



NATIONAL POLICIES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Introduction :

Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes. Research shows that when a child with disabilities attends classes alongside peers who do not have disabilities, good things happen.

For a long time, children with disabilities were educated in separate classes or in separate schools. People got used to the idea that special education meant separate education. But we now know that when children are educated together, positive academic and social outcomes occur for all the children involved.

We also know that simply placing children with and without disabilities together does not produce positive outcomes. Inclusive education occurs when there is ongoing advocacy, planning, support and commitment.

National Policies of inclusive education in India :

1. Sargent Report (1944)

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) report, written by John Sargent, The British chief educational advisor, observed that the Indian government had not done much for the education of the disabled. What had been done was due to the voluntary efforts and the country could 'profitably borrow' from the experiences and achievements of those countries which had been active in this field. The 1944 Sargent Report also referred to the 1936 CABE recommendation, which had directed the provincial governments not to neglect the education of the handicapped.

The report can be said to be a landmark in the policy on 'Integration' of disabled children in general schools, though it continued its recommendation for special schools, but 'only when the nature and extent of their defect it necessary. The report is also important

from two points of view. First, it recommended that the provision for the disabled should form an essential part of a national system of education and should be administered by the Education Department'. Second, 10 percent of the budget for basic and high schools had been set aside for the (education) services of the disabled. Special education in India continues to be administered by the welfare ministry (now called the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) and is not a part of the regular system of education.

2. The Indian Education commission (1964 - 66)

The Indian education commission was the first statutory, body to suggest that the education of handicapped children has to be organized not merely on humanitarian grounds, but also grounds of utility. the commission observed that although the Indian constitution had issued specific descriptive about compulsory education for all including children with disabilities, very little had been done in this regard. It was evidently in favor 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 category: The blind, the deaf, the orthopedically handicapped and the mentally retarded. The Education Commission further felt that children would be constrained by two main considerations: lack of teachers and financial resources.

3. 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.

4. Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC,1974)

In 1974, the Ministry of Social justice and Empowerment, Government of India, initiated the IEDC program the integration of students with mild to moderate disabilities into regular schools .The children were to be provided financial support for books, stationary, school uniforms, transport, social equipments and aides. The state governments were provided 50 percent financial assistances to implement this program in regular schools. However, the program met with little success. A criticism of this program in the state of Maharashtra reported that the:

- a) Non availability of trained and experienced teachers.
- b) Lack of orientation among school staff on the problems of disable children and their educational needs.

c) Non-availability of equipment and educational materials, were the major contributory factors for its failure.

A lack of coordination among various departments to implement the scheme was also considered a major contributor for its failure. By 1979-80, only 1,881 children from 81 schools all over the country had benefited from this program. Due to the failure of the IEDC scheme, it was revised in 1992. Until 1990, the scheme was implemented in 14 states. These were Andaman and Nicobar, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Kerala is the only state that has shown remarkable progress in implementing the scheme. In Kerala, the scheme has been implemented in 4,487 schools and 12,961 children have been served under this scheme.

5. National Policy on education, (1986 - 92)

In 1986 Indian Government formulated the national policies on education for all government schools and articulated a need to students with disabilities again in 1986 national policies on education devoted a specific section to the education of the students with disabilities. 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:

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

6. Bahrul Islam Committee (1988)

The committee included education in the Draft Legislation. It mentioned that the state should endeavor 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.

7. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities:

This policy is released recently, by ministry of social justice and empowerment of India, on 10th Feb 2006. The policy covers comprehensive areas related to persons with disabilities. The National policy recognizes that persons with Disabilities are valuable human resource for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides those equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society. The focus of the policy shall be on the following heads:

1. Prevention of disabilities
2. Rehabilitation Measures
3. Physical rehabilitation strategies
 - (a) Early detection and intervention,
 - (b) Counseling & Medical rehabilitation,
 - (c) Assistive devices,
 - (d) Development of Rehabilitation professionals.
4. Education for persons with disabilities,
5. Economic Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities
 - (i) Employment in govt. establishments,
 - (ii) Wage employment in private sector,
 - (iii) self employment,
6. Women with disabilities
7. Children with Disabilities,
8. Barrier free environment,
9. Issue of disability certificates
10. Social security,
11. Promotion of non governmental organization (NGOs),
12. Research,
13. Sports, Recreation and cultural life.
14. Amendments & Existing acts dealing with the PWDs.