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Abstract

National Educational Policy 2020 emphasizes learning by all by providing needed infrastructural support and essential changes in the inclusive curriculum incorporating the materials on human values of respect for all persons, empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, non-violence, global citizenship, inclusion, and equity. This article deals with the various aspects of inclusive education as drafted in the National Educational Policy 2020 and its significant impact on the inclusive educational scenario of India.

Introduction

The New Education Policy aims to provide quality education for all. Education is the potential tool for achieving sustainable development by facilitating inclusion in regular stream of education and equality for the learners. The learners are provided with new and equal opportunities to get admitted, acquire knowledge, share information and attain academic performance in the educational institutions in the regular stream from school to Higher education, despite their inherent barriers.

Previous Education Related Policies

The strategies aforesaid and practiced as per the Earlier New Education Policies focused initially on the issues related to equality in access and equity in learning in par with the other students in the educational system connected with their teaching and learning process. It addressed the barriers and obstacles in fulfilling the agenda of the National Education Policy 1986 (NPE 1986/92), as amended in 1992.

Principles in the Draft of New Educational Policy

The aim of the education system is to educate people as well as inculcate the basic human values for enabling them to be a good citizen of country. The aim is both human value development and planning of man power with a strong sense of accountability, perspective and responsibility. Its purpose is to create an active, productive and contributing citizen towards the betterment of the society and the country. The Educational institution with quality concern and

professional ethics is one in which all students are treated as the same, have encouraging learning environment facilitating variety in the learning experiences afforded by the teachers, material as well as human resources to facilitate the learning by all the students.

Vision of the Policy

The vision of the policy is not only to cultivate the knowledge, skills but also to inculcate the basic human values which will make the learners feel proud for not only being an Indian .They will realize their inner potentiality, human spirit, innate and acquired intellect, the process of converting their thought into action and attitude that supports the basic human rights, ensurance of the sustainable development, maintenance of quality in lifestyle and approach with responsibility for enhancement of global well-being that molds them be a true citizen.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education means that educational system in which the students having special but manageable needs and abilities can learn in the same classrooms along with the other students in the regular schools without any disparity. The three main models for integrating a student into the mainstream classroom are full inclusion, partial inclusion, and mainstreaming.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 has given importance to the Equality for Educational Opportunities for the learners. It included the Education for women's equality, Education of the marginalized group of scheduled castes/scheduled tribes and backward sections, Education of the Minorities and the handicapped were dealt as unique sections with special provisions. The New Education policies aims to provide quality in education to all the students, regardless of the differences in their caste, community religion, language ,gender, disabilities and socioeconomic conditions with a special emphasis on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is considered the effective equalizer and the most powerful tool for achieving socioeconomic mobility, inclusion and equality in disparity. The New Policy proposes a number of fundamental principles to guide the Educational system as a whole and the educational institutions within it in promoting equality in learning and provision of equal opportunities in education by adopting to the following approaches.

- Recognize, identify and promote the unique abilities of each student. Sensitizing the teachers and parents to promote the holistic development of each and every student in both academic and non-academic areas.
- Respect the diversity and local context prevailing in the curriculum, pedagogy and policies, keeping in mind that education is concurrent subject.
- Equity through inclusion and quality in education must be given prime importance in all the Educational Institutions promoting equal access to education by all the students.

The Importance of Inclusive Education

- Improve learning by inclusive educational system by providing education to all the children together, either they are with or without disabilities.
- Promote mutual understanding, reduce prejudice, bias, feeling of getting denied and strengthen their ability of social adjustment and emotional integration.
- Ensure that children with disabilities can also work and contribute economically and socially to their communities promoting their self-esteem and confidence.

Factors Promoting the Success of the Inclusive Education System Financial Support Provided From the Ministry of Education

The success of the inclusive educational stream needs time and financial assistance from the government and NGO to implement the essential and much needed changes in the educational system to facilitate learning by all through trained teachers, teaching methods, flexibility in curriculum, teaching methods, necessary human and materialistic resources to support the teaching learning processes.

Support for Teachers and Students

Teachers teaching the students in an inclusive setup need not only subject knowledge but also sufficient training and guidance to teach the students and make use of the need based services to overcome the normal barriers in the learning process of students who undertake inclusive education.

Respecting Diversity and Promoting Inclusive Learning

Positive attitude and perception of the parents, teachers and society must be inculcated and encouraged to overcome the negative ideas, beliefs, myths and prejudice towards providing inclusive education for the children with manageable needs and disabilities.

High Expectations for All Students

Teachers must have positive belief and support all the children in attaining their objectives pertaining to both the academic and nonacademic arena. They have inculcate positive thinking among the students.

Safe and Inclusive Environments

The children cannot learn if they feel frightened of their teachers or when they face bullying by other children in the same class in their school.

Partnership between Parents, Disability Organization and School

Inclusive education needs the support and team work between the parents, teachers, peer group, educational institutions, school authorities and the organizations supporting promoting the inclusive stream.

Progress Monitoring System in Inclusive Mode

It is important to measure the periodical progress in educating children with disabilities in inclusive stream and to overcome the obstacles or barriers (physical facilities, human resources, financial constraints, adjustment problems) by planning either ahead or when in need of, providing the resources in need of (human or materialistic), guidance offered and training to the parents, teachers, peer group and the children with disabilities if needed.

Requirements for Achieving Inclusive Education

- Education given all without any discrimination to promote learning by all.
- Inclusion of children with disabilities and manageable conditions in regular schools when and where possible.
- Access to Primary and Secondary education by the provision of the sufficient numbers of accessible, inclusive schools are available for children with disabilities
- Practical supports or adjustments are provided in the form of accommodation, equipment and teaching aids for the children with disabilities to learn.

- Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) regarding accommodation and supportive services are being provided for the children with disabilities.
- Services provided for children with specific disabilities such as teaching and learning using Braille, sign language learning, classroom reorganization, and accessibility to learning materials.
- Teachers with appropriate and adequate training are recruited in the schools which inclusive education streaming mode of education.

Measures to be Taken by the Government to Make Inclusive Education a Reality

The Government of India must

- Enact and enforce laws and policies to eliminate discrimination and guarantee the right of learners to inclusive education
- Develop an action plan and schedule for introducing the inclusive streaming in education from the school education to higher education.
- Providing financial assistance and essential resources to enable the transition of exclusive mode of education towards inclusive education for children with manageable disabilities along with the other children without disabilities.
- Collecting the required information about inclusive education being offered in the schools having inclusive mode of education, monitoring them and measuring the progress in learning and education of all the learners from time to time.
- Training teachers for handling inclusive education mode in regular schools.
- Introducing inclusive testing and assessment procedures in the regular schools.
- Introducing procedure for addressing grievance related to inclusive education by the parents and their wards.

NEP-2020 and Inclusive Education

National Educational Policy (2020) emphasizes the significance and need for inclusive education and recognizes it to be the fundamental right of every child. It aims to ensure that every student, irrespective of their socioeconomic background and their physical disabilities must receive quality education. The policy emphasizes the need to eliminate barriers such as discrimination, exclusion, and stigmatization that hinder the progress of the children with manageable needs and physical disabilities to a minimum extent.

Inclusivity in Curriculum Design

The National Educational Policy (2020) emphasizes the need for the development of a flexible and inclusive curriculum that caters to the diversified learning needs of students. It calls for a shift from rote learning to an inquiry-based, activity based, multisensory learning approach. This approach is student centric and ensures more and active participation and engagement on the part of every student in the classroom. It promotes flexibility in learning at their own pace by promoting inclusive mode in the regular classroom.

Teacher Training and Support

The National Educational Policy (2020) gives importance to the vital role of teachers in teaching all the students through the adoption of the inclusive mode in the regular classroom environment. It stresses the need for specialized Teacher Training Programs for teachers to equip them with the knowledge, skills, competencies and mastery in the strategies required to meet the diversified needs of all the students. Additionally, the New Educational Policy acknowledges the importance of faculty development programs /in-service programs to avail the opportunities and support systems

available for the teacher's knowledge updation and to facilitate the effective implementation of inclusive education practices.

Infrastructure and Accessible Environment

To promote inclusive education, the NEP-2020 emphasizes the need for well established schools with all the accessible infrastructural facilities and resources meant for all the students as well as with those with manageable disabilities. It emphasizes the importance of ramps near class rooms, elevators, accessible washrooms and necessary accommodations to create a barrier-free environment for students with physical disabilities.

Inclusive Assessment and Evaluation

The NEP-2020 recognizes the importance of inclusive assessment and evaluation methods that are designed to assess the diverse learning styles and abilities of students. It advocates for alternative assessment and measurement techniques that can accommodate the needs of students with disabilities or special needs, promoting their active participation in the learning process.

Benefits of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education not only caters to the needs of the students with disabilities or special needs but it serves to the essential needs of the entire student community. It fosters a sense of empathy, understanding, and acceptance among the peer student and teaching community and promotes social cohesion and emotional integration. It also contributes to the overall personality development of the students with disabilities, enhances their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and prepares them to face the diverse real-world scenario of the society.

Conclusion

The National Educational Policy 2020 has a special focus on inclusive education which reflects the commitment of the Indian government to provide equitable and quality education for all the learners. By adopting to the inclusive practices and implementation of the policy, the Education System can become more responsive to meet the diverse needs of students and foster an inclusive and empowering learning environment. The implementation of inclusive education has the potentiality to reshape the whole educational scenario of our country leading to equitable society.

References

1. General Comment No 4, Right to Inclusive Education. You can get hold of it at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?Symbolno=CRPD/C/GC/4&Lang=en It is available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic. It is also available in word and pdf formats.
2. UNICEF has developed resources to support ministries of education to implement inclusive education: UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Inclusive Education Portal <http://www.inclusive-education.org/basic-page/inclusive-education-booklets-and-webinars>
3. The World of Inclusion website provides a large number of resources on inclusion: <http://worldofinclusion.com/resources/>