



Inclusive And Special Education In Elementary Level In India

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of inclusive education practices in supporting the academic and social development of primary school children with diverse learning needs. The research explores how differentiated instruction, teacher preparedness, classroom adaptations, and peer-support strategies influence the learning outcomes of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. Using a mixed-methods approach—including classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student performance data—the study identifies key factors that promote successful inclusion. Findings reveal that consistent teacher training, individualized learning plans, and collaborative learning environments significantly enhance student engagement and confidence. The study concludes that an integrated, well-supported inclusive model not only benefits children with special needs but also contributes positively to the overall classroom climate and peer relationships. Recommendations include strengthening teacher professional development, increasing access to assistive technologies, and implementing school-wide inclusion policies to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students.

1. Introduction

Them as members of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) to attain access, barrier free infrastructure, and make learning pathways flexible. be part of regular schools. It includes children with disabilities under to separate special schools. It will be a radical change in the way children with special needs (CWSN) are to now fully has been an eye-opener for this context. Previously, students with disabilities, if not excluded altogether, were sent India is at its cusp with respect to inclusive as well as special education, and recent policy changes such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. still challenges, such as insufficiently trained teachers, not enough resources, and stigma. own pace and level. There are, however, (ISL). It likewise promotes a child-centered approach to teaching based on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to make every learner capable of learning at their NEP 2020 prescribes cross-disabilities teacher education, appointment of special educator, setting up of resource centers and focusing on assistive technology, accessible reading material as well as Indian Sign Language. This study examines the current progress and barriers in implementing inclusive practices in India, highlighting how NEP 2020 can guide schools toward creating more equitable and supportive learning environments for all children.

2. Significance

This study is relevant as it solves one of the major educational challenges in India, which is providing inclusive and equitable education to all children, especially those with special needs. Though NEP 2020 is more than policy inclusive education, the understanding of these policy guideline's implementation in the classroom is limited. With the examination of the current practices, the study helps in ascertaining the readiness of schools to serve the diverse learning needs of the students. This study helps in underscoring the Voice of the teachers, school leaders, and educational policy makers the significance of addressing the need for teacher training, modified school buildings, educational materials, and classroom used for learning with and to foster children's potential in gaining educational success. It also identifies other outcomes in academics and social participation for children with disabilities. The outcomes of the study will also assist in educational development and planning in India towards inclusive, child-friendly, and NEP aligned classrooms. This study provides evidence that all children, regardless of their abilities, should have equal opportunities to attend school and participate meaningfully in all aspects of school life.

3. Objectives

1. To examine the current practices of inclusive education in primary and secondary schools in India.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of NEP 2020 guidelines in promoting equitable and accessible learning for children with special needs (CwSN).
3. To analyze the availability and utilization of resources, including barrier-free infrastructure, special educators, and learning support materials.
4. To recommend strategies and policy interventions for strengthening inclusive practices and improving the overall quality of special education in India.

4. Recent Infrastructure

- According to the latest UDISE+ (2024-25) data covering approx. 1,471,473 schools nationwide — about 75.5% of schools report having ramps for children with special needs (CWSN), and among those, ~ 72.0% have handrails.
- However, only 35.6% of schools have dedicated toilets for CWSN.
- On a related metric, 54.9% of schools are reported to have ramps with handrails (in a 2024-25 aggregate statistic), showing some progress compared to earlier years.
- On the digital infrastructure front: 64.7% of schools have computers, but only 58.0% of those are functional for pedagogical use. Internet connectivity exists in about 63.5% of schools.
- Only around one-third of schools have CWSN-friendly toilets. That leaves a large number of schools without appropriate sanitation facilities for children with disabilities.

5. Some Data (for selected states)

STATES	RAMP AVAILABLE (%)	CWSN FRIENDLY TOILETS (%)
WEST BENGAL	53.1	23.79
DELHI	100	100
BIHAR	37.5	14.4
ASSAM	36.2	22.8

6. How to Improve the Special Education System in India

1) Strengthen Teacher Training and Recruitment

- Increase the number of qualified special educators in every school cluster (as recommended by NEP 2020).
- Make inclusive education training mandatory for all pre-service (B.Ed.) and in-service teachers.
- Introduce advanced training in disability identification, multisensory learning, IEP development, and assistive technologies.

2) Improve School Infrastructure

- Ensure all schools follow barrier-free norms: ramps with handrails, wide corridors, tactile paths, and CWSN-friendly toilets.
- Provide accessible transportation for children with disabilities.
- Create inclusive classrooms with adjustable furniture, visual supports, and quiet learning spaces.

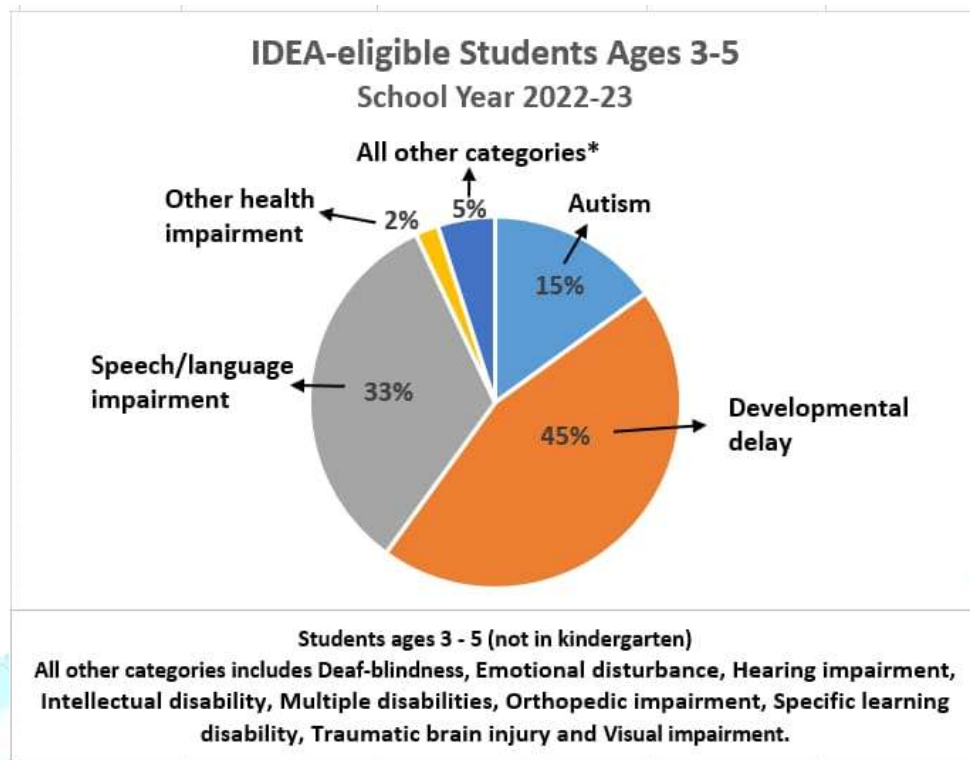
3) Expand Early Identification and Intervention

- Conduct regular screenings at Anganwadis, pre-primary, and primary schools.
- Provide early therapy services—speech therapy, occupational therapy, behavior therapy—at school or block resource centers.
- Promote parent awareness about early signs of disability.

4) Implement Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) Effectively

- Every child with special needs should have a well-designed IEP.
- Set specific learning goals and track progress monthly.
- Involve special educators, parents, and class teachers in IEP meetings.

7. Pi Chart of CWSN (Ages 3 to 5)



8. Steps taken to ensure Education of children with disability

In the year 2018-19, the Department of School Education & Literacy, MHRD has launched Samagra Shiksha – an integrated scheme for School Education covering children with special needs from classes I to XII. The Scheme is governed and regulated by the provisions of the RTE Act, 2009. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 enshrines the entitlement to free and compulsory elementary education, access to school and barrier free access for all children including children with disability. Section 3(2) of the RTE Act lays emphasis on the elementary education of all children with disabilities. As per the Amendment of 2012, the RTE Act also mandates that, a child with multiple and/or severe disabilities has the right to opt for home based education. Under Samagra Shiksha, there is a dedicated component for Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs (CWSN) through which various provisions are made available for the educational needs of differently abled children such as, identification & assessment camps, provision of aids, appliances, assistive devices, teaching learning materials (TLMs), ICT resources like JAWS & SAFA, as well as transportation, escort & scribe allowances and stipend for all girls with special needs (from Class I to XII). Further, individualized support is provided through therapeutic interventions at the block level. Further, CWSN with severe impairment requiring individualised attention are provided home based education through special educators. A separate provision for financial support of Special Educators has been made under Samagra Shiksha in order to appropriately address the educational requirements of children with special needs from elementary to higher secondary levels. Samagra Shiksha also has provisions for ramps, handrails and disabled friendly toilets for barrier free access to schools for all children. The focus of Samagra Shiksha is on providing inclusive education to children with disability wherein, children regardless of their abilities/disabilities participate and learn together in the same class, thus creating an enabling educational environment for all students.

9. How We are all Equal



10. Conclusion

The improvement of special education in India is essential for ensuring that every child, regardless of ability, receives equal opportunities to learn, participate, and grow. Although policies such as the RPwD Act 2016 and NEP 2020 provide a strong foundation for inclusive and equitable education, significant gaps remain in implementation. Strengthening teacher training, upgrading school infrastructure, introducing assistive technologies, and expanding early intervention services are crucial steps toward building an effective inclusive education system. Collaboration among teachers, parents, special educators, and policymakers is equally important for meeting the diverse needs of children with disabilities. Increasing community awareness and reducing stigma will further help create a supportive and welcoming school environment. By adopting data-driven planning, improving resource allocation, and consistently monitoring progress, India can move closer to its goal of creating a fully inclusive and accessible education system. In conclusion, the future of special education in India depends on a multi-dimensional approach that combines strong policy enforcement, committed educators, accessible infrastructure, and empowered families. With sustained effort, India can ensure that all learners receive the dignity, support, and educational opportunities they deserve.

11. References

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