

Integrated Education In India: Past And Present

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Abstract: Persons With Disabilities are the parts of society. Prosperity of a nation would not be reached enough success excluding them. The separate system of education for special child or the special students has not enough chances to nurture the scope of his/her all-round development. Moreover, the child of special institutions may consider themselves isolated or separate from others. Often, they suffer from inferiority. India has shown much improvement to include the Child With Special Needs (CWSN) into the mainstream education system. Even the latest Acts and Legislations also emphasized to establish their rights. The present article contains the brief history of the education of Persons With Disabilities and their inclusion in the mainstream education and at the same time, what roles are being performed at the present time for this purpose.

Keyword: Persons With Disabilities, Inclusive Education, Integrated Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

There are two aspects of inclusion of children with disabilities into the mainstream education system. First, if a nation wants to play her proper role of prosperity parallel to other countries of the world, she needs to utilize her strength from every corner of the country. The persons with disabilities may have much talents. To include their talents with the national prosperity, may be a successful policy. Secondly, it is a question of humanity. If we think education should be a fundamental right for all, we should provide equal chances to all including the persons with physically and mentally disabilities. Though, those who need special care about it may be taken to the special settings. As a developing nation India had also realized the importance to include children with disabilities into the mainstream.

II. INTEGRATED EDUCATION

The principle of integrated education was adopted at the, "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality" by UNESCO in 1994 (Salamanca, Spain 1994). It is a new approach of education of the children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Inclusive education means, "that

students with disabilities are served primarily in the general education settings, under the responsibility of regular classroom teacher. When necessary and justifiable, students with disabilities may also receive some of their instruction in another setting, such as 'resource room' (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004). Generally, in integrated education system, whenever possible, students with disabilities attend a regular school. The idea of inclusion was supported by both the developing countries and the developed countries.

III. HISTORY OF EDUCATION OF DISABLED CHILDREN AND THEIR INCLUSION

The idea of Integrated or Inclusive Education in India is much older. Though the education for disabled children was known as 'Special Education' in India. It was a separate system of education outside the mainstream of education.

Generally, the children with disabilities had no chance to have the same care in a general classroom. There were special schools for different Special Children. A statistic says, the first school for deaf was set up in Bombay in 1883 and the first school for the blind at Amritsar in 1887. In 1947, the number of such schools increased noticeably. The schools for deaf increased to 30 and for the blind 32 and schools for mentally

retarded 3. The number of such institutions was increasing rapidly. The number of special schools rose to near about 3000 in the year 2000. (Sanjeev, K. & Kumar, K. 2007).

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In the year 1960 the Govt. of India designed a scheme to prepare teacher for teaching children with visual disability. However the success of this mission was too poor. Because there was no uniform syllabi of various courses. The number of available teacher-educators was too poor.

The Indian Education Commission, widely known as the Kothari Commission (1964-66), was the first statutory body which highlighted the issue of children with disabilities in the Plan of Action in 1964 (Puri & Abrahm, 2004). It made strong recommendation for including children with disabilities into regular schools.

Elaborating on the allocation of funds for handicapped children, the commission proposed that, "The Ministry of Education should allocate the necessary funds and NCERT should establish a cell for the study of handicapped children. The principal function of the cell would be to keep in touch with the research that is being done in the country and abroad and to prepare material for teachers." (Kothari Commission, 1966)

With release of the Salamanca Statement in 1994, a large number of developing countries started reformulating their policies to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream schools. In India, the Planning Commission in 1971 designed a programme for integrated education. The Govt. of India launched the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme in December 1974. (Sanjeev, K. & Kumar, K. 2007).

The aim was to provide different kinds of opportunities to 'Children With Special Needs' (CWSN) in regular schools and to facilitate their achievement and retention. The scheme included-

- ✓ Hundred percent financial assistance is to be provided for setting up resource Centers;
- ✓ Surveys assessment of children with disabilities,
- ✓ Purchase and production of instruction materials,
- ✓ Training and orientation of teachers,
- ✓ Pre-school training and counselling for the parents,
- ✓ Special training for all kind of disabilities,
- ✓ Provide facilities in the form of books, stationary, uniforms, and allowances for transport, reader, escort etc.

The plan was successful in creating awareness on the importance of integrating the CWSN in the mainstream of education. As a result of it we found in the National Policy of Education, 1986, the subject of integrating those children into the mainstream of education got emphasized. Yet, it is true that the programme of IEDC did not get enough success, as expected. Rane (1983), in his evaluation of this programme in the state of Maharashtra, said that the following factors were responsible for failure of the programme of IEDC-

- ✓ the non-availability of trained and experienced teachers,
- ✓ lack of orientation among regular school staff about the problems of disabled children and their educational needs,
- ✓ the non-availability of equipment and educational materials.

Also, a lack of co-ordination among the various departments to implement the scheme was another major factor in the failure of the IEDC plan. (Pandey & Advani 1997; Mani 1988)

The Govt. of India in its Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985) considered inclusive education for children with disabilities as a priority. Subsequent increased funding for inclusive education and supplementary policies, legislation, and programs indicate the Governments dedication in this sphere. In particular, the provision of inclusive education as an integral part of education system by the Government of India is reflected in the National Policy of Education (NPE 1986, MHRD) and Project for Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED 1987, MHRD)

The National Policy of Education, 1986 emphasized on the need for integrating CWSN with other groups of children. The objectives as stated in the NPE, 1986 were "to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence" (Sanjeev, K. & Kumar, K. 2007).

In 1987, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in association with UNICEF and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) developed the Project for Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED). The aim of the project was to strengthen the IEDC plan (Sing, 2014). PIED adopted a 'Composite Area Approach', instead of confining the programme to a particular institution or school. It converted all regular schools within a specified area, into integrated schools. One major aspect of the programme was teacher training. A three-level training approach (Sharma, 2005) was to be followed-

- ✓ a five-day orientation course for all the teachers in the regular schools,
- ✓ a six-week intensive training course for 10 per-cent of the teachers,
- ✓ a one-year multi-category training programme for eight to ten regular school teachers.

This project produced several positive results. Jangira and Ahuja (1993) reported that as a result of improved programme planning and better management skills now made available to the teachers, the capacity of various states to implement integration programme was enhanced. It is found that about 13,000 disabled children received educational service in regular schools and more than 9000 teachers received training to work with disabled students in integrated settings. (Azad, 1996).

IEDC programme was revised in 1992. Now 100 percent assistance became available to schools involved in the integration of students with disabilities. With this, various non-government organizations now fully funded to implement the programme. According to the information of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (2000), the IEDC programme is being implemented in 26 states and union territories, serving more than 53,000 students enrolled in 14,905 schools. Kerala has shown noticeable success. The programme is implemented in 4,487 schools in Kerala with 12,961 children being served.

The Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protections of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 emphasized the need to provide free of cost education to all

children in an appropriate environment till they are 18 years old and further emphasized their right to measures like:

- ✓ Transport facilities to the students with disabilities or alternative financial incentives to parents or guardians to enable their students with disabilities to attend schools;
- ✓ The removal of architectural barriers from schools, colleges or other institution, imparting vocational and professional training;
- ✓ The supply of books, uniforms and other materials to children with disabilities attending school;
- ✓ The grant of scholarship to students with disabilities;
- ✓ Setting up of appropriate for a for the redressal of grievances of parent, regarding the placement of their children with disabilities;
- ✓ Suitable modification in the examination system to eliminate purely mathematical questions for the benefit of blind students and students with low vision;
- ✓ Restructuring of curriculum for the benefit of children with disabilities;
- ✓ Restructuring the curriculum for the benefit of students with hearing impairment to facilitate them to take only one language as part of their curriculum.

[Chapter-V]

The chapter-v of the said act (PWD-1995) also mentioned, the appropriate Government and local authorities shall-

- ✓ Ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years;
- ✓ Endeavor to promote the integration of students with disabilities in the normal schools;
- ✓ Promote setting up of special schools in govt. and private sector for those in need of special education, in such a manner that children with disabilities living in any part of the country have access to such schools;
- ✓ Endeavor to equip the special schools for children with disabilities with vocational training facilities.

The PWD act-1995 was a landmark legislation towards the right to education of the person with disabilities.

It was the example of social justice. *Baquer & Sharma (1997)* considered the passage of the PWD act as benchmark step in the history of rehabilitation service in India. They stated –

“In a country like India the number of disabled are so large, their problems so complex, available resources so scarce and social attitudes so damaging, it is only legislation which can eventually bring about a substantial change in a uniform manner. Although legislation cannot alone radically change the fabric of a society in a short span of time, it can nevertheless, increase accessibility of the disabled to education and employment, to public buildings and shopping centers, to means of transport and communication.”

However, providing education to such a vast number of children with disabilities in the world’s second most populated country would require a number of challenges and issues to be addressed at both the macro and micro levels of Indian society (*Sharma, 2005*). They are like-

- ✓ The challenges of poverty associated with disabilities;

- ✓ The challenge of modifying deeply held attitudes;
- ✓ Dissemination and public education;
- ✓ The challenge of providing adequate levels of training to key stakeholders;
- ✓ Inadequate resources.

The statement of “*World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality*” (*Salamanca, Spain 1994*) played a significant role to include the children with special needs into mainstream of education. For furthering the objectives of education for all, it considered the fundamental policy-shift required to promote inclusive education. It emphasized that schools should that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. The statement declared- “*those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within child centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.*”

India had a lot of important steps to improve different aspects of inclusive education programme, stated by Salamanca Statement. The *Human Resource Development Minister* of India Sri Arjun Sing on 21st march 2005 assured in the Rajya Sabha that MHRD has formulated a comprehensive action plan for the *Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD)*. The Government has committed to provide education through mainstream schools for children with disabilities in accordance with PWD act-1995 and all the schools in country be made disabled friendly by 2020. □ 10 billion have been outlaid to fulfil the needs of disabled persons between the ages of 14 to 18 years through a revised plan for IECYD. In 2005-06 the Project Approval Board (PAB) has allocated an amount of □ 187.79 crores under this component for a total 20.14 lakhs CWSN identified. (MHRD: 2005)

In order to expand educational opportunities for CWSN, the central Government of India in its *Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*, set aside □ 1,000 million specifically for the provision of integrated education. (*Ministry of Welfare, 1997; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 2000*)

In 1997 the philosophy of inclusive education is added in District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). DPEP also addressed core issues related to curriculum such as, what factors limit the access of certain children to curriculum; what modifications are necessary to ensure fuller curriculum access. Thus, with its child-centered pedagogy, DPEP set a stage where children with special needs could be provide learning opportunities tailored to their needs. The IED (Integrated Education for the Disabled) guidelines in DPEP intend clearly that, “*DPEP will fund interventions for IED of primary school going children with integrable and mild to moderate disabilities.*” (*Dhawan, 2005*)

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The new century is the time of Globalization or Universalization of the ideas and the activities. The aim of the *Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007)* was to provide Universal Elementary Education. It also aimed to provide basic education for the un-reached segments and special groups. The special interventions and strategies like pedagogic improvement and adoption of child centered practice were

focused on the groups like the girls, scheduled casts and scheduled tribes, working children, children with disabilities, urban deprived children, children from minor groups, children below poverty line, migratory children and in the hardest to reach groups.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in 2001. The goal of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* was the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Three important aspects of UEE were access, enrolment and retention of all children in 6-14 years of age. A *Zero Rejection Policy* was taken by SSA, which ensures that every

CWSN irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is to be provided meaningful and quality education. It covers the following components under education for CWSN: early education and identification, functional and formal assessment, educational placement, aids and appliances, support service, teacher training, resource support, Individual Education Plan (IEP), parental training and community mobilization, planning and management, strengthening of special schools, removal of architectural barriers, research, monitoring and evaluation, girls with disabilities.

Sanjeev, K., & Kumar, K. (2007) reported-

“SSA provides up to ₹ 1200 per child for integration of disabled children, as per specific proposals, per year. The interventions under SSA for inclusive education are identification, functional and formal assessment, appropriate educational placement, preparation of Individualized Educational Plan, provision of aids and appliances, teacher training, resource support, removal of architectural barriers, monitoring and evaluation and a special focus on girls with special needs. Residential bridge courses for CWSN with the main objective of preparing CWSN for schools, thereby ensuring better quality inclusion for them. Facilities for home-based education for children with severe and profound disabilities are provided with the objective of either preparing CWSN for schools or for life by imparting to them basic life skills.”

The Right of children to free and compulsory education act, 2009 was a landmark legislation in the history of the Nation that makes elementary education a fundamental right for children between the age of 6-14. But millions of children with disabilities got left out in the Act. The Act says -“It further provides that the provisions of the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection And Full Participation) Act. 1996 will apply in the case of children suffering from disability as defined under that Act. (Chapter-2, Section -3)

Amendments to this law are due to be presented to the parliament in a supposed attempt to correct this huge oversight. But rather than taking a progressive step towards inclusion, the proposed Amendments seem to be itching towards legalizing exclusion of children with severe and profound disabilities. Children with disabilities, including children with very high support needs, are equal holders of this fundamental right. K, Mohan and R,

Babu (2016) in their observation has shown – “Yet today, through the proposed Amendments to the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, this fundamental right of the child is being

offered as a legitimate, alternative option for the education of a child with high support needs.”

The present decade now playing its significant role to include all kinds of learner to take his/her part towards the store of Universal Knowledge. India has her important role. For this, in its Eleventh Five

Year Plan (2007-2012), it is said –

“The Eleventh plan shall support the vigorous implementation of the Comprehensive Action Plan for the Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities, as Announced by HRD Minister in 2005. A commitment has been given in Parliament the education would be made disabled – friendly by 2020. If this commitment is to be fulfilled, certain urgent steps are necessary, including the setting up of disability units in the University Grant

Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Kendriya Vidyalaya (KVS) and all other apex education bodies.”(Chapter-VI)

It is apparent that the plan stresses for the higher education and at the same time vocational education for disabled children.

Under the subtitle –“Special Provision for Children With Special Needs” the Twelfth Five

Year Plan (2012-2017) declared-

“For CWSN, efforts will include identification, educational placement in general schools, schools readiness programmes, provision of aids and appliances, development and production of Braille Books and construction of ramps and disabled-friendly toilets. Considering the complexities and enormity of the work involved in developing appropriate curricula, NGOs and competent private entities with relevant experience and ability to work in this area should become natural partners in implementation of this aspect of the RTE. Act. Such children would need individualized educational plan, for which community mobilization, parental training and peer sensitization would be necessary. Engagement of resource teachers and volunteers /caregivers to cater to their needs would also be needed.”

A new act for the Person With disabilities has been passed by the Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department) in the last year. The act-“*The Rights of Persons With Disabilities Act.2016*” has been published in “*The Gazette of India*”(Part-II,Sec-1). In the chapter-III of the said act, the subject of education of the persons with disabilities has been taken place. To promote and facilitate inclusive education the act emphasized some specific measures like:

- ✓ to conduct survey of school going children with disabilities in every five years for identifying children with disabilities, ascertaining their special needs and the extent to which these are being met;
- ✓ to establish adequate number of teacher training institution;
- ✓ to train and employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities who are qualified in sign language and Braille and also teachers who are trained in teaching children with intellectual disabilities;
- ✓ to train professionals and staff to support inclusive education at all levels of school education;

- ✓ to establish adequate number of resource centers to support educational institutions at all levels of school education;
- ✓ to promote the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes including means and formats of communication, Braille and Sign language to supplement the use of one's own speech to fulfill the daily communication or language disabilities and enables them to participate and contribute to their community and society;
- ✓ to provide books, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities free of cost up to the age of eighteen years;
- ✓ to provide scholarships in appropriate cases to students with benchmark disabilities;
- ✓ to make suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities such as, extra time for completion of examination paper, facility of scribe amanuensis, exemption from second and third language courses; and
- ✓ to promote research to improve learning.

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported on may, 2017- "in 2014-15, the number of children and youth ages 3-21 receiving special education services was 6.6 million, or 13 percent on all public school students. Among children and youth receiving special education services, 35 percent had specific learning disabilities."

The annual report of MHRD: 2015-16 says, investment now for the development

Year	Grants Released (in crores)	Total Children with disabilities covered /approved to be covered	Total no of Resource Teachers engaged
2009-10	55.13	76,242	2565
2010-11	80.35	1,46,292	4959
2011-12	83.16	1,38,586	7311
2012-13	26.98	81,207	2854
2013-14	34.85	1,23,356	3599
2014-15	193.33	2,27,319	4052
2015-16	87.55	2,27,961	4458

*as on 31.12.2015 [Annual Report-2015-16]

Table 1

Of children and youth with disabilities, is not poor. More over the percentage of enrolment of CWSN in the regular school system is increasing. It is seen that the maximum number of pupil with disabilities are from the poor families.

Much of them have not enough economical strength to provide them both treatment and education. It is good news for us that beside the Government's initiatives, many non-government organizations are now engaged to take all round care of those children. Moreover Govt. of India has made various chances for the Persons With Disabilities including in the adult education.

In spite of all these good efforts, a number of challenges still needs to be overcome. Attitudinal barriers engrained as part of India's historical response to disability must be

changed through education programmes for both teachers and the general populace. Success in achieving integrated education will ultimately depends on how Indian educators and educational systems can collaborate to deal with different types of challenges. Inclusive Education is not only the alternative measures for Children With Special Needs (CWSN) for want of separate special schools for these children, but it is a scientific well-thought strategy for their overall development. Hope that the latest Act (i.e. The Rights of Persons With Disabilities Act, 2016) will be helpful to implement the maximum development of the persons with disabilities, including their education. Awareness among all levels of citizens, shall be the important factor. It is found that the persons with disabilities are the victims of different types of inhuman behavior which is hardly expected.

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