

Inclusive Education in Normal Classroom in Relation to NEP-2020

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the education of children with disabilities in normal classroom in relation to NEP-2020. Based on a number of Indian government documents and educational policies, it made schooling more adaptable for children with impairments, as was covered here. It examines how the government views specific schools, inclusive education in the regular classroom, and integration of education. The study also aims to clarify "inclusive education," as it is referenced in NEP-2020 and other official documents. In order to establish a contextual understanding of inclusive education in a typical classroom setting in India, this article ends with the opportunities and difficulties that needs to be addressed.

Keywords: Disability, Inclusive Education, Education for All, Government commissions & committees and NEP-2020.

Introduction

We can understand Inclusive Education through **Rabinder Nath Tagore's words**, *"The problem is not how to wipe out the differences but how to unite with the differences intact."*

"Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes. We also know that simply placing children with and without disabilities together does not produce positive outcomes. Inclusive education occurs with ongoing advocacy, planning, support and commitment."

-L Sodak & E Erwin

Inclusive education means all students are welcome to attend similar ages, face-to-face classrooms, and supported to study, contribute, and engage in all school activities. It affects the design of our schools, classrooms, programs, and extracurricular and curricular activities where kids learn together.

Institutions make sure the teaching-learning environment, curriculum, school infrastructures, flexible classrooms, ramps, playground and play areas, transport systems, disability-friendly toilets, and school physical and mental environment are suitable for all students. It also suggests that students learn without bias in the same school. No student should be unschooled. Their education is a vital right. The Indian Constitution's Preamble guarantees equality of position and opportunity. Article 41 of the Indian Constitution's Directive Principles mandates the provision of job, education, and public assistance for individuals with disabilities. Article 45 stipulates free and obligatory education for children below the age of 14. The 86th Amendment Act of 2002 established education as a constitutional right for all individuals aged 6 to 14 years in India. On August 26, 2009, Parliament enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act. Inclusive education provides high-quality education for all

children in a courteous, inviting, and supportive environment. Students participated in a cooperative learning initiative that provided mental and physical support to surmount discriminatory obstacles.

Inclusion in Education:

Inclusive education places all children normal and disabled in the same class and school to educate them.

The benefits of inclusive education include:

- Social contributions
- Economic cost-effectiveness
- Effectiveness of collaborative and cooperative learning.

Inclusive education enhances learning, fosters understanding, lowers prejudice, develops social integration, and integrates all students with impairments.

Inclusion in Education:

Its dimensions are in cyclic form given below: -

1. **Systems:** Refers to commitment and resources across the educational network in schools.
2. **Supports:** Ensures an inclusive learning environment for teachers and students both inside and outside the institution.
3. **Cultural Change:** Inclusive Education promotes tolerance for all cultures, socio-economic status, and racial backgrounds.
4. **Partnerships:** Inclusive Education requires collaboration between parents, teachers, and organisations. and,
5. **Monitoring:** Regularly tracking progress for better implementation.

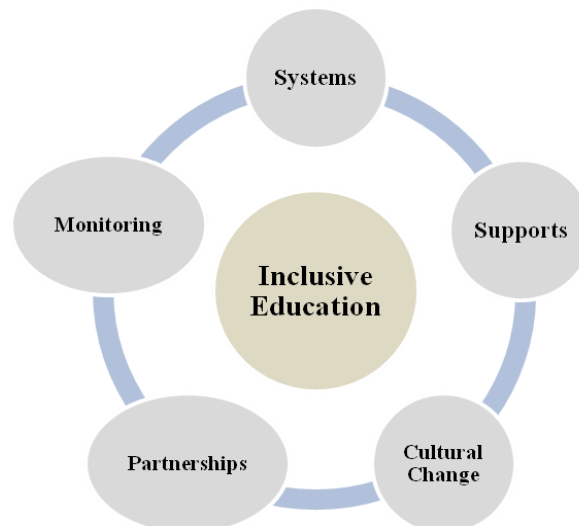


Figure 1: Dimensions of Inclusive Education Implementation

Historical background of Inclusive Education:

Indian Educational Commissions and Committees on Inclusive Education:

- **The Kothari Commission (1966-1968)** proposed a universal education system that would not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic background, or other markers of human identity.

- **The 1968 NPE Draft** proposed a more inclusive educational system for individuals with impairments, allowing them to attend mainstream institutions.
- The Government of India initiated the Scheme **Integrated Education for Children with Disabilities (1974)** to support their transition from special schools to general schools once they have mastered communication and daily skills.
- **NPE-1986** Section 4.9 included individuals with physical and mental disabilities as community opportunity participants. The goal is to help children develop normally and be fearless and confident. It also advocated for equal educational opportunity for all students, addressing the concerns of those denied equality.
- The **PIED-1987** Project aims to meet the NPE-1986 requirements for handicapped youngsters. Children with motor and other moderate disabilities will attend school with their peers thanks to a Ministry of Human Resource Development of India-UNICEF collaboration. This initiative successfully integrated the Integrated Education of the Disabled (IED) component into the district-level Primary Education Programme.
- The **1992 Program of Action** was developed for children with special needs. A disabled child should attend regular school since it benefits them. To address the lack of a national system for standardized education of special educators and rehabilitation specialists, Parliament passed the RCI Act 1992 to establish a legal framework for training professionals and assisting individuals with disabilities.
- The **PwD Act (1995)** provides equal opportunities, protection of rights, and full participation for those with disabilities. This Act is India's main special education statute. This comprehensive Act covers visual, hearing, locomotor, intellectual, untouchable skin, and mental disabilities. All parties have been given recommendations to adjust to normal students.
- In 1999, the Indian Parliament passed the "**National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability**" Act. This Act protects and advances the rights of even more marginalized disabled people. One of its key goals is to support inclusive and self-sufficient initiatives, not special education. This is done by creating accessible environments, teaching disabled people practical skills, and encouraging self-help groups.
- In **2006, National Policy for disabilities**. This Act guarantees equality, freedom, justice, and dignity for everyone. It demands an inclusive society for all, including disabled people. It recognizes that disabled people are vital national resources. They need equal opportunity, rights protection, and full social involvement.
- **The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE)2009**. The government oversees enrolling, attendance, and completion, and all children have flexibility under this Act.
- Provisions in Rights of Persons with Disabilities (**RPWD**) **Act, 2016**: Children with disabilities need education to protect their rights and integrate into society. It fully supports all its school education recommendations since it integrates students with and without disabilities and adapts the teaching and learning system to different sorts of disabled pupils.

RPWD Act 2016 Target Groups: Children with visual impairments, low vision, leprosy, hearing impairments, mobility disabilities, dwarfism, intellectual disabilities, mental health disorders, autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, chronic neurological conditions, specific learning disabilities, and multiple disabilities.

Major suggestions of RPWD Act:

- Providing equal access to high-quality education, similar to sports and extracurricular activities, for all students.
- Ensuring disability accessibility in public locations like campuses and buildings.
- Providing tailored care and advice using effective language, forms, and methods.
- Efficient curricular interventions, teaching technique improvements, and assessment process adjustments.

This includes having an experienced scribe or amanuensis, exempting intermediate and advanced language study, and tracking the quantity and progress of those using transport services. It can be achieved with certain goals, which is mentioned below:

1. **Training and hiring teachers:** Teachers must be disability-savvy and qualified to help disabled students. Disabled teachers know sign language and braille. Training specialists and staff to facilitate inclusive education and creating enough resource hubs. Advocating for augmentative and alternative communication forms and providing books, educational resources, and assistive equipment, providing scholarships and funding research to improve education.
2. **Involving social workers and counsellors:** Many non-governmental organizations and social workers' priorities increasing school involvement and academic performance for SEDGs and disabled children. Inclusion and equity shall be integral to teacher education and training for all leadership, administrative, and other school positions.

The following RPWD Act 2016 recommendations:

- The B.Ed. programmes will teach students cutting-edge classroom strategies, including basic literacy and numeracy, teaching and assessing students at multiple levels, accommodating students with special needs, fostering students' interests and talents, integrating technology, and fostering group and individual growth.
- Interdisciplinary schools will offer concise certification courses for instructors seeking to enhance their skills in special education, school administration, or directing students through different levels of education.
- Comprehensive instruction on educating children with disabilities, including learning disabilities, will be included in all in-service teacher education programs. These programs will also teach under-represented groups in gender sensitisation to address their under-representation.
- It helps alternative school instructors improve their skills in science, math, language, and social studies by introducing novel teaching approaches.
- There will be a major emphasis on preserving traditions or adopting alternative instructional methodologies in alternative schools. These schools will receive help incorporating the national curriculum framework for school education (NCFSE-2023) mandated topics and learning areas into their curricula to reduce and eliminate their students' under-representation in higher education. These schools may receive funding to teach science, math, social studies, Hindi, English, state languages, and other subjects.
- Libraries and labs: Enhance and increase accessibility of reading resources like books, journals, and instructional materials.

- In the education system, teachers, principals, administrators, counsellors, and students should prioritize the needs of all pupils with inclusion, equity, respect, dignity, and privacy.
- Parents/caregivers can support their children's active learning needs with technology-based orientation and widespread learning tools.
- Efficient resourcing and governance through school complexes, including resource pooling, will enhance assistance for students with disabilities and Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).

It aims to integrate children with disabilities, recruit special educators with cross-disability training, and build resource centers for children with severe or multiple disabilities in schools and school complexes. This is crucial for foster kids. It also guarantees that all students with disabilities receive individualized accommodations and assistance so they may fully engage in the classroom.

NEP-2020 Inclusive Education Outline:

It means that all education decisions should be fair and inclusive to ensure that all students succeed. It has many parts, listed below:

- **❖ Foundational Stage:** Priorities inclusion and equal participation of underprivileged and disabled children in early childhood care and education (ECCE) and formal education. The policy intends to phase in high-quality ECCE countrywide. District officer will priorities severely economically disadvantaged. Ashramshalas in indigenous regions and other alternative educational settings will integrate ECCE over time. It is suggesting to provide equitable and quality education from the Foundational Stage to Grade 12, with a focus on serving economically and socially disadvantaged communities by expanding educational opportunities through traditional and nontraditional means. Expanding the National Institute of Open Schooling and State Open Schools' Open and Distance Learning Programmes would enable Indian youth who cannot attend traditional schools acquire an education.
- **❖ Dynamic Curriculum and Pedagogy:** Create a comprehensive, interactive, enjoyable, and engaging learning policy. We'll work to bridge the child's native language with the medium of education early on. Teachers and students should communicate in the home language or mother tongue wherever possible, even if textbooks are not accessible. The curriculum would be tailored to each student's strengths. Nationally standardized Indian Sign Language and new tools for hearing-impaired children will be integrated in state and national curriculum. Local sign languages will be used and taught whenever possible. Extra special education teachers are in high demand in some classrooms. Specialized training may be needed for middle school and high school subject teaching for children with disabilities/Divvying kids with certain learning difficulties. Such teachers must understand their subject and its educational goals. They would need specialist training to fulfil student needs. Secondary specializations for subject or generalist teachers could be formed during or after teacher education. Multidisciplinary universities and colleges will provide full-time, part-time, and hybrid certificate programs for pre-service and in-service students. NCTE and RCI course curriculum will be aligned to produce enough certified special educators and subject teachers.
- **Gender-Inclusion Fund:** Provides sanitation, restroom facilities, bicycles and money transfers to support girls and transgender children's schooling. This will empower governments to fund and develop successful community-based programs that address local impediments.

- ❖ **Inclusion Fund:** Its initiatives address accessibility issues for diverse socioeconomic groups. The main purpose is to provide quality education, including vocational training, to all children regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic condition. Free standard boarding is available for kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, with steps to protect all children, especially girls, in schools with remote locations. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika or KGB Vidyalayas are expanding to increase enrolment of girls in high-quality educational institutions up to grade 12. Nationally, more JNVs and KVs will serve "aspirational districts," economically challenged neighborhoods, and rural areas.
- Special hostels, bridge courses, and financial aid, such as fee exemptions and scholarships, would be provided to talented and deserving students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. This will help ease their transition into higher education, particularly at the secondary level. On a national level, initiatives such as educational condition cash transfers, bicycle transportation, and targeted scholarships would enhance the educational involvement of economically disadvantaged people.
- ❖ Students from low-income backgrounds will have easier access to scholarship possibilities, programs, and services through the creation of a "single window system" consisting of a single agency and website.

In order to inspire young people in tribal-dominated secondary and higher secondary schools to join the military, the Ministry of Defence would fund NCC wings there.

NEP 2020 targets match the RPWD Act-2016:

Here are some NEP suggestions.

All impaired children are guaranteed access, proper technological resources and assistance. Textbooks in large print and Braille are adequate and compatible with the target language.

1. **Choice and equity:** Children with severe and profound disabilities who cannot attend regular schools can attend homeschooling. Effectiveness and efficiency of home based education will be assessed and standards set.
2. **Resource centers:** This will help severely disabled pupils heal and learn. They will assist parents in homeschooling and skilling the above students when needed. Special education teachers would assist normal educators.

Conclusion

NEP 2020 encourages inclusive education and a positive school environment by improving facilities and teaching materials that focus on respect, kindness, understanding, human rights, gender equality, peace, global citizenship, unity, inclusion, and fairness. It advises stakeholders to remove biases through sensitization. To promote inclusiveness, equity, and respect for diversity, this policy educates students, teachers, and staff about diverse cultures, beliefs, languages, gender identities, etc. By providing resources, stronger governance and monitoring, school cooperation, and assistance for students with disabilities and SEDGs, the policy will empower stakeholders. Our school complexes will empower and improve education for all students for inclusion and equity. Leaders, teachers, students, support workers, parents, and communities must work together to support education.

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