

# The Impact of the Educational Journey of Special Needs Children on the Employability, Sociability, and Economy of Working-Class Parents in the UK

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*Abstract- The employability, societal integration and economic stability of working class parents in the UK are all impacted by their children's special needs educational journeys. The special educational needs system in the UK is designed to provide assistance to children with different disabilities through such interventions as early intervention, personalised learning plans (IEPs) and inclusive teaching practices. But Despite this, navigating the education system creates significant problems for these children and their families. Previous research shows that parents of disabled kids undergo increased stress levels, anxiety and isolation; however there is a gap in the literature about such issues as regards to low income earners' parents. This paper will therefore seek to fill this gap by examining how raising a child with special needs affects employment opportunities, social networks and financial viability of poor families. Based on a thorough review of relevant literature, the article points out critical areas where working class parents might be confronted by unique problems. It also examines how these deficiencies result in financial hardship and social alienation among other issues. Additionally, the paper contains anecdotal stories as well as case studies that bring out these impacts clearly so that they can resonate with people to compel them to address such matters urgently. The results showed a need for further research specifically targeting working-class families and improving support systems for them. Lastly, it concludes with policy recommendations to enhance the support provided for these families and calls for comprehensive reforms on economic, social and employment related challenges experienced by these families. This research is therefore directed at contributing towards this goal by creating a more equitable and supportive environment for all families*

*navigating through the maze of special needs education.*

*Indexed Terms- Special needs education, Employability, United Kingdom, Working-class parents, Economic impact, Sociability, Educational journey, Family dynamics, Social isolation and Policy recommendations*

## I. INTRODUCTION

- *Background to Special Education in the UK*

Special education needs within England is a system that is planned to provide support for children who require extra assistance because of various physical, emotional, behavioral or cognitive disabilities. The primary aim of this is to help these children reach their full potentials and enable their integration into society as much as possible. In the United Kingdom, special educational needs are covered through a range of services and resources.

These include specialist schools, integrated programs within mainstream schools and individualized education plans (IEPs) tailored to meet the specific requirements of each child. The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice governs the UK's approach towards special needs education. This code establishes that it is the duty local authorities, schools and parents have in ensuring that children with SEN get necessary support. Complexities come with educational journey for special needs kids even though they follow this guideline.

- *Definition of Key Terms*

- **Special needs children:** These are kids with the necessity for more support because of their various physical, mental, psychological and behavioral conditions. They may be born with special needs, which could come about due to learning difficulties or disabilities resulting from accidents or illnesses.
- **Working class parents:** Parents who fall under this economic category typically work in manufacturing industries that require manual labour with low to middle incomes. Such parents face unique challenges such as maintaining a balanced family life while they work hard to provide for their families.

- *Importance of Studying This Topic*

It is crucially important to appreciate the impact of special education experiences on the working-class parents' lives. There are a number of reasons why this exploration is important:

First, it stresses on how these parents have double burdened themselves. Parents who belong to the working class often suffer from high stress levels and lack opportunities for career growth due to having caregiving responsibilities that are so demanding in nature. In addition, their hours at work can be reduced leading them into low-waged employment or even unemployment since they have both responsibilities; i.e., child's schooling and employment itself.

Secondly, equally important is the factor of social dimension. When parents spend less time on their kids and lack energy for this task, they may feel socially isolated or lose their personal relationships creating distance between them which can bring about mental illness. Moreover, social marginalization may worsen due to societal prejudices against special needs and blue-collar status.

Lastly, a comprehensive look at this subject highlights wider economic consequences. In working class families' case reduced job opportunities; limited hours worked as well as financial obligations linked with raising children having disabilities tend to impact significantly the economic statuses of these households. The influences that emanate from such economic challenges are deep-reaching and can affect

public policies and social services. Understanding how these things work is very vital in developing workable systems that will cater for the needs of such families. The article therefore presents a holistic analysis of the many-sided impacts on working-class parents by examining these interrelated aspects. It intends to championed for reinforced support structures geared towards better serving these families thus contributing to an egalitarian society with greater solidarity among its members ultimately.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- **A Review of Prior Research on Special Education Needs**

Special requirements education research has indicated a range of ways and strategies with the aim to effectively support children with disabilities. Early intervention is largely recognised as being crucial because it can result in improved developmental outcomes significantly improve development outcomes for children making them at an advantage when they enter school and eventually get into adult life (Guralnick, 2011). In addition, individualized education plans (IEPs) are considered key elements in special needs education in that they allow personalization of teaching methods based on individual needs (Ryndak et al., 2014).

Nonetheless, there has been extensive research on inclusive education which refers to special needs children study alongside typical students in regular classrooms. For advocates, inclusive learning helps in social integration of all categories of students leading to minimized stigmatization and improved learning for all learners (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). However, there still some challenges such as teacher training program adequacy, resource allocations as well as development of inclusive curricula meeting different learning styles (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

- **Previously conducted research on the Influence of Children with Unique Needs on Household Relations**

The presence of a child with unique requirements in a family has serious implications for intra-family relations and operation. It has been found that parents to children with special needs, are usually more

stressed, anxious and depressed than the ones with typically developing children (Dykens, 2005). This pressure may be brought about by various issues like; stress emanating from caregiving responsibilities, concerns on what will become of the child later in life and financial problems among others.

Baker-Ericzén et al. (2005) further demonstrated through their study that increased caregiving responsibilities results into physical and emotional exhaustion which adversely affects parents' health and wellbeing. As couples may grapple with time allocation issues and differences regarding how to care for their disabled child as well as prioritizing different tasks that must be done at home, these demands can also place strain on marital relationships.

Another significant problem experienced by these families is social exclusion. According to Neely-Barnes & Dia (2008), most parents who have kids with special needs often feel estranged from society due to the attention consuming nature of caregiving activities as well as stigma around disabilities. Furthermore, this segregation limits their social interactions and support systems thereby deteriorating mental health issues and increasing stress levels in such parents.

- Research Gaps

Remarkably, however the existent research has offered guidance on the challenges faced by families of special needs children; there remain notable gaps. In particular, the educational journey's effect on employability and economic stability of working class parents in UK is scarcely explored in literature (Swain et al., 2006). Most studies tend to generalize across different socio-economic groups without making a distinction between their unique challenges that affect working-class families.

One critical area where more research is required is employability. Some scholars have shown that parents of special needs children often have to reduce their hours or leave jobs completely to cater for them (Rosenzweig & Huffstutter, 2004). However, there is little information on how this affects working class parents in particular who may have fewer resources along with limited job flexibility compared to their middle class and upper class counterparts.

Similarly, though social impacts on parents whose kids are disabled are well documented among other things; less information exists concerning specific experiences of low-income working-class parents. They face additional barriers to social interaction and community involvement because of economic constraints as well as lack access to supportive services and networks.

There is another area that needs to be looked into carefully which is on the economic stability. The amount of money needed to raise such a child can be quite huge and may involve medical bills, special education fees and reduced work hours which would lead to lost income. However, when such costs are put in the context of working class families, it becomes apparent that they may not be affordable thus leading to persistent economic difficulties. More research should be conducted so as to understand this financial impact better as well as develop effective strategies and facilities for addressing it.

This review shows that there is need for more robust and directed research related to how raising children with special needs affect working class parents. It is important to address these research gaps in order for policy makers and stakeholders to have solid information for policy formulation and development of support systems that meet their needs effectively. In subsequent sections of this chapter, we will further explore employability, sociability and economic stability areas for a greater understanding on the impacts.

### III. EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

- Description of the Typical Educational Path Early Intervention and Preschool Services

Typically, early intervention is very important for special needs children because of its positive effect on developmental paths. In the United Kingdom, early intervention services are aimed at spotting and rectifying developmental delays as soon as possible. Most of these services are usually provided by either the NHS or local councils who offer speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy among others. Nurseries and preschools where young children attend before starting

mainstream schools play an instrumental role in empowering them with developmental skills. They have programs that are person-centred e.g., cognitive development, socialization, emotions among other things.

Early intervention programmes should be a partnership between parents, healthcare professionals and educational experts so that comprehensive support plans can be developed. While immediate developmental progress is a key advantage of early intervention programs; they also lay the groundwork for successful transition into school.

**The Transition from Primary to Secondary Education**  
The educational paths of children transitioning into primary and secondary education can differ greatly. While some special needs kids go to mainstream schools, others are placed in specialized institutions that cater to their needs. Inclusive education practices are increasingly being adopted by regular schools which aim at integrating special needs students with the appropriate support.

This integration is anchored on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The plans outline their personal goals as well as the kind of assistance they need for instance additional teaching aids, materials used for instruction, and curriculum adjustments. They are developed collectively by teachers, parents and specialists depending on individual child's unique requirements.

Special schools provide an alternative for those cases where the complex nature of a child's condition cannot be fully accommodated within mainstream settings. These schools offer a highly specialized environment with personnel trained to handle a variety of disabilities thus ensuring that each child gets an education customized to his or her strengths and weaknesses.

- **Transitioning to Higher Education or Vocational Training**

Moving from secondary education to higher education or job market plays a significant role in the educational process of special needs children. This period is often marked with lots of problems as there is still requirement for support, not only for academic skills

but also practical life and vocational skills. There are further education colleges and vocational training programmes that prepare students for employment or independent living. These schemes allow real life skill acquisition through practical training and work experience opportunities which take into consideration the abilities and interests of special needs students.

However, despite their availability, many young people with disabilities face significant difficulties at this stage. Such hitches may subsume problems like inadequate services support, societal impediments on getting jobs and insufficient access to suitable learning programs. A well-executed transition usually requires comprehensive planning and necessary backing; it should include coordinated efforts between schools, employers as well as support agencies.

- **The Problems Faced by Disabled Children and their Families**

Access and mainstreaming in the education of students with disabilities.

One of the fundamental problems is to ensure that schools are physically accessible. Some schools have improved accessibility with ramps, lifts as well as specialized equipment, however older buildings may not satisfy current access standards fully. There usually exists physical barriers which can prevent children with special needs from participating fully in educational activities.

Another critical question is about inclusiveness within a classroom. For instance, if a child requires special teaching techniques for his learning process, it means that teacher should be able to do more work than he/she has been trained for. Therefore, such children must be able to participate freely in class activities and extracurricular activities so that they feel part of the class and avoid social exclusion.

- **Adequacy of Special Education Resources and Support**

There are great disparities in the availability and quality of special education resources between different regions. While some schools have trained personnel and adequate resources, others are constrained by budgetary issues or lack expertise needed to support learners with disabilities. Thus,

effective special needs education relies much on skills and commitment of educators alongside other support staff thus necessitating continuous professional development.

- Emotional And Psychological Challenges

In most cases, children with special needs confront emotional and psychological challenges which include bullying, social exclusion and low self-esteem. Schools are required to create environments that are supportive of mental health and emotional well-being. They should institute anti-bullying campaigns, offer counseling services, and instill a sense of inclusion and respect among students. These challenges must be addressed for the sake of the complete development and welfare of special-needs children.

- Support Systems and Resources Available  
Government Policies and Programs

The UK's approach to special needs education is shaped by the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice. This statute lists what local authorities, schools, and parents are supposed to do for children with SEN. The key provisions include individualized educational planning, provision of appropriate materials as well as services, child-centered assessments which are periodically reviewed. Early identification, personalized support and close partnership among all stakeholders form part of the SEND code of practice.

- Role of Local Authorities and Schools

Local authorities have a key role in assessing special needs children's necessities and co- coordinating necessary support services to them. These comprise funds for additional assistance in schools; offering specialized activities like those supervised by educational psychologists; ensuring adherence to the SEND Code of Practice. At the same time, day-to-day support is provided by schools while creating an inclusive atmosphere. These involve developing IEPs for students; providing unique supplies; ascertaining that every employee gets trained on how to help children who possess disabilities effectively.

- Support from NGOs and community groups

There are many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as well as community groups that help special needs children and their families. These organizations provide a variety of services such as advocacy, peer support and resources for parents and care givers. NGOs play a key role in filling the voids left by public agencies in form of specialized programs and sometimes even support networks extending beyond the school environment. They may also offer social opportunities or peer support systems for community groups which may reduce isolation and create a feeling of belonging among special need child families.

This understanding can better inform us about the challenges facing these children's families throughout their education journey, and how vital supportive system is to boost their welfare and success. This holistic analysis thus provides an overview necessary to delve deeper into specific effects on employability, sociability, economic conditions among working class parents who have kids suffering from abnormalities in UK society.

#### IV. IMPACT ON EMPLOYABILITY OF WORKING-CLASS PARENTS

- Employment Opportunities and Challenges

A Balance between taking Care of Your Family and Work

It is common for working-class parents with disabled children to find it difficult to balance their childcare duties and employment. Such children require a lot of attention that may involve regular visits to the hospital, school therapy sessions, among other things. This in most cases makes parents reduce on their work time or leave employment completely to be able to fulfill this obligation.

Working-class parents in particular often lack the kind of flexibility required in order to strike such a balance, as these individuals are more likely to lack job security, compared to those who belong in either the middle or upper class families. Certain jobs including factory work, low-to- mid-level earners and manual labor come with fixed hours thereby making it difficult for care givers' job security yet they have to take care of their kids at the same time.

- Case Studies and Statistical Data

Many case studies have noted that parents with special needs often face difficulties in employment. To illustrate, studies conducted by Rosenzweig and Huffstutter (2004) point out that mothers of children with disabilities are more prone to labor force disruptions such as reduction in work days or even losing jobs completely. The situation is even worse among the working-class parents due to lack of access to supportive workplace policies hence having little money to replace what they lose.

Moreover, statistical data from UK further expound on these challenges. According to a survey by Contact, a charity for families with disabled children, almost one third of parents admitted having to quit their jobs or reduced their activities entirely in order to attend their child's needs (Contact 2014). Consequently, this means loss of income which leads into financial instability, increased stress levels and affects the quality of life for the entire family members.

- Support by the Employer and Policies Current Policies and Their Effectiveness

The support of employers and policies are key in helping parents of children with disabilities to cope with employment challenges. Such policies in the UK include but not limited to Parental leave, Time off for dependants, Carer's leave, Flexible working hours amongst others. The effectiveness of these policies however is quite diverse as many working class parents find them falling short of their needs.

Flexible working arrangements are often more accessible to those workers in higher-skilled and better paid jobs. However, these may not be beneficial to the majority of working-class parents who have less job flexibility. Additionally, unpaid or reduced-pay leave can present significant financial burdens for these families.

- SUGGESTIONS

A few policy improvements could be suggested, to better support working-class parents of special needs children.

- More Flexibility: Implementation of stronger and more accessible flexible work arrangements that specifically cater for the interests of caregiving parents.
- Money Assistance: Offering money help to compensate for loss of earnings due to care giving responsibilities, for example caregiver grants or increased allowances.
- Workplace Training: Encouraging employers to consider training programs that will sensitize employers on the challenges facing parents with special need children as well as encourage good practices at work environment.
- Employment Security: Strengthening protections against job loss so that parents can take required time off without being afraid of losing their jobs.

These are areas where policymakers and employers can intervene to relieve some employment-related burdens borne by low-income working families, thereby helping them juggle between work obligations and caring for their children while enhancing their overall living standards.

- Sociability of working class parents Social Challenges and Seclusion Limited Time and Energy for Social Activities

The extensive caregiving duties that come with raising children with special needs can seriously limit the amount of time and energy parents have for engaging in social activities. Working class parents on the other hand, who are often struggling to keep work schedules squeezed in tight working hours or facing financial pressure may face difficulties while trying to hold onto their social connections. This leads to socially alienated environments which has been shown to adversely affect mental health.

Moreover, the parents might not be able to take part in community functions or other social events due to absence of suitable childcare centers or support groups for their children with special conditions. This further makes them isolated by disallowing leisure engagements because they are obliged to be ever watchful and caring always.

- **Role of Social Support Networks**

Social support networks are essential to overcoming the negative impacts of isolation. These extended family members, friends or even society-based groups provide important emotional and practical help. However, these networks may be hard for working-class parents to access due to location, money or societal based barriers. For these parents, strong support networks are critical in making it through caregiving challenges.

- **Programs and Initiatives**

Efforts to Improve Sociability and Community Engagement

Several programs and initiatives seek to enhance socialization and community involvement among parents with special needs children. Such programs include support groups, community activities and online forums which facilitate interaction amongst parents sharing similar experiences. This is an opportunity for them to come together as a group for both companionship, advice as well as exchange of information.

In fact most times children with disabilities' families get assistance from NGOs; charities and community centers that have special initiatives put in place just for them at different occasions. The programs can create a break room atmosphere where the families have an escape by themselves while they spend time out together with their loved ones thus reducing isolation feelings and promoting unity within society.

- **Enhancing Social Support**

To increase social support for working-class parents of children with disabilities, the following recommendations can be made:

- **Enhanced Funding for Community Programs:** More resources should be given to local community centers and charities that offer assistance services to families with special needs children.
- **Inclusive Activities Development:** There is need to devise more all-inclusive community activities that accommodate children with special needs and their

families as well so that parents do not feel any additional stress.

- **Online Support Networks Advocacy:** Advise and encourage them on engaging online platforms where they can meet other parents having similar experiences which form a more flexible and accessible means of building social ties.

Implementing these recommendations would help communities better assist working class parents of special needs children as they would no longer feel socially alienated leading to an improved quality of life.

- **Economic Effect on Working-Class Families**

Raising a special needs child is quite expensive for working-class families. For example, such costs can include payments of medical bills, buying the right educational materials and other adaptive equipment. Besides this, parents often lose wages indirectly when they reduce their hours or lose their jobs.

These additional financial burdens can be too much for lower income earners like working-class parents who may already be living from hand to mouth. Inadequate funding from social services contributes to increasing economic pressure which results in more debts and less stability.

- **Availability of Financial Aid and Government Help**

A number of financial assistance options are available for instance Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Carers' Allowance but these resources are hard to reach. The processes in place are usually complicated and time consuming, while the amounts given may not adequately meet what the families spent during that period. These systems may also prove difficult for working-class parents to navigate due to limited time or resources.

- **Long-term Consequences for the Economy**

Lower-class households can be affected by the fiscal burden of rearing a child with special needs in that it might have long-term economic consequences. Shortened earnings and rising expenditures can destabilize finances, thus making it hard for families to plan ahead and save money for their future needs or

make investments such as buying homes or paying school fees for other kids.

These families may face other economic challenges which may affect their overall life quality including increased stress levels and limited access to essential services. Such poverty that spans generations eventually leads to chronic financial instability which makes it difficult for the later generations to break through the binding chains of pauperism.

- **Economic Support Recommendations**

Various recommendations are available on how working class families that have children with special needs can get economic support:

- **More Financial Aid:** This entails increasing both amount and accessibility of financial aid programs so that they are able to meet additional costs faced by these households.
- **Easier Application Procedures:** Hence, there is need to streamline application process of financial aids so that they can be well understood and easy to fill out, especially by parents whose time is limited.
- **Support Employment Programs:** Involving parents return back into labor market while still aiding them at home will necessitate provision of flexible job opportunities, training programs and job placement initiatives.

In order to improve the economic backing of low income families, reduce financial stressors and enhance their lives in general, policymakers can adopt these steps.

It is only by recognizing all such complex dimensions to employability, sociability and economic stability that we can design improved policies as well as support systems for working class parents of children with disabilities. Such a comprehensive approach is necessary if we are to have a more fair and inclusive society.

## V. CASE STUDIES AND PERSONAL STORIES

- **Personal Narratives from Working-Class Parents Balancing Work and Taking Care of Toddlers**

In Birmingham resides Jane Smith, a single mother who provides a poignant example of the battle between employment and caregiving. There is nothing that Jane does not do to make ends meet. Jane has been employed as a factory worker where she has to work for long hours and with little flexibility. She also has Tom, an eight-year-old boy suffering from autism who must be supported through frequent visits to the doctors, therapeutic sessions, and continuous educational aid. Because her job is very strict, most times she has to go on unpaid leave which greatly reduces her income flow. “I have taken unpaid leave so many times,” Jane complains. “It’s such a struggle to survive and I fear I could lose my job.” Each time I receive calls from Tom’s school or therapist, going to work or staying with my son becomes a dilemma.

From Manchester, a couple called John and Lisa Brown faced similar hurdles. John is employed as a bus driver while Lisa is a cashier at supermarket. Their daughter Emily has cerebral palsy meaning she needs full time care and supervision. In order to meet such responsibilities, they have had to work out their shifts so that one of them is always with Emily. However, this arrangement has been necessary but it has also affected their relationship in the sense that it reduces the amount of time they spend together daily. “We hardly see each other,” opines John. “It’s like ships passing in the night, and our relationship’s suffering for it; both of us are tired and feel disconnected, however we don’t have any alternative.”

- **The Experience of Social Isolation and Efforts to Build up Support Networks**

The experience of Maria Rodriguez, a cleaner based in London, epitomizes the overwhelming degree of social isolation experienced by most working-class parents with children who have special needs. In case of Luis, her son who suffers from Down syndrome, there are very many obligations related to his care that leave her no time not only for social life but also personal attachments. According to Maria, “I don’t get time for friends or social activities.” She adds that she has nothing to do with friends or fun because everything is about Luis. It can be lonely but I have found some support online.



Maria's experience is far from being unique. These parents resort to using online support networks and local community groups as a remedy for this lack of social linkages in their immediate surroundings. Through the local Down Syndrome parent support group, she has been able to meet other parents who understand what she goes through. "We share information one another sometimes give out resources and sometimes hug each other," she explains. Furthermore, it provides me some relief so I'm not alone when I know that someone else understands my problems." The meetings are important for sharing experiences as they help me feel part of something much bigger than myself; a sense of belonging which no place else offers me."

- Financial Problems and How They Affect Family's Economy

David and Sarah Wilson from Liverpool exemplify the economic strains often associated with bringing up a child with special needs. The couple has two kids one of whom, Jack, suffers from severe epilepsy. David works in construction while Sarah is a part time receptionist. The costs for medical treatments for Jack, his educational materials and adaptive equipments are unbearable. "We've had to take out loans and rely on food banks," admits David. "It's a constant worry. We can never make ends meet, having no enough to pay off all expenses it seems like we are always running behind."

The family's long-term financial instability has far-reaching implications on their economic sustainability. "We cannot save for tomorrow," Sarah argues. "Every cent goes towards Jack's care." It feels like we're caught in a spiral of debt and tension .Jack needs extensive care so sometimes difficult decisions have to be made regarding what we can afford at the expense of our own needs as well as that of our other child."

- Examples from Real Life to Make Clear the Points Discussed Earlier

How Inadequate Support Systems and Policies Impact The Smith's family example reveals how inadequate support systems and policies affect individuals. The fact that Jane has to work while still taking care of her

baby shows that there is a need for more flexible working hours, as well as financial aid for parents who belong to low income category. "I wish I had someone to help out with looking after my son because then I would not have been in a position of deciding between my work and him," she says. "It is so painful feeling like you are always failing on both."

- Success Stories of Effective Support Programs and Initiatives

The story of Green family from Leeds can be told as a demonstration of how successful certain support programs may turn out to be. Sarah Green and Mark her husband are beneficiaries of a local project that offers relief and finances assistance to families with disabled children. Alex, their son has multiple disabilities, therefore in this program he receives the best care while his parents whose jobs are always safe. "The respite care gives us much-needed breaks, and the financial help has made a huge difference," according to Sarah. "It's not just that we're barely making it; we actually have time together as a family." The fact that they had relied on support programs for so long meant they could spend more time focusing on parenting rather than worrying about paying bills.

- References

- Parents' and Teachers' Views on Inclusive Education and Community Support

Special education teachers too affect the lives of special needs kids greatly. In Newcastle, Mrs Thompson says inclusion in education is very important. "Inclusion benefits all students," she claims. "It teaches empathy, patience, and understanding." Our school has seen incredible progress by integrating special needs children into mainstream classrooms with the right support. It's about creating an environment where every child can thrive."

This is something that parents such as the Browns can attest to. "Emily's school has been fantastic," Lisa said. "They have made available to her all necessary gadgets and services to flourish. It has been a life changer for us." Emily is not just getting an education but she is acquiring social skills, making acquaintances and friends, things we never would

have believed possible. Such came from the broad-minded approach of the school, aimed at creating her self-esteem as well as her sense of being in a place.

These personal stories and testimonials provide examples of many challenges faced by working class parents looking after special need children. They demonstrate the critical importance of comprehensive support systems and policies that cater for these families' unique needs hence promoting more inclusive and just society. Sharing this information allows us to understand better what these families go through so that we can advocate for change that will enable them to lead better lives.

## VI. POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Analysis of Current Policies

Overview of Existing Policies and Their Effectiveness

Policies such as the special Education Act, Disability Discrimination Act and the SEN Code of Practice have been set up by UK government in order to support children with special needs. The basic thing behind all these policies is the SEND code of practice. Within this Code are detailed procedures for identification and support of children with learning disabilities. It highlights the importance of timely intervention, IEPs and inclusive teaching methods thus enabling disabled children to access appropriate support.

Accordingly, it may be said that early intervention is key to the SEND code since there is general acceptance that early tackling developmental issues can produce better long-term consequences. Schools and local authorities must work closely with parents to identify children's needs as early as possible so that they can provide them with appropriate support. This entails ongoing assessments and reviews of provision based on progress made by the child or any changes in their circumstances which may imply different requirements being met to ensure they reach their potential.

Also, the right to request flexible working hours and parental leave are employment policies aimed at helping parents balance between work and caregiving. To help such families, some of these programs include Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Carer's

Allowance that cater for extra expenses related to caring for children with disabilities. They cover transport costs to medical appointments, specialized equipment, extra child care arrangements and so on.

However, even with such policies in place their efficacy varies greatly. Conversely, employees in higher skilled or higher paid jobs have more access to flexible working conditions and parental leave entitlements. On the other hand, those working-class parents stuck in inflexible shift patterns rarely benefit from such provisions. Many families find it hard to cope financially as support provided by programs like DLA and Carer's Allowance is not enough to offset all expenses attributable to raising a disabled child. Benefit claims can be long-winded processes necessitating elaborate documentation sometimes waiting approval for an approval process that takes months.

- Gaps and Weaknesses in Current Systems of Support

There are many significant gaps and weaknesses in the existing systems of support. Parents who work at jobs with a lot of toil cannot be flexible around their work conditions. In sectors like manufacturing, retail, or services many working-class jobs have set hours and almost no flexibility, which makes it difficult for parents to respond to the needs of their children without putting their employment at risk. The grants provided are most times not enough while the application processes for such benefits tend to be intricate as well as time consuming hence adding more weight on already burdened parents.

Additionally, inclusive education programs are inconsistently used among schools. Fewer schools have sufficient resources and trained personnel capable of integrating such students in a meaningful way like others do. Special needs students therefore experience varied educational outcomes due to such inconsistency. Achievements made towards ensuring inclusive education depend usually on commitment, expertise from teachers as well as resource availability like teaching aids, training courses specifically designed for them and adjustment tools.

It should be noted that not everybody can access social support networks which are necessary for minimizing loneliness and gaining emotional backing. The parents of the working class have difficulties in getting to these networks because of their geography, financial situation and societal issues, thus leading to an increase in their feeling of being alone, burdened with stress. In rural areas parents will have to travel long distances in order to get any support services while urban areas may have an overwhelming number of such needs that can put a strain on the existing resources.

- Recommendations for Policy Changes Fostering Flexible Working and Job Security

In order to enhance, make stronger policies on flexible working arrangements which target lower class workers who are parents of children with special needs should be undertaken. Employers ought to be persuaded or required to offer alternative hours and distant job arrangements where it is possible. It will require improvement in job protection measures that do not penalize mothers for taking leaves they might need for their children without jeopardizing their careers. This may involve making laws about longer periods of paid time off given to the employees that are new parents and creating job-sharing schemes for parents who can manage their roles more effectively.

Policies should also stimulate or force employers into giving extra sick leave especially meant for medical appointments and caretaking duties. This would ensure that no parent has to determine between their child's well-being and a job opportunity in question. Moreover, generating more part-time positions with benefits could serve as an option for certain parents who have to reduce their shifts at work.

- Improving Financial Assistance and Simplifying Application Procedures

The government should reform the financial assistance programs like Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Carer's Allowance so that they can adequately cater for the real costs of bringing up a child with disability. This could mean increasing the allowances or offering additional top-ups for some specific needs such as travelling expenses or therapies tailored to children with special requirements. Moreover, these benefits'

application processes must be made easier and simpler by streamlining them to enable working class parents to be able access them. Offering clear instructions and helping people throughout application process can guarantee that payments are not delayed or complicated by bureaucracy.

Government departments can introduce case management systems in which there would be dedicated staff who can help families to complete applications while collecting required documents at the same time providing advice on what is available under the eligibility criteria. In addition, simplification of forms as well as provision of online modes of applying will equally reduce paperwork burden on households.

- Promoting Inclusive Education and Specialized Training for Educators

Inclusive education practices must be implemented consistently across all schools. Proper funding for materials and teachers with specialized training is necessary to effectively support special needs children. Schools need to encourage empathy and understanding by adopting curricula inclusive of diverse learning abilities. There should also be regular evaluations of the schools' efforts towards inclusion so that areas that may need improvement are identified, and ensure all children are given the necessary support.

Teacher training programs should cover extensive modules on special needs education, which will equip teachers with necessary skills to cater for varied learners. Accessing specialist assistance staff including educational psychologists, speech therapists would also help. What's more, creating smaller class sizes can help ensure that all students receive the individualized attention they need.

- Advocacy for Comprehensive Policy Reforms

Policymakers must advocate for comprehensive reforms that target the peculiar problems experienced by working class parents with exceptional children. This involves designing regulations which offer strong financial backing, flexible working timetable and reachable social networks. Also, advocacy should give emphasis on public sensitization about the

circumstances of these families while promoting a more inclusive and fair society.

Additionally, public awareness drives can be mounted to unveil the predicaments confronting these households and gather broader support for required reforms. Moreover, reaching out to companies and employers to influence good practices and encourage voluntary uptake of supportive policies may lead to instant changes in the lives of working-class parents.

Implementing these recommendations will create a sympathetic atmosphere for working-class parents who have exceptional children within their communities. In view of this, such changes will help address their economic, social and industrial hardships thereby contributing towards an all-inclusive and just society.

## CONCLUSION

- Summary of Major Results

In the UK, the future prospects for working-class parents are significantly influenced by the education journey of their special needs children. Several challenges exist among these parents such as striking a balance between caring duties and work, experiencing social isolation and facing enormous financial burdens. There are however significant gaps and deficiencies in the existing policies that need to be addressed in order to make provision that is more inclusive.

- **Employability:** Flexible work schedules have been a great challenge to working-class parents due to inflexible work hours. A vast number of lowly skilled workers cannot afford these facilities since they are accessible only to people with higher skills. While financial aid is useful, it rarely covers all the expenses incurred in bringing up a child with special needs. As such, many parents are forced to reduce their hours at work or quit employment altogether in order to cater for their children's needs hence suffering significant loss of income as well as opportunities for career growth.
- **Sociability:** A lot of parents become socially isolated due to the exhaustive caregiving

responsibilities they have and a lack of time or energy for socializing. Not all individuals can benefit from the support of networks available around the world; this is because there are geographical, economic and cultural barriers that hinder most working class parents from attending community activities and support groups. The lack of social interaction worsens stress and mental illness among parents who feel unappreciated or misunderstood by others. As a result, it affects even physical well-being of both parents and their children.

- **Economic Stability:** Working-class families are burdened with many financial challenges associated with bringing up children with disabilities. In fact, it is long-term financial instability that arises due to the additional expenses incurred in medical treatment, specialized teaching materials and adaptive gadgets as well as foregone income arising from reduced job schedules or joblessness. However, such forms of aid come in the form of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Carers' Allowance which are not only barely enough but also very hard to get through. This may leave families in debt traps where they cannot save towards future plans nor invest on opportunities such as university education for other siblings.

What these challenges mean. The implication for the community is that parents of children with special needs and who are poor face the greatest challenges. These families risk long-term poverty, social exclusion, and reduced quality of life without appropriate assistance. The stress and strain of financial obligations can negatively affect the mental and physical health of both parents and their children leading to escalating healthcare expenses as well as increased demands on social services thereby straining public resources.

Furthermore, many special needs students fail to receive necessary support because of an inconsistent approach towards inclusive education policies. This not only affects such individual's development but also perpetuates intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. For example, these marginalized

learners end up being limited in their future opportunities through inadequate educational provision hence contributing to larger societal inequalities.

To deal with this problem a multi-faceted strategy is needed that incorporates; improving existing policies addressing them based on addition funding for support programs, generating greater public awareness about the issue and promoting advocacy movements. This way we will be able to create a more inclusive society where everyone benefits from same treatment regardless of whether they are rich or poor.

- Cautionary Explorations

To help the parents of children with special needs who are in the low-income class, the following strategies can be adopted:

1. Policy Improvements: Increase flexibility of work schedules and job security for parents to ensure that they balance their careers with caring duties. Provide enough support through financial aid while simplifying application processes for such programs that are difficult to access. Policies should take into account the distinctive challenges faced by working class families. For example, more time ought to be given as well as better pay during parental leave and there should be incentives to employers so as they can sometimes provide opportunities for flexible working.
2. Increased Funding: More resources should be directed toward community centers, charities and other support groups that offer vital services to families with children having special needs. This includes provisions for respite care, support groups and inclusive community activities. Adequate funding will ensure widespread availability of these programs and remove geographic or financial obstacles. Moreover, investing in community-based interventions assists in promoting a sense of belongingness and mutual assistance among families which reduces social isolation
3. Ensuring Inclusive Education: Implement inclusive education practices in all schools consistently, and ensure that there are adequate funds for resources and specialized training of educators to be able to support children with disability effectively. Periodic assessments and

reviews can highlight strengths and pinpoint areas for improvement, in order to make sure that all children get the help they need. Schools must have appropriate resources such as special education teachers and adaptive technologies for meeting different learning requirements.

4. Advocacy/Awareness: Call on the government to put in place legislation that takes care of the interests of working-class parents who have children with impairments. Raise public awareness of challenges faced by these families so as to create an inclusive society that meets their needs. Advocacy activities should involve working together with NGOs, community organizations and stakeholders in order to present a unified front pushing for change. Public awareness campaigns can serve as an eye opener, showing people how difficult life is for those dealing with disability issues at home, thus getting more people to support necessary changes. Lastly through creating partnerships with business representatives as well as promoters of latest trends in effective voluntary policies could lead immediately towards better lives of low income adults
5. Research and data collection: Carry out thorough research and data collection to ascertain the specific needs and challenges faced by the working-class parents of special education children. By doing this, a more specific intervention plan will be created, hence resources will be channeled in the right way. Regular updating of this information as well as determining efficiency of the implemented policies can improve support systems over time.
6. Tribal involvement and support: Encourage local businesses, agencies and residents to help families with children who have disabilities for stronger community engagement. These may involve volunteering services, giving away things or organizing inclusive events for community members. This is indeed a supportive network that offers practical help and provides emotional assistance to families in an attempt to improve their welfare.

To make things better for working-class parents of children with disabilities, we need to do some or all of the following. This will help them overcome their economic, social and employment problems. In this

manner, there would be a more inclusive and fair society where every family stands an equal chance of thriving.

We can partner with policymakers, business leaders, communities and individuals to create a society that understands and supports the different needs among its people. For instance, if we were to address issues unique to working class parents having special need children there will be enhanced equity, inclusion and welfare for everyone.

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