

## **A STUDY OF POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES OF DISABLED CHILDREN IN INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

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*The Constitution of India (1950), Article 41, states the 'Right to Education and Work' and Article 45 on 'Free Compulsory Education for All Children up to the Age of 14 Years', both Articles are inclusive of children with mental retardation. The Education Commission, 1964-66 directed to move education for persons with disabilities from that of the charity mode to one of the rights mode, hoping that at least 5 per cent of the persons with mental retardation should have received education by 1986. It lay emphasis on making persons with disabilities as useful citizens in their adult lives. The Commission further recommended that both special schools and schools in the integrated school system should include persons with disabilities.*

*The present paper focused on the study of various policies and program of disabled children in India with the prime objectives are (i) To understand the concept of disabled children (ii) To understand the policies of disabled children in India. (iii) To discuss the programs of disabled children in India.*

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**Key Words:** *Policies, Programs, Disabled children*



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### **Introduction:**

According to the National survey, It is considered that around 150 million children in the world live with a disability; 80% of them live in developing countries. Most often, these children do not receive necessary treatment and most of them are discriminated.

### **Disabled Children:**

“Children’s with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

A special needs child is a youth who has been determined to require special attention and specific necessities that other children do not.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- i) To understand the concept of disabled children.
- ii) To understand the policies of disabled children in India.
- iii) To discuss the programs of disabled children in India.

### **POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES OF DISABLED CHILDREN IN INDIA:**

#### **The National Policy for Children, 1974**

The National Policy for Children, 1974 included children from the weaker sections of society and disabled.

#### **Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC), 1974**

Now, according to the supported through research conducted by the UNESCO, the program for Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1974, aimed at promoting access to education for all children with disabilities. The trained resource teachers support the mainstream school teachers in providing appropriate education to children with disabilities.

#### **The International Year for the Disabled Persons (IYDP), 1981**

India was one of the signatories to the resolution IYDP, 1981 endorsing the objectives set forth in the resolution of the General Assembly. It was visualized to:

- ✓ form a National Policy for the disabled.
- ✓ Provide a network of services with focus on the rural handicapped,
- ✓ To set up National Institutes, and
- ✓ To establish special education cells in the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), State Institutes of Education (SIEs), etc.

The then Ministry of Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Culture appointed an Advisory Committee to make salient recommendations to the Government to initiate action regarding early detection, prevention, medical and physical rehabilitation, education and

training of handicapped including teachers training, employment and the role of NGOs and creation of public awareness.

### **National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986:**

Now as per the the National Policy on Education (NPE) formulated earlier was acted upon in May 1986. Specific recommendations made in the policy document (NPE, 1986, 1992) were in the areas of integrated education for persons with mild disability in the mainstream schools, special schools for persons with severe disabilities with hostel facilities at district headquarters, vocational training, re-orientation of teacher training program to include persons with disabilities and services provided by voluntary organizations. The State governments are now opening facilities for at least one school in each district, either day care or residential to provide educational facilities to children of that particular district. At the district headquarters, service centres also provide for diagnosis, referrals, and interventions. Parents work as carry over agents at home for their children.

### **Project Integrated Education for Disabled (PIED), 1987**

In support of the IEDC program and to provide further impetus, the Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) in 1987 was piloted by the NCERT and supported by the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) in remote villages which were divided into blocks of 80-100 schools for program implementation. Through the project, cooperation of local officials, NGOs, community members, and parents was solicited. A three-phase training program targeted all teachers initially and culminated with introducing Teacher Education program at the community level.

### **Integrated Education**

The term "integration" is based on the "principle of normalisation" that "you act right when making available to all persons with intellectual or other impairments of disabilities, patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to or indeed the same as the regular circumstances and ways of life in their communities". The ideology on which integrated education is based is reflected in a unitary system of education and the approach rests on the fundamental principle of education, "all children are special" (Billimoria, 1999, p. 2.). The Kothari Commission, 1964-66 and UNESCO in the 1970s recommended that those children who are capable of being educated in the mainstream schools should be given equal opportunity through integrated education. UNESCO advised the developing nations to direct their national policies towards equal access to education (1973, 1977). Many voluntary

agencies and private schools have also implemented different models of integration with special educational support in urban settings.

In India, the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 stated, “the objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally challenged with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence”. The Government has established several institutions across the country for improving the education processes. They are:

- ✓ The State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT).
- ✓ Institutions for Developing Activities in Planning and Management.
- ✓ The National University of Educational Planning & Administration (NUEPA).
- ✓ District Institution of Education and Training (DIET).
- ✓ The State Institute of Education Management and Training.
- ✓ The National Policy on Education, 1986, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) 1995, The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act, 1992, have given the needed impetus to the establishment of • an International Centre for Special Needs Education, by the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) in collaboration with UNESCO, • the District Primary Education Program (DPEP)

#### **Following programs for disabled children in India:**

##### **Residential Program:**

Residential centers have been established for the persons who have transport difficulties to reach special schools, those who require constant medical and custodial care, which parents and care givers are not in a position to give.

##### **Special Schools:**

Special schools, the largest in number for persons with mental retardation in the country, provide for individualized attention not available in mainstream schools, though they have led to their social segregation with non-retarded peers. One way of introducing integration in special schools is by encouraging non-disabled children to come into special schools under the National Social Service Corps (NSSC) or Socially Useful and Productive Work (SUPW) schemes. As innovative teachers build in to their curriculum, activities that take the children out into the community, shops, post offices, restaurants, involving bus travel and so on, they create opportunities for integrated septum.

### **Mental Health Act, 1987:**

As the Mental Health Act was not applicable for persons with mental retardation, a legal vacuum prevailed in the areas of protection of the persons with mental retardation, till the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 came into being. The THPI, Hyderabad organized an All India Seminar to frame a National Policy for the Mentally Handicapped in February, 1987. A major outcome of the event was the appointment of the Behrul Islam Committee, which was a prelude to the subsequent Acts of Parliament in the area.

### **National Program for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (NPRPD):**

The NPRPD provides the required infrastructure to provide rehabilitation facilities at state, district, block and gram panchayat (village) level. Centre-based as well as community-based programs and schemes for implementation of the programs at the state level, with financial assistance from the Centre. It is envisaged that the unreached villagers with disabilities will have services, and the community will be empowered.

### **Schemes of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare:**

#### ***Prevention, Early Detection and Intervention***

Efforts of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India are directed at prevention of disabilities through increasing public awareness, immunization, pulse polio immunization and sensitization of grass root level workers and PHC doctors.

Appropriate treatment and management of epilepsy and related medical problems in children with intellectual impairment is taken up. Training is imparted to professionals and parents on simple early intervention techniques to reduce and/or arrest the severity of the condition in their wards.

### **Conclusion**

A disability is any medical condition that makes it more difficult for a person to do certain activities or effectively interact with the world around them. Quality of life of persons with mental retardation has been significantly enhanced. Families of the affected are being empowered. Self-advocacy measures are being taken and independent living skills are imparted to the persons with mental retardation. Reaching the persons in remote, rural, tribal and hilly areas is a priority for the Government of India. Educational and training programs suitable to the social cultural milieu of each region are being developed, so that persons with mental retardation develop competencies to live independently in their own environments. Translating the policies and training materials in Indian languages in print and non-print

media to reach out to every person with disabilities in his community is of prime importance. This task has been undertaken effectively. Continuous research and development in all dimensions of mental retardation is of utmost importance for future development.

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