



Effective Strategies Promoting Rights of Disabled Students Studying in India

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Abstract

This research paper as entitled “Effective Strategies promoting rights of Disabled Students studying in India” makes an attempt to describe factors or barriers which affect the access of students with disabilities in educational institutions and also tries to understand the fundamental rights and special provisions of provided to disabled students while gaining education. The fundamental rights mentioned in Indian constitution in some ways do not specifically mention the physically handicapped/disabled/Person with Disabilities, while concern were/are made to the educationally, socially, economically and backward sections of society. After Independence, there have been many conventions and Acts, which promoted the PwD in many ways. One of the Sustainable Development Goals clearly mention the right of learners with disabilities as Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all in general and for disabled person in particular. National Education Policy 2020 reaffirm that bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes in school education will continue to be one of the major goals of all education sector development programmes. There may be various Effective Strategies promoting rights of Disabled students studying in India including- Infrastructural, Pedagogical, curriculum, financial supports and etc. So, in this paper basically, an attempt is made to provide/suggest some of the effective strategies for disabled students studying in Indian educational institutions.

Keywords: Person with Disabilities (PwD), National Education Policy (NEP), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Effective strategies, Inclusive policies.

1. Introduction

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Person with Disabilities is present in every caste, religion, race, ethnicity and gender. More than a billion people or 15 percent of the world's population, have some category of disability. Of these, an estimated 150 million children have a disability, and 80 percent of these children live in the developing countries (WHO, 2011). This section of population in India has increased by 22.4% between 2001 and 2011. The number of disabled, which was 2.19 crores in 2001 increased in 2011 to 2.68 crores of which 1.5 crores are males and 1.18 crores females. The World Health Organization said that a disability is defined as a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual or group. The term is used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment, mental illness and various other types of chronic diseases. So, in this way we can say that Disability is a permanent or long-term total or partial impairment in one of the physical, sensory, mental, communicative, educational or psychological abilities.

Disability can broadly be divided into physical, mental, sensory, developmental and nonvisible disability. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 (RPwD) of India has provided 21 categories to identify disability.

1. Blindness
2. low vision
3. Leprosy cured persons
4. Hearing impairment
5. Locomotor disability
6. Dwarfism
7. Intellectual disability
8. Mental illness
9. Autism spectrum disorder
10. A liberal policy
11. Muscular dystrophy
12. Chronic neurological conditions
13. Specific learning disability
14. Multiple sclerosis
15. Speech and language disability
16. Thalassaemia
17. Haemophilia
18. Sickle cell disease
19. Multiple disabilities including deaf blindness
20. Acid attack victims
21. Parkinson's disease

The State of Uttar Pradesh is home for the highest number of disabled children (0-6 years). Four States namely, Uttar Pradesh (20.31%), Bihar (14.24%), Maharashtra (10.64%), and West Bengal (6.48%) together have the burden of more than 50% of the disabled children in India. Education is the single most important tool for achieving social justice and equality.

Inclusive and equitable education while indeed an essential goal in its own right is also critical to achieving an inclusive and equitable society in which every citizen has the opportunity to dream, thrive, and contribute to the nation. The education system must aim to benefit India's children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of circumstances of birth or background. Despite overall progress in education attainment globally, children with disabilities remain one of the most marginalized groups. They are less likely to participate in and complete their education compared to their peers without disabilities. While overall enrolments in schools decline steadily from Grade 1 to Grade 12, this decline in enrolments is significantly more pronounced for many of these SEDGs, with even greater declines for female students within each of these SEDGs and often even steeper in higher education.

Although the fundamental rights mentioned in Indian constitution in some ways do not specifically mention the physically handicapped or disabled, they still concern the educationally, socially and economically and backward section of society. It is the State's duty to demolish the wall that differentiates between a normal person and a disabled person, in order to implement the principle of equal status and opportunity. Even disabled people should have access to all rights, protections and benefits.

Article 12 to 35 contained in Part III of the Indian Constitution deal with Fundamental Rights. These are: Right to equality, including equality before law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and equality of opportunity in matters of employment. The Constitution of India guarantees education for all children aged 6 to 14 years

(Article 21A), although the constitution of India lacks explicit mention of anti-discrimination of persons with disabilities in educational institutions.

The National Education Policy (2020) reaffirms that bridging the social category gaps in access, participation, and learning outcomes inschool education will continue to be one of the major goals of all education sector developmentprogrammes. The main focus of this document is on skill development, professional development and for inclusive development in education. While the Indian education system and successive government policies have made steady progress towards bridging gender and social category gaps in all levels of school education, largedisparities still remain - especially at the secondary level particularly for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) that have been historically under-represented in education. NEP (2020) describes Socio-EconomicallyDisadvantaged Groups as they can be broadly categorized based on gender identities (particularlyfemale and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, ScheduledTribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns,and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions(such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor).

The factors or barriers which affect the access of students with disabilities in educational institutions are categories in the following ways; Attitudinal Barriers,Physical Barriers, Inappropriate Curriculum, Untrained Teachers, Inadequate Funding, Poor Organization of the Education System and Policies as Barrier.

2. National Education Policy 2020 (Equity and Inclusion in Education)

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 defines Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) can be broadly categorized based on gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urbanpoor).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reaffirms the provisions in the Rights of Person with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 regarding inclusive education. The policy takes on a broader inclusion perspective and aims to achieve learning for all, particularly addressing the exclusion of socio-economically disadvantaged groups. The policy emphasizes the importance of inclusion of children with disabilities from early childhood education to higher education, with the provision of assistive devices and teaching and learning materials.

The Policy also recognizes the importance of creating enabling mechanisms for providing Children with Special Needs (CwSN) or Disabled/Divyang students, the same opportunities of obtaining quality education as any other child.

National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) also emphasizes that children up to the age of six years may be identified at the earliest and necessary interventions be made urgently so that they are capable of joining inclusive education at the right age.

Objectives-To describe the factors or barriers which affect the access of students with disabilities in educational institutions; To know the experiences of disabled students while gaining education; and To suggest some of the Effective Strategies that promotes rights of Disabled students studying in India.

Methodology- We have adopted Descriptive research design in this piece of research paper. Secondary sources of data including books related to Disabilities, relevant journal's Articles, and Government's documents/ policies have been presented in this research paper.

Acts and Schemes for PwDs-The Department of social Justice and Empowerment and various other departments for Persons with Disabilities (PwD) implements various schemes to provide benefits to them.

- National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC)
- DeenDayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)
- SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA)
- RashtriyaMadhyamikShikshaAbhiyan (RMSA)
- National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities (RGMF)
- Pre Metric scholarship and Post Metric Scholarship for students with Disabilities
- District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs)
- Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)
- National Overseas Scholarship for students with disabilities
- Trust Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
- National Fund for persons with disabilities and etc.

Effective Strategies-There may be various Effective Strategies promoting rights of Disabled students studying in India including- Infrastructural, Pedagogical, financial supports and etc.

- Make sure to provide transportation facilities, wheel-chair, ramp and etc. for disabled students in institutions like universities, colleges and schools;
- Special training for disabled students to access websites documents in easier way;
- Providing Special training for students with learning disability;
- Providing Access of effective Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and required supporting equipments including Software for collage bound students with disability;
- Providing regular workshop and training programme for students with disability;

- There should be Adoptive curriculum development in institutions, collages and schools;
- Should be provided Inclusive infrastructure for various types of disability in every institutions including Toilets, washrooms, seating arrangements and etc;
- Provision of Trained care-takers for both girls and boys with disability;
- Providing Disabled friendly attitudes;
- Providing financial assistance and cash collection counter on campuses;
- There should be teacher training programme for awareness of various types of disabilities.
- Providing disability service guidebook;
- Providing special clinic on campuses;
- Providing opportunities for career advising, counseling;

3. Conclusion

On the whole, it has been found that the essential steps are taken into accounts which are particularly effective for certain SEDGs and particularly for disabled person by both Policies and Acts. One-on-one teachers and tutors, peer tutoring, openschooling, appropriate infrastructure, and suitable technological interventions to ensure access can be particularly effective strategy for certain children with disabilities. Meanwhile, counselors and/or well-trained social workers that work with and connect with students, parents, schools, and teachers in order to improve attendance and learning outcomes have been found to be especially effective for children with disability. NEP 2020 reaffirms the provisions in the Rights of Person with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 regarding inclusive education. The policy takes on a broader inclusion perspective and aims to achieve learning for all, particularly addressing the exclusion of socio-economically disadvantaged groups. The policy emphasizes the importance of inclusion of children with disabilities from early childhood education to higher education, with the provision of assistive devices and teaching and learning materials.

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