

DISABLED CHILDREN IN EDUCATION: INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION

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Abstract

The Present paper illuminates the various educational policies for children with disabilities and special needs. For bringing the children within the social stream a variety of policies, projects, and strategies have been formulated and implemented. The education of disabled children, their preventive and curative measures, and their rehabilitation need a genuine combined effort by family, society, educational institutions, and government. This paper contains A vivid description of the educational policies for making education available for all and the creation of an environment where every child learns according to their ability and inclination in a safe and protected environment at every level from elementary to higher education.

Keyword: Disability, Children with Disabilities, Inclusive Education, National Policy of Education



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Introduction

“People with disabilities are vulnerable because of the many barriers we face: attitudinal, physical, and financial. Addressing these barriers is within our reach and we have a moral duty to do so..... But most important, addressing these barriers will unlock the potential of so many people with so much to contribute to the world. Governments everywhere can no longer overlook the hundreds of millions of people with disabilities who are denied access to health, rehabilitation, support, education, and employment- and never get the chance to shine.”

Stephen Hawking

Education is the fundamental right of every person. Education enables people to understand other basic rights and persuade people to follow them. It is a strong tool that helps every individual to realize his/her innate potentialities and helps them to achieve a good life

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that is worth living. It provides significant developmental benefits by increasing individual independence and empowerment. Education is one of the most indispensable pillars of national growth. Therefore, the Education system and policy has the provision for equity, accessibility, quality, and universal education so that education should reach every nook and corner of the country and harness the rich pool of talents available in the country which in turns beneficial for individual and growth of the nation at large (National Education Policy, 2020). So, creating such an environment where irrespective of caste, creed, gender, economical background, and disability in terms of all its dimension as physical and mental, all students according to their needs will able to access education which is their one of the fundamental rights (National Education Policy, 2020). This research paper throws light on education relating to disabled children.

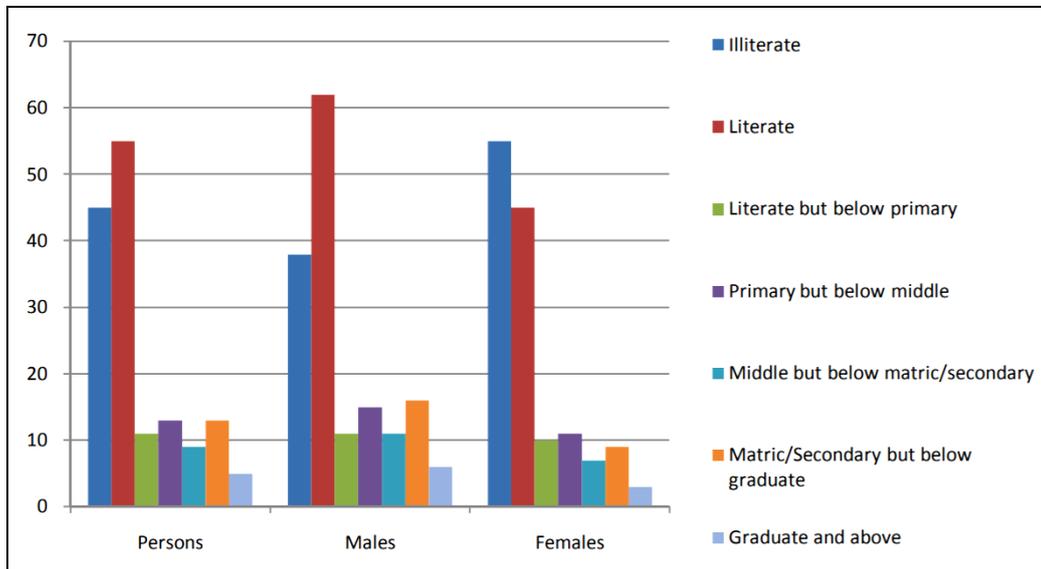
What is Disability?

Disability means deprivation of the physical and emotional strength of an individual at a varying level. The needs, problems, and challenges differ according to the level of deprivation from moderate to extreme. Disability is defined based on the medical model and social model (Altman, 2001). The medical model emphasizes diagnostic and solution, remedies and rehabilitation of deformities, abnormalities, disorder, and deficiency present in the body which causes disability in the person (Barnes et al., 1999). The social model arose in the 1970s and 1980s which advocated that society should take responsibility for disabled people and give its full participation in fighting against disability. Disability is eliminated from one's life and society with the active support of every individual of the society (Barnes et al., 1999).

According to the World Bank Report (2007), disabled children hardly attend school, if they do restrict themselves to the primary level resulted in illiteracy, unemployability, and poverty. According to Census 2011 (Figure 1), among the total disabled persons, 45% are illiterates. 13% of the disabled population has matric/secondary education but are not graduates and 5% are graduates and above. Nearly 8.5% among the disabled literates are graduates (Social Statistical Division, 2017)

According to Social Statistical Division (2017), “among the male disabled persons (Figure 1), 38% are illiterates. 16% of the disabled male population has matric/secondary education but are not graduates and 6% are graduates and above. About 9% among the male disabled literates are graduates.”

According to Social Statistical Division (2017), “among the female disabled persons (Figure 1), 55% are illiterates. 9% of the disabled female population has matric/secondary education but are not graduates and 3% are graduates and above. About 7.7% among the female disabled literates, are graduates.”



**Figure #1: Educational status of disabled persons (%), in India- Census, 2011
(SOURCE: Social Statistical Division, 2017)**

Previous Efforts- Inclusion & Integration in Education

The various and extensive provisions made for the children with disabilities in India for empowering them so to make them self sustained and can contribute to the nation and not be dependent on anybody in terms of physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and economically. India has taken many efforts for the disabled.

Kothari Commission (1964-1966), the first commission which felt the need for integration of special children in normal schools. It recommended that children with special needs should be integrated into ordinary schools. Commission recommended the ministry of education to allocate funds for the education of disabled children (Alur, 2002).

Integrated Education for Disabled Children's (1974) scheme provided educational opportunities for integration of disabled children in normal schools to improve their educational qualification, retention, and lower dropout rates and giving financial supports to those schools to draw out maximum benefits.

The disability rights in India introduced in the 1980s has three basic tasks-

- a. Individual-centered organizations: whose task to provide service, creating awareness through circulating information among the target groups.

- b. NGO's Social Activists work in rural and urban areas for the rehabilitation of disabled children.
- c. Scholars who take studies on disabled and exposed extensive knowledge related to the Disability (Mehrotra, 2013).

Later on, IEDC has transferred to the Department of Education and in 1986 the disabled education was the responsibility of the Equal Education Opportunity Provision under the National Policy on Education (NPE). NPE focussed on those students with disability studied in general school should not be transferred to a special school and students those who studied in special school should be shifted to general school after they are trained in basic skills of life for normal living. There came the concept of Inclusive Education.

After independence, India resolved to enhance the education system successfully but education for the disabled not up to the mark because of the lack of trained teachers to meet the educational needs of children with varied disabilities. The programs that launched to aid in the disabled education like Operation Blackboard in 1987, the Lok Jumbish in 1992, and the District Primary Education Programme by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1993 focussed on infrastructure, the children learnings (Singal, 2006).

The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 was established the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation), and the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999. The Persons with Disability Act, 1995 recommended that every child has the right to free education under a student-friendly environment with the provisions for a special school, non-formal education, and open school (Dasgupta, 2002).

For the capacity building of special teachers, the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) developed a curriculum for inclusive education. They are-

- a. Diploma in Special Education (Autistic Spectrum Disorders), introduced in July 2003, was functional in 11 institutions registered with RCI, producing 20-25 teachers every year per institute
- b. B.Ed. Special Education (Autistic Spectrum Disorders) will become operational from the session beginning in July 2010 at 4 institutions across the country (Bhargava, 2009).

The establishment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was later accepted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006 (Addlakha and Mandal, 2009). A structural model for disability was prepared in an international convention, *Copyright © 2020, Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language*

India opted this model on October 1, 2007. After then people raised their voice to change the law of disability so that disabled people should not only look for welfare but also given medical treatment and social security with the correct approach where disabled people know their rights and on demands call the utilize their rights (Chopra, 2013).

Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) is the motto of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) which works on access, enrolment, and retention of all children in 6-14 years of age. A child with a disability belonging to any sect of the society has the right to education NEP follows a zero rejection policy. With the introduction of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 which advocated that education is the fundamental right for every child in the age group from 6-14 years. Although Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is showing progress towards the inclusion of children with physical disabilities, but the situation for children with intellectual and multiple disabilities remains unchanged (Lakhan, 2013).

Education of disabled children is the prime concern of New Education Draft Policy 2016 recommended that all disabled children suffering from different disorders as visual, locomotor, speech and hearing, and neurodevelopment have the right to be part of general education. These children are referred to as Children with Special Needs (CWSN). Recommended the establishment of the board which takes care and guides the school for the teaching of children with special needs, need-based provision for a special school, and training of teachers for Inclusive Education (Government of India, 2016).

NEP 2020: Provisions for Disabled Children

The National Education Policy, 2020 was approved on July 29, 2020, by the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, based on the Draft National Education Policy, 2019. This policy is the first education policy of the 21st century which aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. The principle behind this is that education must develop not only cognitive capacities both the foundational capacities of literacy and numeracy and higher-order cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem-solving. NPE 2020 also gives several provisions for bringing the disabled individual to the mainstream through education and transform it to achieve equity and quality and accessibility of education to all.

There are many provisions in this policy for children with disabilities under School Education (National Education Policy, 2020), which are-

- **For Controlling Dropout Rates-**

NEP 2020 takes two major initiatives at all levels of education to reduce the dropout rate-

- a. Bring children back to school and ensure universal access including persons with disabilities. The first is to provide an effective and sufficient infrastructure so that all students from pre-primary school to grade 12 have safe and engaged schooling.
- b. The second initiative is to increase enrolment, retention, and easily re-enter school after dropping out. Counselors and trained social workers will help school and teachers will continuously touch with students, parents, and communities to ensure that every child will attend school. (National Education Policy, 2020).

- **Service Environment and Culture for Teachers and Disabled children-**

The major goal for adapting the service environment and culture of schools is to enhance teachers' competence to perform their tasks effectively and to ensure that they are teachers, students, parents, principals, and other support staff of vibrant, caring, and inclusive communities, all of which all set the common goal of children's learning situation in a safe and conducive environment.

- **The Necessity of Special Educators-**

Special educators are required for teaching disabilities/Divyang children at the middle and secondary school level, including teaching for specific learning disabilities. Teachers will be trained in such a way so that they are not only equipped with subject knowledge but also aware of their problems, needs, and ways of dealing with them. Provisions for certificate courses, in the pre-service as well as in-service mode, either full time or as part-time/blended courses and again, necessarily, at multidisciplinary colleges or universities will be available.

- **Approach to Teacher Education-**

- a. Teacher education will be gradually shifted to multi-disciplinary colleges and universities by 2030, and at that stage, they will also target excellent education departments offering B.Ed., M.Ed., and Ph.D. degrees in education.
- b. Training in pedagogy and strong classroom practice using the most modern technique including pedagogy with foundational literacy and numeracy, multi-level teaching and evaluation, teaching children with disabilities, children with special interests or talent, use of educational technology, and learner-centered and collaborative learning.

c. Short term courses of B.Ed. will also be made for teachers in special areas of teaching such as the teaching of students with disabilities, or leadership and management in the schooling system to move from one to another stage between foundational, preparatory, middle, and secondary stages.

• **Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All-**

- a. Learning will be made available for all including all Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) such as gender identities, socio-cultural identities, geographical identities, disabilities, and all socio-economic conditions or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor.
- b. This National Policy, 2020 is in complete consonance with the provisions of the RPWD Act, 2016, and endorses all its recommendations about school education. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 describes inclusive education as a 'system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities.
- c. Resource centers will be established in schools, recruitment of special educators trained in cross-disability training, barrier-free access for all children with disability strengthens according to RPWD Act. Facilitates their learning need-based with assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools, as well as adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials (e.g., textbooks in accessible formats such as large print and Braille) will be made available to help children with disabilities integrate more easily into classrooms and engage with teachers and their peers.
- d. Guidelines and standards for home-based schooling shall be developed based on this audit in line with the RPWD Act 2016. Technology-based solutions for orientation programs and learning material will be provided to the learning will be properly carried out.
- e. Teachers will train enough to identify learning difficulties and assist students accordingly. For effective assessment standards and guidelines will be developed with help of the National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, assessment, and certification agencies.

• **Efficient Resourcing & Effective Governance through School Complexes/Clusters-**

- a. School should have sufficient resources human and non-human including counselors, trained teachers, social workers for teaching art, music science, sports, languages,

vocational subjects, etc; physical resources such as a library, science labs, computer labs, skill labs, playgrounds, sports equipment, and facilities, etc.

- b. To bring the special education in mainstream and to minimize the isolation, joint professional development programmes, sharing of teaching-learning content, joint content development, holding joint activities such as art and science exhibitions, sports meets, quizzes and debates, and fairs will be conducted. The decision-making rights to be given within schools and making them the semi-autonomous unit and forming management committees for effective governance and effective resource utilization and pooling resources within the schools and clusters.

There are many provisions in this policy for children with disabilities under Higher Education, which are-

- This policy envisions a complete overhaul and re-energizing of the higher education system to overcome these challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion. The policy's vision includes the key changes for learners with disabilities (National Education Policy, 2020). The measures will be taken such as public education, scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students; online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL); and all infrastructure and learning materials accessible and available to learners with disabilities for increasing access, equity, and inclusion.
- Establishment of libraries so that books will be made available for students to enhance reading skills. The policy also recommends that strengthening and modernization of all communities and educational institutions for every student including persons with disabilities and other differently-abled persons.
- Educational software will be developed in all major languages of the country and can be used by all Divyang students across the country. Teaching-learning material will be developed in regional languages by states as well as by the NCERT, CIET, CBSE, NIOS, and other bodies/institutions, and will be uploaded onto the DIKSHA/Swayam platform. This E- platforms will be used in teachers' training platform.

Conclusion

Education policies and the education system persistently strives to strengthen disabled children through education. These policies are very large, extensive, and elaborate policies for inclusive education. The policy emphasized barrier-free education, the establishment of a resource center for the education and rehabilitation of disabled children, teachers training for
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cross-disability students, technology-based education, development of e-resources on regional languages, developing modules, etc. Though It's our combined efforts to look after not only to cure their disabilities but supporting them to inculcate social, emotional, moral, and academic skills which enables them to deal with their problems and make them more resilient. More research work also requires in the field of disabled education. However, there are so many challenges on the way of the education sector for the disabled in areas like implementation of policies, proper follow-up work, awareness, teachers training, technology, infrastructure, funds but government persistently work to provide them all the opportunities, strengthening them in all aspects of life and eradicating problems and barriers from their life.

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