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THE FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDIA WITH THE SPECIAL REFERENCE OF N.E.P-2020: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT
Education should be accessible to all children; only education can provide us with equality and justice. The concept of inclusive education emerged as a guideline to ensure universal access to education. In this paper, the investigators identify the primary areas of inclusion education within the Indian context. The paper delves into the historical context of inclusivity, provides a summary of the government of India's policies, contemplates the role of inclusive education in NEP-2020, and identifies the primary obstacles to its implementation. The investigators have used qualitative data sources to explore the aforementioned key points. The study relies on secondary data from sources such as edited books, journals, government reports, and search websites.

KEY WORDS: *inclusive education, equality and justice, children with special needs, government of India, NEP-2020*

INTRODUCTION

The World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality in 1994 in Spain first used the term "Inclusive Education" in the Salamanca Statement. The conference's theme was "Education for All Children." Children who are mentally or physically retarded receive special attention. The motto of inclusive education is "bringing everyone into the mainstream of education so children can learn according to their own merits and abilities."

Within the context of the Indian education system, the idea of inclusive education is of crucial significance. India has experienced significant socio-cultural diversity. Therefore, education in Kane is a challenge to maintain equity and quality. In this perspective, inclusive education is a powerful weapon to remove all barriers and promote the integration of children with disabilities, despite socio-economic drawbacks. The server report indicates that mainstream classrooms are excluding 40 million children with physical and mental disabilities in the age group of four to sixteen years. Many children with special needs in India appear to be receiving primary education but not pursuing higher education. Its impact is particularly noticeable in rural areas of India. For this reason, equality and integration in education have not yet improved significantly. In the context of India, we have to think about social aspects like race, religion, caste, and demographic area, which also impact inequality in education. Policymakers must prioritize these issues to ensure education for all. In this paper, investigators examine the current state of inclusive education in India. Understand its achievements, remove barriers, and create a roadmap for inclusive education in the future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

This paper has identified several primary and significant goals, listed below.

1. To understand the overview of the government of India, implement steps and policies related to inclusive education.
2. Understanding the impact of inclusive education on NEP 2020 is crucial.
3. To understand the difficulties associated with inclusive education within the Indian context.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

In this paper, investigators have collected secondary sources of data in qualitative form. We collect information from various sources such as government reports, journals, edited books, content analysis, and websites.

DISCUSSION ACCORDING TO THE OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the overview of the government of India, implement steps and policies related to inclusive education:

In this objective, the investigators have outlined a clear chronological sequence of various policies aimed at promoting inclusive education in India.

a) Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) 1987

This is the first initiative in India that specifically bases itself on the principle of inclusive education. UNICEF and NCTE worked together to implement and plan the project. UNICEF provided financial support for this project, which primarily involved the provision of instrumental materials, personnel training, and

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crucially, parent training and project coordination in remote rural areas and unhealthy environments. The project established resource rooms and assistive appliances for children with special needs.

b) National Policy of Education Revised (Program of Action) 1992

This revised educational policy gave more importance to equal education opportunities for all, irrespective of caste, creed, sex, or socio-economic status. The policy also advocates integrating children with disabilities into the mainstream educational environment.

c) The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights, and Full Participation) Act, 1995

The fundamental goal of this law is to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to education and all other parts of society. It declares that educational institutions should create a barrier-free atmosphere where there are equal opportunities and no discrimination against children.

d) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) 2001

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is one of the Government of India's effective initiatives to make elementary education universal. The aim is to guarantee access to high-quality education for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with unique learning requirements.

e) The right of children to free and compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009

In response to the success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Indian government passed "the right to free and compulsory education" on August 4, 2009. The legislation specifies that schools cannot accept kids with disabilities, poor socioeconomic status, or gender prejudice, and it also states that all students from fourth grade through sixteenth grade must attend public schools. If India wants to speed up its mainstream education system, this act is crucial.

f) The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD Act) 2016

This is a revised version of the previous Act of 1995. This revised version provides a legal framework for the protection and encouragement of people with disabilities. It added special provisions for inclusive education, reasonable accommodations, and assistive services for learners with special needs.

These policies reflect the responsibilities and commitment of the Government of India towards inclusive education. The government is committed to providing every child with free, high-quality, and mandatory education, fostering their personal growth, enhancing their inherent potential, and promoting holistic development.

2. Understanding the impact of inclusive education on NEP 2020 is crucial

After the content analysis of the NEP 2020 report, the investigators strongly advocated that national education policy 2020 introduced a significant step towards inclusive education. The report deeply focused on equity, access, and quality across the whole education system. This paper examines inclusive education in light of the National Policy on Education 2020.

a) Equity and Access

NEP 2020 realized the immense need to promote equitable access for all groups of children, including those who belong to marginalized and disadvantaged backgrounds. This policy emphasizes ECCE (early childhood care and education) for all children. It ensures that all are able to access quality pre-primary education in a natural setting. Since the pre-primary stage, the principle of inclusive education has been in place. The policy proposed the establishment of SEZs (special education zones) and inclusive schooling systems. The main idea behind this concept is to add special attention to providing quality education to those with various learning difficulties and backward students.

b) Flexible Learning Environment

NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of a healthy environment in promoting learners' holistic development. A proposed policy aims to establish a flexible and integrative learning environment within the education sector. The goal is to enhance the productivity and enjoyment of the teaching-learning process.

c) Reform The Curriculum Framework

Our curriculum should reflect the needs and interests of all students. The curriculum will be relevant to real-life situations and improve the problem-solving abilities of learners. The curriculum needs to be well structured and formulated to create inclusive classrooms. NEP 2020 advocates reforming the curriculum framework..

d) Evaluation And Assessment Reform

The policy emphasizes evaluation and assessment pattern reform. Teachers should adopt standardized assessment tools and discontinue the unhealthy competition in the class. Use a holistic evaluation approach.

e) Technology Integration

NEP 2020 emphasized the significance of technology in fostering an inclusive learning environment. Use technology as a tool to assist learners facing challenges. Teachers should use technology to make the teaching-learning process more interactive and attractive. Technology also helps learners with disabilities gain knowledge properly.

f) Improve Teachers' Education Programme

The policy has highlighted the improvement of the teacher education program in every aspect. To make teacher education stronger, according to NEP-2020, NCTE will formulate a better framework to prepare teachers and educators appropriately with inclusive classrooms in mind.

The discussion above makes it clear that inclusive education is a crucial process. In the context of NEP

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2020, inclusive education is most essential in India because of its very diverse areas.

3. To understand the difficulties associated with inclusive education within the Indian context.

According to Indian perspectives, inclusive education faces various challenges. In this paper, the investigators have explored some very important issues or challenges that create obstacles to properly implementing the principles based on inclusion. Here are the major challenges identified:

a) Infrastructure And Resources:
Implementing inclusive education in educational institutions necessitates appropriate infrastructure and resources. There is a need for ramps, accessible washrooms, teaching-learning materials, and other necessary resources, especially for children with disabilities. Lack of suitable and student-friendly infrastructure is a major issue in Indian schools.

b) Attitudinal Barriers
The biggest issue in India is the attitude toward learning with special needs children. Stigma and discrimination persist among both the general public and educators. There is a lack of understanding about the concept of inclusiveness.

c) Curriculum And Pedagogy:
Curriculum and pedagogy restructuring are the most important factors in successfully implementing inclusive education in the classroom. It is crucial to consider the needs of children with disabilities when developing the curriculum and pedagogy.

d) Shortage of Special Teachers:
There is currently a lack of adequate training for teachers who work with children with learning disabilities. Promoting enough special teachers is a challenge in the Indian education system.

e) Language and Cultural Diversity:
India has experienced significant linguistic and cultural diversity. It is also a hindrance to inclusive education.

f) Parental Involvement:
Parental awareness plays an important role in implementing inclusive education. However, their lack of awareness and understanding leads to resistance, or a lack of proper support for its implementation.

If we can all work together to eliminate the aforementioned issues, the principles of inclusive education will properly develop in India.

CONCLUSION

Inclusive education has the potential to significantly transform the educational approach in India. By focusing on the present challenges, improving participation among all people, and advocating for continuous development, India ensures that all children have the empowerment or ability, at any cost, to reach their full potential. A fruitful education not only benefits students but also constructs an equitable society.

The concept of inclusive education is a dynamic process. Every person should understand their own responsibility through this process, whether it be the government, educators, parents, or community. In order to make inclusive education effective, we need to increase our mindset and awareness.

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