



# Inclusive Education In India: Opportunities And Challenges For Children With Special Needs.

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**Abstract-** The Present Proposal Research Proposal aim to investigate this article is about ways to make sure everyone can go to special education Children's with special needs and feel welcome there, especially children's with special needs disabilities it talk about how things are now and what we can do to make it better we need to make plans and take action to make sure everyone can succeed in special education. It is one of the only strategies to promote an inclusive and tolerant society. Approximately 73 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2010, down from a high of over one hundred ten million out-of-school children in the mid-Nineties, consistent with new estimates by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). About 80 percent of the Indian population lives in rural regions without provision for special schools. It means, there are an estimated 8 million children out of school in India (MHRD 2009 statistics), a large number of who are marginalized by means of dimensions, like poverty, gender, incapacity, and caste. The Presence of Participation and achievement of all CWSN students. In this paper an attempt has been made to discuss the issues relating to the challenges and opportunities of inclusive education in India. The paper analyses the issues and constraints faced by the stakeholders involved. This is followed by discussion of the implications for the future of inclusive educational for the children with special needs CWSN in India. The inclusive education includes transforming the environment of the conventional educational system with focus on action learning, practical curriculum, appropriate evaluation, teaching techniques, teaching strategies, multilevel teaching approaches, and improved attention to varied children with special needs. This paper concerns with challenges and opportunities in efforts towards country's inclusive education. The 1994 Salamanca statement on inclusive education states— “School should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

**Keywords-** Inclusive Education, traditional approach, inclusive approach, challenges and opportunities children with special needs.

Inclusive education is a set of values, principles and practices that seek more effective and meaningful education for all students, regardless of whether they have exceptionality labels or not.”

---- Michael F. Gianfranco

## Introduction-

Inclusive education means, a system of education, wherein students with and without disability learn together, and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities. Inclusion is about increasing participation of all children and adults while removing exclusion, discrimination, barriers to learning and participation. Inclusion views differences between children, and between adults as resource for learning. It is about supporting schools to become more responsive to the diversity of children's backgrounds, interests, experiences, knowledge and skills. Most of the children encounter a number of barriers when they join the school. Learning and participation are hampered when children encounter barriers. They find themselves at disadvantaged position because of such barriers. They do not know how to cope up in this situation. Many a times, the drop out of children from the school is due to these barriers. Barriers may be found outside of the school also for example within families and communities. There is a need to create an inclusive environment by identifying the educational needs and bringing systemic reforms in and beyond the classrooms for all children who are oppressed, marginalised, discriminated and excluded from educational opportunities and school accessibility. In education, inclusion involves developing mutually sustaining relationships between schools and their surrounding communities. It leads to an understanding of how progress can be achieved when people join their action together.

**RTE Act, 2009**, has been enacted to improve elementary education in the country. Some of the key highlights of the Act are— it is the Right of the Child to get free education after admission at the age of six and up to age fourteen. Child will complete elementary education up to Class VIII; no child shall be denied admission in absence of documents like birth certificate; children with disabilities (CWDs) will be educated along with other children in the same neighbourhood school, children above six years of age who have not completed elementary education, shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age. All schools will have to follow the prescribed norms and standards laid out in the Act. No school will be allowed to function after failing to fulfil these standards. No school or person shall, while admitting a child, collect any capitation fee and subject the child or their parents or guardian to any screening procedure. There is a provision for heavy penalty for demanding capitation fee and screening. Children in every habitation will have access to primary school within a walking distance of 1 kilometre and to upper primary school within 3 km. For children in hilly, forest areas and difficult terrain, if schools are not possible within these distances there will be provision of hostels and transport, to ensure access to schooling for them no child should be subjected to physical punishment and mental harassment, no teacher shall engage them self in private tuitions and private teaching activity, children with severe disabilities may also have right to opt for home-based education, local governments and communities (e.g. SMC) have been vested with adequate powers to plan, monitor and manage their schools; and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has been mandated to monitor the implementation of the right of children under this Act. A special division within NCPCR (RTE Cell), will undertake this huge and important task. A child can get admission in the school anytime throughout the year. For example, a 10 years old child will get admission directly to Class V, even if the child is not aware of reading writing and other competencies as their classmates have; school will arrange special training for such children.

“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 when there is ongoing advocacy, planning, support and commitment.”

--- L Sodak & E Erwin

The government of India is constitutionally committed to ensuring the right of every child to basic education. The Government of India has created numerous policies around special education since the country's independence in 1947. One of the earliest formal initiatives undertaken by the GOI was the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme of 1974 (Seventh all India School Education Survey - NCERT, 2017). The Kothari Commission (1966) which highlighted the importance of educating children with

disabilities during the post-independence period (Sharma B., 2011). In 1980s the then ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India, realized the crucial need of an institution to monitor and regulate the HRD programmes in the field of disability rehabilitation. Till 1990s, ninety percent of India's estimated 40 million children in the age group- four-sixteen years with physical and mental disabilities are being excluded from mainstream education. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE, 1986), and the Programme of Action (1992) stresses the need for integrating children with special needs with other groups. The Government of India implemented the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) in 1994–95. In late 90s (i.e. in 1997) the philosophy of inclusive education is added in District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). When in inclusive settings and Inclusion provides opportunities to develop relationships. Some of the benefits include: friendships, social skills, personal principles, comfort level with people who have special needs, and caring classroom environments. Inclusion in education involves the process of increasing the participation of students in and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of local school. Inclusion involves restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools, so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality.

## Objectives-

- 1) To understand the basic principles of inclusive education
- 2) To acquire knowledge about primary Barriers to Inclusive Education
- 3) To understand the Diversity in classroom in the context of learning Styles, linguistic and socio-cultural multiplicity.
- 4) To understand the concept of Inclusive Education in context of India
- 5) To various challenges and opportunities faced by India towards impact in Inclusive Education.
- 6) To study the need for inclusive education in India.
- 7) To study the problems being faced in implementing inclusive education in India by various stakeholders.

## Needs and Importance of Inclusive Education

There have been efforts internationally to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream. In order to achieve truly inclusive education, we need to think about and incorporate children with special needs into regular schools. Especially, because these children face some sort of barriers to learning and participate in the classroom. Many efforts have been done the world over to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream. To achieve truly inclusive education we'll have to plan about incorporating students with special needs into regular schools only because these children face some sort of difficulties in gaining knowledge and participation in the classroom.

**Inclusion provides opportunities-** The expansion of research has demonstrated that children do better academically in inclusive environments, and that inclusion provides opportunities for relationship formation. Friendships, social skills, personal principles, a high level of comfort with people with special needs, and caring academic environments are among the benefits. According to UNESCO (1994), regular schools with an inclusive orientation are most effective in combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Furthermore the foreword of UNICEF (2003), focussed on inclusive education in India, estimates that “70% of children with disabilities, including those with mild mental retardation, can attend regular schools provided the environment is designed to be accessible and the institution is willing to accommodate them”. 1) RTE mandates free and compulsory education to all children from 6-14 years of age. The key objective of RTE- SSA is Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). This goal of UEE, has further been facilitated by the Constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, making free and compulsory elementary education as a Fundamental Right, for all the children in the age group of 6-14 years. Hence inclusive education has become an important component of SSA. 2) More than 90% of disabled children are found in the rural areas in India. The special school as well as integrated education programmes

are only a few in numbers and cannot serve all disabled children. Therefore, inclusive education is needed to provide equal educational opportunities to all disabled children.

### **AIMS of Inclusive Education:**

- a) Children develop a positive understanding of themselves and others.
- b) Friendship develops.
- c) Children learn important academic skills.
- d) All children learn by being together.
- e) All children learn in different ways.
- f) It is every student's right to be included.
- g) Greater sensitivity.
- h) Better understanding of strengthens and weaknesses.

**Inclusive Education in India**-The Indian government has introduced a number of programmes and initiatives to offer variety of services for the purpose of educating children with disabilities. Indian Education Commission stressed the value of educating children with impairments in 1966. The Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme was one of the first official initiatives the GOI launched in 1974, aimed to give disabled children equal opportunities in general education settings and support their retention. Both the NPE (1986) and the POA (1992) highlighted the importance of integrating children with special needs in other groups. A professional development programme was created to address the requirements of students with impairments under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act of 1992. The District Primary Education Programme, introduced in 1994, likewise adopted the inclusive education ethos. In this programme, extra emphasis was paid to the inclusion of kids with mild to mid-range difficulties. The Persons with Disability, (2006) Act, which has been acknowledged as a significant turning point in the delivery of educational and many other services to persons who have disabilities, has clarified a set of guidelines that the government, private and civil society must follow to ensure a dignified existence and encouragement for their career paths. The most recent development guarantees that all children between the ages of 6-14 have the right to free and compulsory education. It was passed in 2009 and is known as The Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education. One such initiative, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was introduced in 2001 with the objective of providing primary education to everyone. Three essential elements of Universal Elementary Education are the access, enrolment, and retention of all the children between 6 to 14 years of age. In accordance with the SSA's zero-rejection policy, regardless of the kind, degree, or severity of their impairments, all Children with Special Needs (CWSN), are guaranteed gateway to a meaningful learning. The idea of inclusive education has grown in recent years to encompass all children who could be at a disadvantage, not just those with impairments. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005), which underlines the worth of every child and provides all students with the opportunity to experience dignity.

## PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- 1) Diversity in the classroom enriches and strengthens education-every student is unique and every group of students in different diversity in school is a given learner have different experiences, culture beliefs and values.
- 2) A Strength based and personalized curriculum-student engage, motivation, academic outcome for all students.
- 3) Student engagement, agency voice.
- 4) Engaging with all your critical stakeholders.
- 5) Inclusive teachers need commitment, knowledge and practice skill.

**Traditional Approach vs. Inclusive Approach:** A comparison between the traditional and inclusive approaches in education is given below: Traditional Approach Inclusive Approach, Education for some, Education for all, Static, Flexible, Collective teaching, Individualistic teaching, learning in segregated areas, learning in integrated areas, Emphasis on subject-oriented teaching, Emphasis on child-centred learning, Diagnostic/ Prescriptive, holistic, Opportunities limited by exclusion, Equalisation of opportunities for all, Disability View, Curricular view, Labels children disability wise, Planning is made on ability levels and opposes all kinds of labelling of children.

### Challenges

- **Teacher Attitude:** Negative attitude and lack of support from teachers act as hurdle towards inclusive education. Inflexible styles of teaching and classroom management prevents from meeting diverse needs of learners.
- **Lack of Resources:** Some most important lack of resources Architectural barriers lacked the basic units. These facilities include wheelchair accessibility, proper lighting, simple ramps and materials necessary to provide adequate education for learners with special needs.
- **Untrained Teachers:** The key human resource for achieving inclusive education is the educator. The lives of the pupils who are unique and have learning difficulties are significantly impacted by their competence and viewpoint. Regrettably, the most significant barriers to inclusive education can often be found in the teacher's abilities and attitudes.
- **Attitudinal Barrier:** Physical and emotional bullying is a serious learning barrier that isolates and eliminates inclusion chances for kids with disabilities.
- **Inadequate Curricula:** One of the main obstacles to the expansion of inclusive education is curriculum. It occurs because a wide range of diverse learners' needs are not satisfied.
- **Poor Organisation of the Education System:** The majority of decisions are taken at the top levels, and management continues to place more emphasis on ensuring that employees follow the rules than on ensuring that high-quality services are provided.

### Opportunities

- Every school and the entire Indian educational system must adopt an inclusion policy (NCF, 2005). Schools must transform into places where students are taught to be lifelong learners, and they must make sure that all students, particularly those with disabilities from underrepresented groups and those living in challenging circumstances, benefit as much as possible from this crucial area of education.
- Encourage acceptance of individual diversity and foster a culture of belonging and respect.

**Conclusion-**The success of inclusive education in any context depends upon many factors. Teachers themselves are an essential component to ensure the quality of students' inclusion in the school and teacher education institutions. Preparing teachers with essential knowledge and skills for inclusive education requires the commitment of all factors Inclusive education in special education ensuring students' access, participation and success several programmes have been launched by numerous institutions to help students with disabilities in their academic endeavours. Universities are supposedly becoming more devoted to inclusive educational practises as they are becoming more accessible to students with special needs and impairments.

The Right to Education 2009 declares education for all children regardless of their caste, creed, religion, ability, and so on, it is vital to build an inclusive society via an inclusive approach. In doing so, we have challenged commonly held ideals and belief systems and developed a new set of core assumptions. Inclusion is more than a way of educating students with disabilities. It stresses the fact that every child, irrespective of the intensity and severity of his or her disabilities, is a valued member of society and is capable of collaborating in that society. Therefore, a good inclusive education is one that lets all the students take part in all aspects of the lecture room equally as normal children.

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