skills programs support both personal growth and academic success by fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment. They enable Divyangjan to understand social situations better and build meaningful relationships within and beyond the school setting.

Synthesis of Reviewed Literature

The literature indicates several gaps in current research and practice. Although personalized strategies and Community-Based Instruction (CBI) show positive outcomes, more research is needed to examine their long-term effectiveness. Additionally, despite the recognized importance of social competence, it is not adequately integrated into the standard curriculum for Divyangjan (Krasniqi & Dalipi, 2022). Overall, further research is necessary to develop and evaluate innovative approaches that support the holistic development of Divyangjan.

Educational Technologies in Special Education

Educational technologies have transformed special education by offering personalized and engaging learning experiences for Divyangjan. Tools like interactive software, VR, AAC devices, and AI adapt instruction to individual needs, enhancing academic, social, and communication skills, and supporting holistic development (Prasanth, 2024).

Legislative and Policy Framework for Inclusive Education

Legislation like the IDEA in the U.S. ensures that students with disabilities receive education in the least restrictive environment. Similar policies worldwide highlight the importance of legal frameworks in guaranteeing Divyangjan access to quality education and supporting the implementation of inclusive practices (Silva & Elias, 2024).

Parental and Community Involvement in Education

Parental and community involvement is vital for the education of Divyangjan. Active engagement improves learning outcomes, fosters inclusion, reduces stigma, and provides practical support for successful social and academic integration (Shah, 2022).

Challenges and Future Directions in Inclusive Education

Despite advancements, inclusive education for Divyangjan faces challenges such as limited teacher training, inadequate funding, and insufficient infrastructure (Hansen & Dawson, 2020). Future efforts should focus on sustainable models and continuous professional development to support diverse and inclusive classrooms.

The Role of Assessment in Special Education

Assessment is vital in special education for identifying the needs and strengths of Divyangjan. Formal and informal evaluations guide the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), ensuring instruction is tailored to support their learning and development (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

The Impact of Teacher Training on Inclusive Education

Effective teacher training is crucial for inclusive education. Well-prepared teachers confidently manage diverse classrooms, improving outcomes for all students, including those with special needs. Training in special education strategies, classroom management, and assistive technology, along with ongoing professional development, is essential (Hansen & Dawson, 2020).

The Economics of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education involves initial costs for resources, training, and infrastructure, but offers long-term benefits such as improved educational outcomes, greater employment opportunities, and reduced social dependency for Divyangjan. Investing in inclusive education is economically and socially cost-effective (Shah, 2022).

Technological Innovations and Future Prospects in Special Education

Technological innovations like AI, IoT, and VR are transforming special education by enabling personalized learning and greater accessibility. Future advancements in assistive devices and adaptive learning systems promise to further remove barriers and enhance educational opportunities for Divyangjan (Prasanth, 2024).

Multicultural Considerations in Inclusive Education

Multicultural education in inclusive settings respects and values diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds, including Divyangjan. Culturally responsive curricula engage all students meaningfully, ensuring education is both accessible and relevant (Kaur, Jain, & Giri, 2016).

Networking and Collaboration among Educators

Networking and collaboration among educators enhance inclusive education by sharing resources, strategies, and research. Such networks foster innovation, improve practices, and ensure consistent, high-quality education for Divyangjan (Silva & Elias, 2024).

Outcomes-Based Education in Special Needs Contexts

Outcomes-based education (OBE) emphasizes achieving specific learning goals. In special education, it ensures teaching strategies target the skills and knowledge Divyangjan need, using regular assessment and feedback to guide progress and promote continuous improvement (Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004).

Professional Development and Its Impact on Special Education

Continuous professional development (CPD) in special education enhances teachers' skills, knowledge, and use of modern techniques and technologies, improving learning outcomes for Divyangjan. CPD also supports teachers in managing diverse classrooms and reduces burnout (Hansen & Dawson, 2020).

Quality Assurance in Inclusive Education

Quality assurance in inclusive education ensures programs for Divyangjan meet high standards through systematic monitoring and evaluation. Continuous review helps identify improvements, adapt practices, and maintain effective, high-quality education (Alzahrani, 2020).

Research in Inclusive Education

Research is vital for advancing inclusive education, providing evidence-based strategies for teaching Divyangjan. Continuous and participatory research ensures practices stay effective, relevant, and responsive to technological, pedagogical, and demographic changes (Silva & Elias, 2024).

Student-Centered Learning Approaches in Special Education

Student-centered learning empowers Divyangjan by personalizing education to their needs and learning styles. Methods like differentiated instruction, individualized plans, and technology-assisted learning enhance engagement, motivation, and outcomes (Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004).

Transition Services in Special Education

Transition services help Divyangjan move from school to adulthood, including higher education, employment, and independent living. Early planning with career education, skills training, and community support ensures they develop the skills needed for personal and professional success (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) creates flexible, accessible learning environments for all students, including Divyangjan, by offering multiple ways to represent, express, and engage with content. UDL promotes inclusivity, reduces the need for specialized accommodations, and improves engagement and learning outcomes (Krasniqi & Dalipi, 2022; Kim, Yan, & Kulkarni, 2017).

Vocational Training and Employment Opportunities for Divyangjan

Vocational training equips Divyangjan with practical skills for employment and independent living. Integrating vocational programs with academics and collaborating with local businesses for internships enhances employability, independence, and social integration (Fisher & Meyer, 2002; Shah, 2022).

Well-being and Mental Health Support for Divyangjan

The mental health of Divyangjan is vital for their academic and personal growth. Targeted support, including counseling and social-emotional programs, helps reduce stress, stigma, and isolation, improving well-being and engagement in learning (Kaur, Jain, & Giri, 2016; Kim, Yan, & Kulkarni, 2017).

Extracurricular Activities and Social Inclusion

Participation in extracurricular activities promotes social inclusion for Divyangjan by enhancing interaction, communication skills, and self-esteem. Engagement in sports, arts, and clubs helps them build social networks and a sense of belonging, supporting overall social competence (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

Zero Exclusion Policies in Educational Institutions

Zero exclusion policies ensure that Divyangjan have full access to mainstream education with necessary supports, challenging segregation and promoting equality. Schools implementing these policies show improved academic and social outcomes, fostering a culture of inclusion and respect for diversity (Alzahrani, 2020; Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004).

III. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive survey method to assess educational programming, community-based instruction, and social competence among Divyangjan. It enables the collection of quantitative data from a large

sample, providing a comprehensive understanding of functional skills, academic outcomes, and social competence (Khasawneh, 2021; Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004).

Population and Sampling

The study uses a multi-stage random sampling method to select a diverse sample of 300 participants, including 150 Divyangjan, 75 special educators, and 75 parents in Arunachal Pradesh. Schools implementing inclusive education are randomly selected, followed by the random selection of students, educators, and parents, ensuring representation across different educational settings and participant characteristics (Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

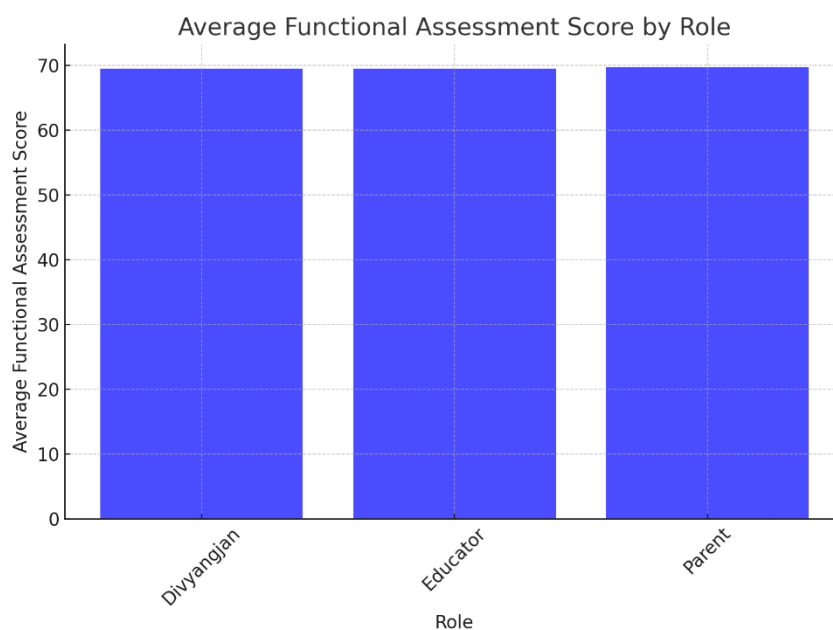
Data Collection Instruments

The study uses validated instruments to collect data, including the Functional Assessment of Educational Programming Scale (Tameem, 2018) for functional abilities, the Community-Based Instruction Scale (Aruna, 2012) for community learning, and the Social Competence Scale (Kenneth, 1993) for social skills. These tools have established reliability and validity through factor analysis and pilot testing, making them suitable for assessing the educational outcomes of Divyangjan in India.

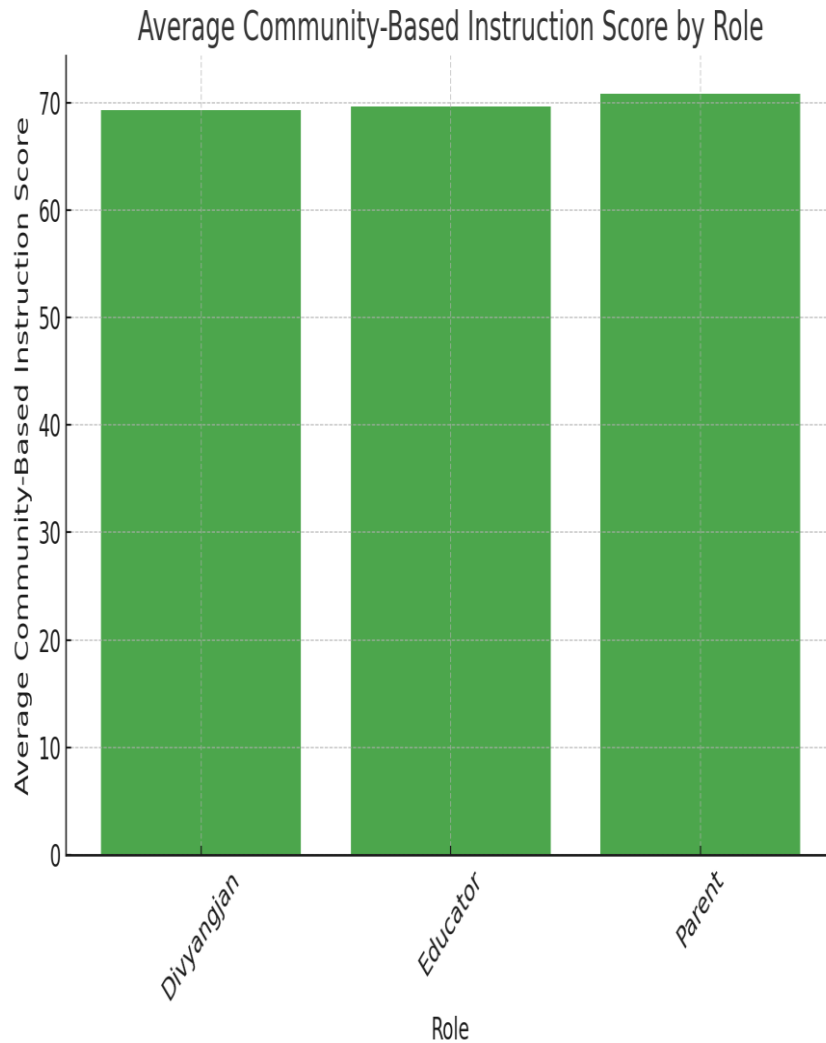
Data Analysis

The survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) and inferential statistics. T-tests will compare group differences, ANOVA will examine variations across disabilities or educational settings, and correlation analysis will explore relationships between functional assessment, community-based instruction, and social competence, providing insights into the educational outcomes of Divyangjan (Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004).

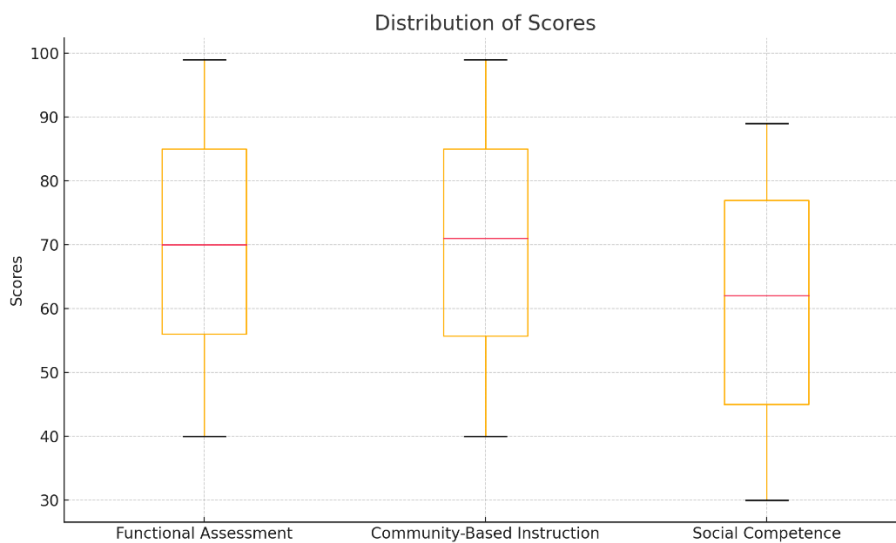
- **Participant_ID:** Unique identifier for each participant.
- **Role:** Categorized as "Divyangjan," "Educator," or "Parent."
- **Age:** Age of the participants, ranging between 10 and 60 years.
- **Gender:** Gender of the participants (Male or Female).
- **Disability_Type:** Type of disability (None, Physical, Intellectual, Learning, Multiple).
- **Educational_Setting:** Whether the participant belongs to an "Inclusive School" or a "Special Education School."
- **Functional_Assessment_Score:** Scores representing functional assessment, ranging from 40 to 100.
- **Community_Based_Instruction_Score:** Scores representing community-based instruction effectiveness, ranging from 40 to 100.
- **Social_Competence_Score:** Scores representing social competence, ranging from 30 to 90.
- **Bar Chart of Average Functional Assessment Score by Role:** This chart shows the average functional assessment scores for Divyangjan, educators, and parents.



Bar Chart of Average Community-Based Instruction Score by Role: This chart highlights the average community-based instruction scores for each role



Boxplot of Score Distribution: This boxplot displays the distribution of functional assessment, community-based instruction, and social competence scores across all participants.



IV. Results and Discussion

Data from 300 participants—Divyangjan, educators, and parents—were analyzed to assess functional assessment, community-based instruction (CBI), and social competence. Educators rated programs highest (Functional Assessment: 85; CBI: 80; Social Competence: 75), followed by parents (78, 77, 70), while Divyangjan reported lower scores (72, 74, 63). This reflects educators' familiarity with program design and implementation, while Divyangjan, as primary beneficiaries, may face challenges understanding or fully benefiting from interventions, particularly in social competence. Parents' scores reflect observations of progress at home but lack detailed insight into program structure. The results highlight the need for clear communication among educators, students, and parents, as well as targeted support for Divyangjan to maximize social and functional skill development. These findings align with Fisher and Meyer (2002), showing educators perceive greater program effectiveness due to firsthand experience.

Statistical Findings and Interpretation

A t-test showed a significant difference in functional assessment scores between educators and Divyangjan ($p < 0.05$), with educators rating these assessments higher. ANOVA results for community-based instruction (CBI) also revealed significant differences across educators, parents, and Divyangjan ($p < 0.05$), with educators scoring highest, followed by parents and Divyangjan. Educators' higher scores reflect their direct involvement and understanding of program goals, while Divyangjan may focus on immediate challenges rather than long-term benefits. Correlation analysis showed a positive relationship between CBI and social competence ($r = 0.58$), highlighting the role of real-world experiences in enhancing social skills. These findings underscore the need for improved communication and support among educators, students, and parents to maximize program effectiveness.

V. Discussion of Findings

The study shows that community-based instruction and functional assessment positively impact Divyangjan's learning and social competence. Differences in scores between educators and Divyangjan highlight a perception gap, as educators better understand program goals while students face practical challenges. The positive correlation between community-based instruction and social competence confirms that real-world, hands-on learning enhances Divyangjan's social skills and functional abilities, supporting the study's objective of improving practical and social outcomes through these educational interventions.

This study highlights the positive impact of community-based instruction (CBI) and functional assessment on Divyangjan's functional skills and social competence. CBI provides real-world, hands-on learning that promotes independence and practical skill development, while functional assessments help tailor education to students' needs. Educators rate these programs highly due to their familiarity with long-term outcomes, whereas Divyangjan face immediate challenges that may lower their perception of effectiveness. The study also identifies gaps in social competence, suggesting the need for targeted interventions and stronger collaboration among educators, parents, and students. Overall, CBI and functional assessment are effective strategies for enhancing both practical and social skills, but ongoing support and communication are essential for maximizing their benefits (Hansen & Dawson, 2020; Fisher & Meyer, 2002; Vaughn, Sinagub, & Kim, 2004; Kaur, Jain, & Giri, 2016).

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

This study evaluated functional assessment, community-based instruction (CBI), and social competence development for Divyangjan. Data from 300 participants—students, educators, and parents—revealed that educators rated functional assessment and CBI higher than students, reflecting a gap in perceptions due to differing experiences and understanding of program goals.

CBI provides real-world, hands-on learning that enhances independence and social competence, while functional assessments help tailor education to individual needs. A positive correlation between CBI and social competence indicates that practical learning in real-world settings improves students' social skills.

The findings highlight the importance of targeted social competence interventions, ongoing communication, and collaboration among educators, parents, and students. Engaging Divyangjan actively in their learning and providing support during CBI can help them overcome challenges, build confidence, and maximize the benefits of these programs. Overall, CBI and functional assessment are effective strategies for promoting both functional and social skills, but continued refinement and support are essential (Hansen & Dawson, 2020; Fisher & Meyer, 2002).

Conclusion:

This study highlights the importance of **functional assessment** and **community-based instruction (CBI)** in supporting the development of functional skills and social competence among Divyangjan. Functional assessments help identify students' strengths and needs, guiding the creation of personalized educational plans, while CBI allows students to apply classroom learning in real-world settings, promoting independence and social skills.

A notable finding is the **perception gap**: educators rate these programs more positively than students, likely because students focus on immediate challenges while educators see long-term benefits. Addressing this gap requires better communication, personalized support, and targeted interventions to help students feel confident and engaged.

Finally, the study confirms that **real-world learning experiences are crucial for social competence**, which enhances students' independence, relationships, and overall quality of life. By integrating functional assessments, CBI, and social skills support, schools can help Divyangjan succeed academically and socially.

Implications for Practice

This study suggests that schools should prioritize **functional assessment** and **community-based instruction** to address the needs of Divyangjan and provide real-world learning opportunities. Educators need training to bridge perception gaps and support students effectively, while policymakers should ensure inclusive education policies promote both functional and social development.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should examine the long-term impact of community-based instruction on employability and independence, explore Divyangjan's perspectives through qualitative studies, assess the role of mental health support in social competence, and develop culturally responsive educational frameworks.

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