



## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: INDIAN EDUCATION COMMISSION'S (1964 -66) VISION OF COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM**

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### **Abstract**

*Indian Education Commission (1964-66) clearly indicates the intent of the Commission to look at Common School System as an effective instrument to build a society grounded on the principles of equality and social justice. For actualizing this, what is necessary is acceptance of the principle of 'inclusion and percolation of the same across all levels of society. The Commission dreamed of a society which will be free of all discriminations and education having the key role of bringing the social change which creates a socially just and equal society for all. The prime objective of the Common School System is equalisation of educational opportunities. The Common System is the only option that provides the necessary framework for resolving not just the complex multi ethnic conflicts within and across each state in the north east but also for reversing the rapidly growing alienation between the northeast and the rest of India. If this framework is adopted throughout the nation, India would be in a unique position to offer a meaningful policy alternative to its neighbours across the border.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusive Education, Common School System, Features, Implementation and its failure*



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### **Introduction**

The Indian Education Commission (1964 -66) aimed for equal opportunities of quality education to all children irrespective of caste creed, sex or class. The Kothari Commission dreamed of a society which will be free of all discriminations and education having the key role of bringing the social change which creates a socially just and equal society for all. orof this dream, the Commission recommended a school system which will provide equal opportunities to all to gain quality education and equal schooling opportunities. In other words the Commission recommended Common School System such that all schools act as common government funded schools where in all the children belonging to any caste , creed , sex or colour (i.e.all economic and social backgrounds) will have the right to gain good and equal

quality education. The education given in these schools will be free for all in all respects. Also, the Commission intended to include private schools as well under this obligation.

### **Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education is an idea and philosophy in the field of education. It means that persons with disabilities or persons who need special care can learn in schools together with people who don't have special needs. This idea comes from the idea of social justice, which demands that all people have human rights without any discriminations. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also says that access to education is right. Children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education or from secondary education, on the basis of disability and can access an inclusive, quality and free education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live. Inclusive education is the practice that provides school experiences to children with special needs, in the same school and the classrooms they would have attended anyway had they not had special needs. It is a process during which all children, regardless of their abilities and need participate in the same school.

### **Concept of Common School System**

The Indian Education Commission (1964–66) had recommended a Common School System of Public Education (CSS) as the basis of building up the National System of Education with a view to “bring the different social classes and groups together and thus promote the emergence of an egalitarian and integrated society.

The Commission suggested that “instead of doing so, education itself is tending to increase social segregation and to perpetuate and widen class distinctions.” It further noted that this is not only bad for poor children but also for the rich and the privileged groups. Since by segregating their children such privileged parents prevent them from sharing the life and experiences of the children of poor and coming into contact with the realities of life and also make their own children's life incomplete or anaemic. The Commission asserted that “if these evils are to be eliminated and the education system is to become a powerful instrument of national integration in particular, we must move towards the goal of Common School System of Public Education. The Commission also pointed out that such a system exists in other nations like USA, France and other Scandinavian countries. The British system, however based upon privileged and discrimination but in recent decades under rising democratic pressure, it has steadily moves towards a comprehensive school system as recommended by the Commission.

## **Features**

Features listed as essential features of a Common School System that is to be developed as the National System of Education pertaining to school education.

Coverage from pre elementary to plus two stages: all schools, to provide absolutely free education from pre primary to class VIII as per article 21 A and amended article 45 of the constitution, for secondary and senior education; a rational fee structure to be ensured by the state /local bodies in all category of schools.

All schools including private unaided schools; neighbourhood schools, neighbourhood to be specified for each school with a view to optimise socio cultural diversity among children in each school, necessary legislation to cover all government local body and private schools to be enacted.

Screening, interviews or parental interaction not allowed as a valid basis for admissions; common and minimum norms and standards for infrastructure, equipment and teacher related aspects for both state funded and private unaided schools (recognised /unrecognised) these may relate to school land buildings, number, size and design of classrooms, drinking water and toilets, midday meals, safety measures, barrier free access and other requirements of various categories of disabilities, facilities for girls at the age of puberty, play ground and sports, performing and fine arts facilities, teaching aids, library, laboratory, information technology, number of teachers and their qualifications/specialisations along with pre service and in service training, pupil teacher ratio and other such requirements, common curriculum framework, shared features of curriculum and comparable syllabi with flexibility relating to texts, teaching aids, teaching learning process, evaluation parameters, assessment procedures and school calendar.

Common language policy that takes into account the multi lingual context of the majority of Indian children, pedagogic role of the mother tongue and its relationship with the state language, majority languages (article 350A ) and increasing significance of English in providing equitable access to knowledge; careers and economic opportunities.

Decentralised school based management that ensures the necessary degree of institutional amendment, relating to rural and urban areas respectively; this requires the formation of school, management committees, with the majority of members being parents of students and appropriate linkages with local bodies and affiliation to a Common Board of Examinations for all schools within state.

We may add that the principles underlying the concept of Inclusive Education are integral to the vision of Common School System.

In the Indian context, Inclusive Education has to go beyond the Unescodeclaration,1994 and transcend the issue of disability. It must concern itself with all marginalised sections of society viz dalits,tribalsreligious and linguistic minorities, child labour and of course, the physically and mentally disabled and particularly the girls in the of these categories, whom the school system tends to exclude in substantial proportions unless this exclusionary character of Indian education is challenged both theoretically and in practice. By the application of the principles of Inclusive education neither the Common School System nor universalisation of Elementary Education can come reality.

### **Implementation**

This is one of the forgotten policy of education system. No measures were announced either in the Program Of Action, 1986 or modified 1992 .to implement the policy on the Common School System. The CABE committee had called for neighbourhood schools, qualitative improvement of education in public sector and identification of target areas. While reviewing the implementation of the 1986 policy the committee considered the development of Common School System to be very vital component of the overall strategy for securing equity and social justice in education. The committee had made three recommendations, which could address the issue of equity in Indian Education System.

1. It is called for the essential minimum legislation, particularly to dispense with early selection process, tuition fee etc.
2. It suggested, 'exploring ways of including the expensiveprimary schools into Common School System through a combination of incentives, disincentives and legislation.'
3. It called for ensuring that instructions for all is given through the medium of mother tongue at the pre primary and primary levels.
4. There are evidences to suggest that mixing children with different abilities and socio economic backgrounds enhance the school standards for all (Kahelnberg 2001). The successful schools in the post industrial era will be once that achieve excellence and equity simultaneously indeed one that recognises equity as the way to excellence (Skrtic, 1991 , P 233)

### **Failure**

1. There is no regular system of recording and enumerating the fee charging private schools in elementary and secondary education through it is quite large and is growing sector. It has a serious impact on the issue of equity in the Indian education system.

2. Of late, primary schools have gradually started opening their doors, but in the afternoon or in the school annexe in the form of learning centres, in the same premises, different tracks of school system operate, in the name of doing something good to the poor and disadvantaged. Some school believe that these children are not intelligent enough and cannot mix up with those coming from the richer class and couldnot be admitted into regular classrooms!
3. While analysing the status of children in India sees education as an instrument for differentiation by separating children according to social class.
4. Most of the systems that is private fee charging schools for upper middle and rich classes, schools for the children of central government, public undertaking and the defence staff, schools for talented rural children, low fee private schools in rural areas etc. have developed in the name of social justice, equal opportunity and deficiency in resources. They are expected to serve educational interests of the groups they have been established for. Are they detrimental to the principles of equal opportunities in matters of basic education? Has the Fundamental Right now guaranteed under the constitution changed situation and could a poor child demand a school similar to the one available for well to do child ?

The existing system of education seems to have been adversely affecting the quality of governance in the country. The seeds of superiority, hierarchy and insensitivity against the people, the poor in particular are sown at a very early age in existing school system in India and gets reflected very strongly in the governance, at each level. The system reinforces compulsion, comparison and competition that restricts options, individuality and cooperation.

### **Conclusion**

The rich have a right to choose, poor children should also have a right to choose! Why should they suffer on account of poverty in matter of education, particularly elementary education, now since it has become a fundamental right? Common School System is vitally linked with the government school reforms and one major reform would be to give them the same level of autonomy as available to the private schools. The inclusive education movement is catching up at international level to initiate the general education /school reform process and to address the diversity in the society. Inclusive education doesn't mean only education of disabled; it is just component of the aspect of diversity.

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