



Philosophical Aspects of Inclusive Education in India As Per NEP 2020

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Abstract

The philosophical approach of inclusive education in NEP 2020 are based on the principles of equality, human dignity, and social justice by recognizing the potential of every child. Inclusive education, aims to break traditional barriers and provide an environment that is welcoming, respectful, and supportive for all learners. This approach follow the philosophy of 'education for all,' where learning is seen as a fundamental right and every child is liberal to get quality of education. The NEP 2020 promotes the holistic development of all students by framing the curriculum that is flexible, adaptable, and responsive to diverse learning needs.

Keywords: Inclusion, Acceptance, Diversity, Equality, Equity, Social Justice, Parent's Attitude, Disabilities, NEP 2020.

Introduction

All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us have an equal opportunity to develop our talents” (Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam). Indian Education system has evolved over a period of time. Education is a fundamental right of every Indian citizen. Truth (satya), wisdom (pragyaa), knowledge (jnan) are always considered important in Indian Philosophy as the highest human goal. Today, education system focuses on the wholesome approach which emphasis the development of the emotional, social, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects of a person. The concept of “inclusive education was taken up at the world conference by UNESCO at Salamanca in Spain (1994). An Italian physician, Maria Montessori was the founder of inclusive education. Inclusive means welcoming of all the children irrespective of any disability. It is a principle of celebrating the diversity by addressing their needs and interests.



Inclusive education is a new approach of teaching the disabled children with the regular ones under the same roof. In Inclusive schoolrooms we see students having different learning styles, talents, and ability to gain knowledge because they all are different from one another (Mondal, 2023). About 20 million out of India's 200 million school aged children require special needs education .Article 24 of the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities) confirms the inclusive education at all levels and the disabled children should not be excluded from receiving the education. All children must have equal opportunities for their progress and development. The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** of India emphasizes the requirement for a more inclusive and unbiased education system, identifying the diversity of learners and the importance of guaranteeing that every child, has access to quality education. Inclusive education, in the context of NEP 2020, refers to providing a learning environment that accommodates and supports students from different social, cultural, linguistic, and physical backgrounds. Moreover, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has adopted a zero (no rejection policy). It means no child should be destitute for the right to education. IEDCS (Integrated Education for Disabled Children Scheme) was launched in 1974 with the objective to embrace the children with disabilities in regular schools. The new education policy (2020) promotes the inclusion by maintaining equality by removing all the barriers and discrimination. It is an encouragement to enroll them in normal classroom settings. Another comprehensive plan for disabled 2005 was presented by Arjun Singh the minister of Human Resource Development .This plan believes in “ making all schools disabled friendly” by 2020. As Kane (1974) quotes Bandhayanas rules for a special type of Upanayana or the right to start the educational studies performed by young people who were blind, deaf, crippled. Philosophy has provided subtler understanding of inclusion and for more logically organized society.

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** of India emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and equitable education system, recognizing the diversity of learners and the importance of ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has access to quality education. Inclusive education, in the context of NEP 2020, refers to providing a learning environment that accommodates and supports students from different social, cultural, linguistic, and physical backgrounds.

Features of NEP 2020 with Respect to Inclusive Education



1. NEP 2020 aims to reduce the gap between different social - economic groups by ensuring equitable access to quality education. It acknowledges the needs and make special provisions for marginalized people, including children from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, children with disabilities.
2. The policy demands for the need to strengthen the education system for children with special needs. Curriculum should be accessible to all. Children must learn sign language for their better understanding.
3. **Pedagogy should be more flexible and inclusive** to cater the different learning needs of students. Teachers should use variety of teaching methods in their classrooms like play way method, group discussions, collaborative learning, project-based learning, and the use of ICT to ensure that all students can engage themselves actively with the curriculum.
4. The NEP recommended that in early years education must be given in mother **tongue only**, to make sure that all children, can learn effectively and efficiently.
5. The NEP 2020 stresses for continuous professional development of teachers by developing their skills and knowledge.
6. The NEP stresses for the need of high-quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) to all the children between ages of 3 and 6 years and to prepare them for formal education. The policy appeals for a change from traditional examination assessment systems to more flexible and formative assessments.
7. NEP 2020 motivates students with disabilities by integrating them into mainstream schools to larger extent by promoting inclusive **education** rather than separate special schools. Moreover, it demands for the requirement of some provisions, like resource rooms, ramps, elevators, adapted materials, assistive technology and well trained teachers.
8. The NEP recognizes the role of technology in education this can be beneficial for disabled children as technology can provide resources and tools for their better understanding and active participation. Children in remote areas should not be demotivated. Government should help such children for their holistic development.

Major Provisions For Promoting Inclusive Education

1. Financial support
2. Celebration of world disabled day



3. Creating awareness
4. Identification and enrollment
5. Vocational education
6. Barrier free environment
7. Providing support services
8. Accessible learning materials

NEP 2020 aims at making India a global knowledge superpower in the 21st century by imparting and promoting ethical values, spirit of love and cooperation among all and moreover no hard separations between normal or specially challenged children. Teachers, parents and community can bring a positive change among students and aware them to achieve their desired goals.

Objectives:

1. To explore the role of human rights in inclusive education.
2. To know the philosophical foundations of inclusive education in NEP 2020
3. Role of teachers, curriculum and pedagogy approaches in fostering inclusivity
4. To assess the impact of inclusive education on social equality and justice

Review of Literature

Hyatt, K. (2004). Studied IEP program, this document provides tips for parents about how to best prepare for Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings for their children. The author describes the steps in developing the IEP, which is used to determine an appropriate classification and necessary services for a student. This publication is a resource for parents who may be overwhelmed by the formal and complicated nature of the IEP documents developed during these meetings. Familiarity with the structure of the meetings can help parent's better advocate for their children during this process.

Ohba and Malenva (2023) made an attempt to study inclusive education and data was collected from public schools. Data was collected from more than 126 teachers, 14 head teachers. The findings revealed that local schools put much effort into creating an inclusive setting.



Methlagl and Michael (2022) studied inclusive education and the objective of the study was to gain information on scientific productivity, international collaboration activities and to know the conceptual framework. Descriptive analyses co- authorship collaboration analysis and co- word analysis were used. Disability issues, attitudes, teaching practices, social process, curriculum issues, students and parents perspectives were the major research areas of this study. The results of the study showed a fast growing body of research in inclusive education over the years with intensive international collaboration patterns.

Verma and Mathur (2020) revealed that instructor perspectives and epistemological convictions toward inclusive education are malleable and may gradually foster a favorable attitude towards the program.

Zelina (2020) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study in Slovakia used sample consisted of 218 female teachers with a minimum of 20% of disadvantaged students in their classroom. The main findings show that teachers opinion and attitudes towards inclusive education are positive and they appreciate their cooperation with specialist in schools.

Elmira and Nurshat (2021) conducted a studied in a primary school in Kazakhstan using observation and interview method as a tool and content analysis method to analyze data. Findings revealed that teachers showed an atmosphere of mutual respect and love in classrooms with disabled students, although they are strict about classroom rules. A constructive knowledge as well as constructive trainings like games and visuals were provided. The research suggests preparation of a curriculum including the disabled.

Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) studied the current skills of regular primary school teachers in Delhi, in order to teach students with disabilities in inclusive education settings. They reported that nearly 70% of the regular school teachers had neither received training in special education and don't have any experience teaching students with disabilities. Moreover, 87% of the teachers did not have access to support services in their classrooms.

Rekha Chavan (2013) conducted a study on Student teacher's attitude towards Inclusive Education This study includes the sample of 486 student teachers in second year of D.T.Ed. from ten colleges of education and results revealed that majority of student teachers possess average level of attitudes towards inclusive education.



Results & Discussions

The inclusive education has been evolved gradually. Talking about the Early history in pre 20th century children with disabilities were often excluded from formal education. Education for disabled children was extremely restricted. After that in the beginning of 20th century social movements favored for the education of children with disabilities. In the period of Post-World War II (1940s – 1950s) with growing recognition of civil rights some countries began to contemplate the educational needs of children with disabilities. UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994) emphasized the need for inclusive schools with the flexible education system and to provide opportunities for all the students. Countries like UK, USA, and Canada made an efficient efforts in integrating students. Likewise, India began experimenting with inclusive practices with the recommendations of the National policy on Education (1986). This was the first policy document to introduce the idea of inclusive education. Similarly NPE 1992 focused on special needs and disabilities, integrated education, teacher training and resource support, infrastructure facilities.

NEP 2020 advocated for a flexible, inclusive curriculum which promotes the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schools. This policy highly recommended the need for teacher training, creating safe and supporting learning environments, by fostering equity and inclusion in all stages of education, from early childhood to higher education.

Inclusive education is a fundamental human right for all children irrespective of any discrimination. The concept of equality, non- discrimination, justice, right to education all of them are protected under Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the united nations convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Scientists like Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein had disabilities but still managed to become the greatest mind of the 20th century. There are many challenges for educating children with disabilities in regular classrooms like, negative attitude of the parents, poverty, scarcity of human resources, social stigma. Teachers in inclusive classrooms can feel overstressed when they have difficulty in managing over crowded classes while catering the individual needs. With larger class sizes, teachers may feel harder to apply different teaching and learning strategies. Teachers may feel overwhelmed with administrative work, assessments and additional responsibilities leaving less time for planning inclusive lessons.



Section 12 (1) (c) mandates that private schools reserved 25% seats for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including those with disabilities. Moreover, the Rights of persons with disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016, also emphasizes inclusive education for children with disabilities within the mainstream system. In inclusive classrooms the role of a teacher is very multifaceted that accommodates all students, regardless of their caste, backgrounds or needs. Teachers should accept the diversity of the learners. They must welcome and treat all the children equally irrespective of their disability. They must ensure that every students feels valued.

Teacher can alter or modify their teaching strategies, methods and materials to meet the diverse needs of the learners. This can include modifying lesson plans, using assistive and adaptive technologies, providing additional support or offering flexible assessments to make sure that all learners can gain new knowledge and skills. Teacher must have some traits towards disabled children like empathy, respect, patience, clear communication, positive reinforcement, positive attitude, flexible mindset and collaboration with staff in fostering the inclusivity. Teachers should not use only multiple means of representation but also expressions like text, videos, images, flashcard, audios, projects, verbal responses etc. Curriculum content should be based on language, arts, mathematics, science and social studies, life skills, social skills, music, fine arts, physical education etc. Environment of the classroom should be very supportive and friendly. Teacher should create an environment where students feel free to ask anything without any hesitation or fear for their academic and personal growth. Along with teachers, parents and community play a great role in promoting inclusive education. They should encourage their children and break down all the barriers of learning. They should promote peer interactions where disabled children can form new bond of friendship and learn from their peers. Teachers should upgrade their skills and receive ongoing training in inclusive strategies. Inclusive education plays an important role in promoting social equality and justice in the society by providing:

- equal Access to Education
- development of life skills
- reducing prejudice
- reducing of stigmas
- social integration



- empowerment of marginalized groups
- promoting fairness
- breaking down physical, social barriers
- valuing diversity
- equal access to resources
- reducing segregation

Conclusion

In spite of all the challenges and barriers inclusive education has the prospect to create a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all students. In India, society is transforming with the help of government initiatives and all the stakeholders by fostering equality, social justice, and equity. Achieving effective inclusive education requires commitment, proper training for pupil teachers, educators and teachers. Inclusive education supports academic achievement as well as it promotes emotional, social and personal growth. When family members are involved to educate their children irrespective of their any problem or disability then only children can learn more efficiently. Families can assist their children to develop a more positive attitude towards the school, teachers and the learning system. Inclusion doesn't mean just the physical presence of disabled individuals, however it ensures equal opportunities and full participation of individuals with disabilities in the community. "INCLUSION IS NOT TOLERANCE, IT IS UNQUESTIONED ACCEPTANCE"

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