



Policies And Practices For Inclusive Education In India

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Abstract: The right to live with dignity and self-respect as a human being leads to a continuous analysis of policies and services aimed at marginalized sections. UNICEF's Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2002–05, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, demands that 'all children have access to and complete an education of good quality'. Inclusive practice is a teaching technique that acknowledges and utilizes the diversity of students. It ensures that all pupils have access to instructional knowledge equitable. Also, have the opportunity to fully participate in their inclusive education studies. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act of 1995 provided equal opportunities, protection of rights, and full participation to people with disabilities. The Integrated Education of Disabled Children Act is a federal law that mandates that disabled children get an integrated education. The National Trust Act was enacted in 1999. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an excellent start for all kids interested in universal elementary education. The New Education Policy 2020 is to make education universal from pre-school through secondary school. Aarogya Setu is a mobile application that aims to "bridge the gap between excellent health and happiness." The purpose of inclusion is to include everyone. Discrimination based on race, gender, or disability. As a result of eradicating prejudice and intolerance, this comes down to equal access and opportunity. Secondary data was gathered from a variety of journals and websites. The higher education system follows the comprehensive core structure. In India, similar vocational training projects are being implemented. This initiative program aims to overhaul India's educational system by 2040.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive education, opportunities, protection of rights, Discrimination

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of India states that everyone has the right to equality of education and of opportunity. The 86th amendment of the Constitution has reiterated the need for free, compulsory and universal elementary education as a fundamental right for all children from the ages of 6 to 14 years. The 93rd amendment of the Constitution of India has made education a fundamental Human Right for all children between the ages of six and 14 years, irrespective of caste, class, religion, gender and disability. They need to be brought into the fold

of education. The National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, 2013 stresses the importance of, “providing integrated services for holistic development of all children along the continuum from the prenatal period to six years of age. Thus, ensuring a sound foundation for survival, growth and development of the child with focus on care and early learning.” (p.1). The different education commissions and committees at national and international levels have highlighted the pressing need for education of children with different disabilities in the general education system. They emphasize that the educational needs of children with disabilities should be an inseparable part of the general education system. Several initiatives by governments, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and others have addressed the special education needs of children with disabilities, and some have successfully demonstrated examples of special and inclusive education.

Inclusion is a new way of thinking about specialised education. The shift from special education to inclusive education signals a dramatic philosophical change. Inclusion is a belief in the inherent right of all persons to participate meaningfully in society. Inclusive education implies acceptance of differences and making room for persons who would otherwise be excluded. This practice of educating children who have disabilities together with their non-disabled peers means creating learning communities that appreciate and respond to the diverse need of its members (Engelbrecht, Kriegler&Booyesen, 1996:7).

The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the “World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality” (Salamanca, Spain 1994) and was restated at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal 2000). The idea of inclusion is further supported by the United Nation’s Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Person with Disability Proclaiming Participation and equality for all. Of late, a consensus has emerged among Indian intellectuals and pedagogues for adopting inclusive education in mainstream schools.

The Salamanca Statement maintains that ‘inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and the enjoyment and exercise of human rights’ (quoted in CSIE 1997). Thus, we see inclusive education as largely emanating from the human rights perspective which upholds those variations in human characteristics associated with disability, whether in cognitive, sensory, or motor ability, as inherent to the human condition and such conditions do not limit human potential (Rioux and Carbet 2003). The idea of children having rights independently of the adults around them is a relatively new concept of the past century and a common theme in early legislation was that children were seen as passive recipients, to be ‘seen but not heard’ (Munro 2001). The adoption of Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC) in 1989 and the World Summit for Children in 1990 were promising enactments and it appeared that rights of children were seriously being considered by the governments and international community (International Save the Children Alliance 2001).

1.1. Inclusive education:

Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all type of students learns and participate together. As per NCERT,2000 – Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with disabilities nor for general learners without disabilities. Social requirement is that learners with special needs should be educated along with other learners in inclusive schools, which are cost effective and have sound pedagogical practices. Inclusive education is key in building inclusion communities, when children with and without disabilities learn together it promotes an inclusive society. It is about our future living in the community and having jobs like everyone else. It includes all the students who are away from the education for any reasons like physically or mentally challenged, economically, socially, deprived or belonging to any caste, creed, gender etc.

1.3. Objectives of the study:

- 1.To study the concept of inclusive education in India.
- 2.To learn about India's inclusive education policies and practices.

2.0. Creating Policies for Inclusive Education:

India gained independence from Britain in the 1947, and inclusive education is written into India's constitution as a fundamental right for all citizens. It is important to differentiate between constitutional rights and state policies and their legal implications. Rights are listed in the constitution; they are absolute and completely enforceable. State policies are completely subjective on a state-by-state basis. Part IX, Article 45 of the Constitution states,

“The state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.”

The significance of Article 45 was reaffirmed in 1993 with the Supreme Court's Unnikrishnan judgment, also known as the case “Unnikrishnan vs. the state of Andhra Pradesh.” In this case, the court ruled that Article 45 must be read in conjunction with Article 21 of the constitution, which states that “No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.” By requiring these two articles to be read in conjunction, elementary education is now considered imperative for life and personal liberty in India. A clause was added to India's constitution to this affect; however, it was not added until December 2002. The 86th amendment to the constitution, section 21A reads, “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.” Although many viewed this amendment as positive, others criticized the age restrictions. In addition, many thought that the type of education (inclusive, segregated, or other) should be specified within the law.

The 1960s marked an important change in how special education was organized and funded in India. The Ministry of Education split, and a new branch called the Ministry of Social Welfare was created. The Ministry of Social Welfare was given the responsibility for the “weak and vulnerable” sections of society. They largely focused on rehabilitation, and not as much on education. Instead of supporting the current education system, the Ministry of Social Welfare began giving out grants to nonprofits that provided education for children with disabilities, inadvertently preventing inclusion of these children within the public or mainstream sector. The split of these two ministries has never been reversed, and is still this way at present.

2.1. Policy Changes in Inclusive Education

- University Education Commission or Radhakrishnan Commission (Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan), 1948-49
- Secondary Education Commission (Dr. Lakshmanswami Mudaliar), 1952-53
- Education Commission (Dr. D.S. Kothari), 1964-66
- Education in Concurrent List, 1976 (42nd Constitutional Amendment)
- National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 - Child-Centred Approach
- Program of Action (POA), National Policy on Education (revised) -1992
- National Policy on Education 2016 (draft) -T.S.R. Subramaniam Committee Report (2016)
- National Education Policy 2019 (draft)- Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee Report (2019).

2.2. Practices of Inclusive education in India- Initiatives for Inclusion Education Practices

- The Integrated Education for Disabled Children Scheme (1974)
- The District Education Program (1985)
- The National Policy on Education (1986)
- The Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (1987)
- The Persons with Disabilities Act (1995)
- The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2000)
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan aims to make all schools “disabled-friendly” (2018)

2.1 Government Plan and Programmes:

The National Education commission (1964-66)

The first education commission in India, popularly known as the Kothari Commission, began the section on handicapped children in the chapter ‘Towards Equalization of Educational Opportunities’ in its report in a similar tone as reflected in the 1944 postwar report. ‘Very little has been done in this field so far... any great improvement in the situation does not seem to be practicable in the near future... there is much in the field that we could learn from the educationally advanced countries, (Education Commission,1966, p.123).

It was evidently in favour of making education of the handicapped an integral part of the general education system. The commission suggested educational facilities to be extended to these four categories: The blind, the deaf, the orthopedically handicapped and the mentally retarded.

National Education Policy (1968)

The 1968, The National Education Policy followed the commission's recommendations and suggested the expansion of education facilities for physically and mentally handicapped children and the development of 'Integrated Programme' enabling handicapped children to study in regular schools. Eight years later in 1974 a scheme for the integrated education of disabled children or, the IEDC was started by the welfare ministry.

National Policy on education, (1986)

Twenty years later, the NPE (MHRD, 1986a) which has been guiding the education system in India, under its broad objectives of 'education for equality' proposed the following measures for the education of the handicapped:

- Wherever it is feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with others.
- Special schools with hostels will be provided, as far as possible at district headquarters, for severely handicapped children.
- Adequate arrangements will be made to give vocational training to the disabled.
- Teacher's training programmes will be reoriented, in particular for teachers of primary classes to deal with the special difficulties of handicapped children, and
- Voluntary efforts for the education of the disabled will be encouraged in every possible manner.

Baharul Islam Committee (1988)

The committee included education in the Draft Legislation. It mentioned that the state should endeavour to provide free and universal elementary education to children with physical and mental disabilities. The state shall also provide assistance to them for education and training at the secondary and higher levels. It also emphasized promotion of integrated education and continuation of residential education.

Programme of Action (1990, MHRD)

The Programme of Action (POA, MHRD, 1990) outlined the measures to implement the policy, which included massive in-service training programmes for teachers, orientation programmes for administrators, development of supervisory expertise in the resource institutions for school education at the district and block levels, and provision of incentives like supply of aids, appliances, textbooks and school uniforms.

Programme of Action (1992, MHRD)

The NPE/POA 1986 was modified and a new POA was chalked out in 1992. The 1992 POA made an ambitious commitment for universal enrolment by the end of the Ninth Plan for both categories of children:

those who could be educated in general primary schools and those who required education in special schools or special classes in general schools (MHRD, 1992, p.18). It also called for the reorientation of the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes.

Centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (Revised 1987, 1989 and 1992)

The Department of social welfare, Govt. of India launched the centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled children in 1974 with 100% central assistance. The Scheme provided funding for rehabilitation aids and equipment, educational material, training of resource teachers, establishment of preschool and parent counselling centres, transport allowance, removal of architectural barriers in school buildings, etc. With the coverage of education of children with disabilities in the National Policy on Education during 1986, the scheme was shifted to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The scheme purports to provide educational opportunities for children with disabilities in common schools. A large number of State governments have already adopted the scheme. They have established Administrative Cells for monitoring the Scheme. However, coverage of visually impaired children under the scheme at present is negligible.

Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED)

The National Council for Educational Research and Training implemented PIED during 1987 with the financial support from UNICEF, which provided support for the development of instructional material, training of personnel, mobilizing community support, training of parents and coordination of the project in remote and rural areas and difficult places. It also extended support for identification and assessment of children with disabilities, establishment of resource rooms, provision of aids and appliances and allowances for children with disabilities.

Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992

The Rehabilitation council of India is established by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, India in 1992 for regulating the training of rehabilitation professionals, maintenance of a Central Rehabilitation registers and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto which is again a right step in the right directions. It provides a regulatory mechanism for development of human resources in the field. For the visually impaired persons, various courses have already been started.

Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of rights and full participation), Act 1995

To give effect to the proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region, the Parliament enacted the Persons with Disabilities Act (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, which came into force with effect from 7th February 1996. The Act desires the appropriate governments and local authorities to ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment until he attains the age of eighteen years. It encourages promotion of integrated, residential education, functional literacy, and non-formal education,

education through open school or open universities. It desires initiation of research for designing and developing new assistive devices and developing human resources. It also ensures reservation of at least three percent seats in the educational institutes of persons with disabilities. It also encourages preparation of comprehensive education schemes with a variety of facilities for such persons.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

Evolving form, the national experience with area specific projects is an ambitious nationwide plan, popularly known as District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), to put local communities in charge of education in their area and enhance investments in primary education. As a first step, a five-year plan for the selected districts has been chalked out. From the year 1995, the education of children with disabilities has also been included as integral component of the programme. All such children in the selected districts would be enrolled for inclusive education at the primary level. The DPEP envisages following measures in this regard:

- Providing all children, including children with disabilities, with access to primary education either in the formal system or through non-formal education programme.
- Facilitation access for disadvantaged groups such as girls, socially backward communities and children with disabilities.
- Improving effectiveness of education through training of teachers, improvement of learning materials and upgrading of infrastructure facilities.
- Appointment of special teachers at district and cluster level for providing support services to class teachers.
- Provision of assistive devices and educational devices to these children.
- Involvement of experts in disability development in the State Coordination committee.
- Orientation of Master Trainers at the State and district level in respect of educational needs of children with disabilities.

DPEP is an excellent and bold step towards promotion of inclusive education of children with disabilities.

National Trust Act (1999)

The National Trust is an established as a statutory body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, set up under the “National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities”, Act (Act 44 of 1999). This act is meant for strengthen the PWD Act, 95 especially gives provision for Persons with Autism, mentally retarded and cerebral palsy.

The Tenth Fifth Year Plan (2002-2007)

The tenth fifth year plan (2002-2007) aims to provide Universal Elementary Education by the end of the plan. It also aims to provide basic education for the un-reached segments and special groups. The special interventions and strategies like pedagogic improvement and adoption of child centered practices are focused on the groups like the girls, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, working children, children with disabilities, urban deprived children, children from minority groups, children below poverty line, migratory children and in the hardest to reach groups.

Education of children with special needs (NCF 2005)

The national curriculum framework for school education (NCFSE) (2000), brought out by the NCERT, recommended inclusive school for all without specific reference to pupil with SEN as a way of providing quality education to all learners. Though in India there is no formal or official definition of inclusion, but the draft scheme on Inclusive Education uses the following definition: Inclusive Education means all learners, young people-with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary preschool provisions, schools, and community educational settings with appropriate network of support service (Draft of Inclusive Education Scheme, MHRD, 2003) National Curriculum Framework (2005) A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout our education system. The participation of all children needs to be ensured in all spheres of their life in and outside the school. Schools need to become centre that prepare children for life and ensure that all children, especially the differently able children from marginalized sections, and children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit of this critical area of education (NCF 2005, P85)

Action Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD) 2005

The following framework of the Action Plan and list of activities has been developed as a result of the initial consultations. The plan covers the inclusion in education of children and young persons with disabilities.

The main objectives of Action will be:

- 1) To ensure that no child is denied admission in mainstream education.
- 2) To ensure that every child would have the right to access an Anganwadi and school and no child would be turned back on the ground of disabilities.
- 3) To ensure that mainstream and specialist training institutions serving persons with disabilities, in the government or in the nongovernment sector, facilitate the growth of a cadre of teacher trained to work within the principles of 'Inclusion'.
- 4) To facilitate access of girls with disabilities and disabled students form rural and remote areas to government hostels.
- 5) To provide for home-based learning for persons severe, multiple and intellectual disability.
- 6) To promote distance education for those who require an individualized pace of learning.
- 7) To emphasize job training and job oriented vocational training, and

- 8) To promote and understanding of the paradigm shift form charity to development through a measure awareness, motivation and sensitization campaign.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Campaign)

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a historic stride towards achieving the long-cherished goal of Universalization of Elementary Education through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with states. This movement promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, assumes to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children including those with disabilities in the 6 to14 age group by the year 2010. It makes a provision up to Rs.1200 per child for integration of disabled children as per specific proposal.

The Right to Education Act 2009

The Government of India decided to make Amendment 21A of the constitution, giving children between the ages of 6-14 the right to a free, appropriate and compulsory education, into an act. In 2005, the Right to Education Act was drafted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This bill, framed through a “social justice and collective advocacy perspective” rather than through a framework of individual rights, is not disability-specific, but is inclusive of children with disabilities, with specific sections that address the educational rights of students with disabilities.

The Right to Education Bill was drafted in 2005. However, for three years, the bill was not discussed by the cabinet, was not brought up in budget sessions, and was passed around and generally avoided by different departments. The Right to Education Act was passed in 2009 and put into full effect in 2010. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the act on April 12, 2012.

One of the main reasons for this was section 12 (1) (C) which allocated 25% of all seats in private schools to children from Dalit and marginalized sections of society.

“The bill has been fiercely opposed by the private school lobby which feels that opening its doors to the dhobi's son and the driver's daughter will dilute its brand value and lower standards.”

Another reason that the bill took so long to pass was the estimated cost of implementation, at up to Rs 1,500,000 crore. Initially, the Central Government of India wanted the states to harbour 25% of the financial responsibility. However, after months of debate after the bill was finally passed in 2009; a decision was made that funding for implementation will be split between the central and state governments at a 65:35 ratio, 65% coming through the central government. However, some of the monetary support will be funnelled through programs that already exist, such as SSA.

Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD)

The MHRD also developed the program of Action for IECYD. This program aims to ensure that all disabled children can attend regular school. To accomplish so, the government will cooperate with the National Council for Teacher Education and Rehabilitation Council to ensure that enough teachers or educators are educated in inclusive education and that schools have the required physical and ideological infrastructure. This keeps disabled children in ordinary schools without adaptations to accommodate the current Integrated Education for Disabled Children program. It caters to a wide range of requirements. Existing physical infrastructures will be modified as part of the program. All students or children must meet teaching approaches.

National Policy for People with Disabilities (2006)

Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry is a set of rules and regulations that deal specifically with education and people with disabilities (2006). This policy uses the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. This policy reflects the 2005 program and transforms special schools into knowledge centres for persons with mental impairments and educators or instructors. Furthermore, the policy aims to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas by establishing more District Disability and Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs), which disseminate information on the accessibility of assistive devices, instruments, and machines or with equipment. It ensures that persons with disabilities receive the required 3% coverage in poverty reduction programs and target disabled female children.

New National Education Policy 2020:

NEP envisions “an India-centric education system that directly contributes to transforming our country into a sustainable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all.” Based on the pillars of “Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability,” this policy aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making school and college education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st-century needs, and aimed at bringing out each student’s unique capabilities.

Highlights of School Education

- New school education methodological and curricular framework- (5+3+3+4)
- Access to free, safe, and high-quality ECCE of Children in the year of 3 to 6 have at Anganwadi or Preschool or Balvatika
- Ensure and access that universal education for all levels
- To introduce new curricular, pedagogical model or structure for teaching and prematurely childcare
- Basic Literacy and everyday activities like counting, mathematical skills
- Reforms in school curricula and pedagogy
- The Power of Language and Multilingualism

- Reforms in Assessment
- School Governance
- Robust Teacher Recruitment and Career Path
- Equitable and Inclusive Education

3.1. GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: Inclusive practice is a teaching approach that recognises student diversity and uses this to ensure all children receive equal treatment, opportunities and respect. Everyone works to make sure that all learners feel welcome and valued, and that they get the right support to help them develop their individual talents and achieve their goals. Inclusive education has been conducted in India for over a decade. Originally as part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan is one of the inclusive education components, then as part of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA), and finally as part of Samagra Shiksha. Among the provisions for Children With Special Needs under Samagra Shiksha are recognition and evaluation of disabled kids, mobility impairment, assistive devices, primary healthcare services, diagnostic services, practical teaching and learning materials, diagnostic services, transportation facilities, Braille books, large print textbooks, escort facilities, scholarships related information, uniform allowance, stipend for girls child in special education, hostel facilities school and colleges students use of computers (ICT), with the support staffs, awareness camps for the health-related issue. Based on the local surroundings and needs, States and Union Territories across India adopted techniques and strategies for delivering inclusive education. The appropriate data was obtained from the states and UTs in order to document good practices followed by inclusive education. Inclusive policies refer to the provisions, entitlements, and guidelines outlined in national disability policies to support complete involvement of children with disabilities, equitable workplace function, abolition, eradication of all forms of favouritism, facilitation of diversity, inter sectional ties in higher education institutions.

3.2. PRACTICES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDIA- STATE

- Fundamental Coaches Training Program for Special Teacher -Haryana
- Nature Study Camp, Inclusive Adventures –Haryana
- The concentration of disability students, by introducing innovations in teacher investments -Haryana
- Assembly in Sign Language -Chhattisgarh
- Non-Visual Disabilities or Learning Disabilities (Identification) -Chhattisgarh
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Education for students of Visual Impairment -Rajasthan
- TAB-based Information and Communication Technology Training with Visual Impairment disabled children -Madhya Pradesh
- Public-Private Partnership - Uttarakhand
- Self-defense Training - Odisha
- Rescue and Rehabilitation for Urban Deprived Children's Education -Odisha

- Vision Screening Program and School Students for Spectacle Distribution -Odisha
- Neuro-Regenerative Rehabilitation Therapy (NRRT) - Odisha
- Early Childhood Learning Skills in Inclusive Schools - Meghalaya
- Exploration and distribution facilities for camps (same-day hearing)-Andhra Pradesh
- Resource Room (RR) –Goa
- “Free and Open-Source Software” (FOSS) training for Government School Teachers (Digital initiatives) -Tamil Nadu

CONCLUSION

So, Inclusive Education is an approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones under the same roof. It advocates that special children with special needs have to be educated along with normal peers in regular classrooms. It brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and seeks to maximize the potential of all students. It is one of the most effective ways to promote an inclusive and tolerant society. India has advocated the implementation of inclusive education supported by relevant policies, legal enactments, schemes, programmes and plans. Several initiatives by governments, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and others have addressed the special education needs of children with disabilities, and some have successfully demonstrated examples of special and inclusive education. The 1994 Salamanca statement on inclusive education states— “School should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.” This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.”

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