# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR DISABLED AT SECONDARY STAGE IN HARYANA: INPUTS AND ACTION REQUIRED

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## ABSTRACT

All children with disability have a right to education. In the Biwako Millennium Framework, inclusive, barrier free and right based society is emphasised. The 86th Amendment of the Constitution of India ensures right to education to every child. Haryana is among few states in India which has implemented and notifies the Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE) for all the children of 6-14 years of age for getting free and compulsory education. In the past decade, education of children with disabilities has seen a paradigm shift from segregated education in separate schools to inclusive education in regular schools along with normal children. Successful implementation of inclusive education requires consideration of policy matters, legislation reforms, financial resources, human resources, infrastructural resources and intellectual resources. There is an urgent need for providing competencies at various levels for inclusion to be successful.

**KEYWORDS:** IEDSS, Haryana

## Introductory Review

Disability is part of human life, and children with disabilities can be found in every society, every culture and every community throughout the world. They have the right to respect and support in order to ensure their full participation and equality in society, but often, as a result of social attitudes or environment, they are unable to realise these rights. "Education contributes to an individual's journey toward self reliance and independence. Schools and instruction must be designed and organized to meet the varying needs of individual learners".

Inclusive Education (IE) is a relatively new concept. Basically, it means welcoming all children without discrimination into ordinary schools. By this change in attitude to education, differences between people will possibly be seen from a positive perspective. IE works on the premise that the school is better for all when it includes all children in a community, and that teachers become better teachers when they have the responsibility for all children. By assuming that responsibility, teachers become more active, innovative and creative and learn to see the needs of the individual.

Inclusion is an educational philosophy that brings all types of students together to create a class or school environment that is based on acceptance, belonging and a respect for human diversity. Effective inclusion establishes a collaborative, supportive and nurturing community of learners which is based on providing all students the services and accommodations they need to learn (Salend, 2001)

Rights to education should be applied to both disabled and non-disabled children. Education as human rights has been recognized and affirmed in various national and international conferences including Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26), Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28), World Conference on Education for All (1990), the Salamanca Conference (1994) and World Education Forum (2000) where UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, etc. and agencies and representatives from all over the world gathered to review and analyze their efforts towards the goal of "Education for All". Consequently, Inclusive education is regarded as the only means to achieve the goal of "Education for All".

**The Salamanca Statement**

More than 300 participants representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations met in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June in 1994 to further the objectives of "Education for All" by considering the fundamental policy shift required to promote the approach of "Inclusive Education", mainly to enable schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs. The Conference adopted the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and a Framework for Action.

The Salamanca Conference marked a new point for millions of children who had long been deprived of education. It provided a unique opportunity to place special education within the wider framework of the "Education for All" (EFA) movement. The goal is nothing less than the inclusion of the world CWSN children in schools and the reform of the school system. This has led to the concept of "Inclusive School". The challenge confronting the concept of "Inclusive School" is that of developing a child-centred pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities.

To provide quality basic education to all children is now a globally accepted reality (World Declaration on Education for All, 1990; Delhi Declaration, 1993). In developing countries, the focus is on access and participation with a reasonable level of achievement, while developed countries are concentrating on enhancing standards of achievement. A second trend is also discernible. School systems in developed countries have historically operated a parallel system of ordinary and special schools and now they are moving from mainstreaming• and integration towards the development of •Inclusive Schools (Ainscow, 1993, 1995). For school system in developing countries, inclusive schooling is not an alternative choice but inevitability. The goal for both is to organize effective schools for all children, including those with special needs. Planning and implementing this qualitative change to the system is a challenging task (Jangira, 1995).

The Dakar Framework for Action adopted a World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 2000, which established the goal to provide every girl and boy with primary school education by 2015. It also clearly identified Inclusive Education (IE) as a key strategy for the development of EFA. Spain proclaims that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs and that "those with special education needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting those needs." The Salamanca Statement also asserts that educational systems that take into account the wide diversity of children's characteristics and needs "are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education

to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire educationsystem."2

Most of the literature suggests that inclusion programs prove to be socially beneficial for both special education and general education students (Moore, Gilbreath & Maiuri, 1996; Salend, 1999). Positive outcomes for special education students include interacting with others more often, receiving and offering increased social support and developing and maintaining richer and longer-lasting friendships with non-disabled peers (Salend, 2001). Positive outcomes for general education students include greater understanding and acceptance of individual differences, recognizing strengths, recognizing their own needs and developing more realistic perspectives concerning people with disabilities (Salend, 1999).

Although the majority of research supports inclusion as a positive service model for improving social outcomes, some studies suggest that inclusion programs may lead to increased behavior problems, decreased self-esteem and a class climate of discomfort. Daniel and King (1998) found higher instances of behavior problems among students in inclusion classrooms, indicating that these problems led to decreased self-esteem, which in turn negatively impacted academic achievement. Studies that suggest discomfort of general education students are usually limited to inclusive classes with severely disabled students who have physical deformities or act out in an extremely violent manner. These same studies also suggest that discomfort levels decrease or disappear as the year progresses and teachers gain more experience working with special needs students (Salend, 1999).

Numerous studies cite the importance of teacher attitude as it relates to effective inclusion (Stoler, 1992; Campbell, 1997; Schmidt, et al., 2002). The idea that beliefs shape practices is as consistent within inclusion settings as it is in general education and special education settings. Decades of research suggest that contextual factors, such as teacher beliefs and classroom climate, affect student outcomes as much as student-dependent factors such as aptitude (Schmidt, et al., 2002). Lipson and Wixson (in Schmidt, et al., 2002) stated that "perhaps no single factor influences the instructional setting more than a teacher's knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning".

Although educators tend to agree with the principle of placing students with disabilities in general education environments, when it comes to their particular circumstances (class, school or district), their attitudes and reactions are much more varied (Salend, 2001). The most recurring themes in teachers' hesitancy regarding inclusion is the lack of training, professional development and general preparation for working with students with special needs (Stoler, 1992; Bang & Lamb, 1996; Campbell, 1997; Lipsky & Gartner, 1998; Salend, 2001; Schmidt et al, 2002). A survey conducted by Soodak, Podell, and Lehman (1998) revealed that teachers who questioned their own ability to make a positive impact on students were less receptive to inclusion, while teachers who had stronger, positive beliefs about their impact experienced less anxiety about inclusion.

Another prevalent belief among teachers is that special education students will benefit socially, but that non-special education students will regress both academically and socially (Campbell, 1997; Salend, 2001). Campbell's (1997) study which differentiated attitudes based upon experience, found that although veteran and beginning teachers were in agreement as to the social benefits for special education students, they were in disagreement as to how well non-disabled students could learn in inclusion programs. Veteran teachers believed that non-disabled children would not learn as well, while beginning teachers believed that non-disabled children's learning would not be affected.

For inclusion to be effective, teachers must personally accept the concept. For inclusion teachers to be effective, they must receive and participate in a full range of planning and training which includes team-teaching techniques, differentiated instruction, individualized instruction, disability training and the information that an instructor's attitude is closely linked to the effectiveness of teaching disabled students (Stoler, 1992). The success of inclusion inevitably depends on the classroom teacher's competence and willingness to manage the environment of all students in the class. Development and implementation of inclusion programs that do not address teacher attitudes and do not offer appropriate training, may very likely fail (Campbell, 1997).

**Haryana at Glimpse**

Haryana is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest state in India. This state has a very fertile land and is called the Green Land of India. It is located between 27°37' to 30°35' N latitude and between 74°28' and 77°36' E longitude. The altitude of Haryana varies between 700 to 3600 ft (200 metres to 1200 metres) above sea level. The state is bordered by Uttar Pradesh in east, Punjab in west, Himachal Pradesh in north and Rajasthan in south. Union Territory of Delhi is landlocked on 3 sides by Haryana. The state of Haryana has made tremendous progress in the field of education since its inception. SCERT Haryana Gurgaon was established in April 1979. It was the conglomeration of State Institute of Education and State Institute of Science, to provide new dimensions to school education. It has been the endeavor of the government to make educational facilities available to the poorest of children. Now accessibility to schooling is available within the radius of 1.10 km, 1.38 km, 1.66 km and 2.79 km at the primary, middle, secondary and senior secondary levels respectively. Haryana Board of School Education, established in September 1969 and shifted to Bhiwani in 1981, conducts public examinations at secondary and senior secondary levels twice a year. The Board also conducts examinations for Haryana Open School at secondary and senior secondary levels twice a year. The Haryana government implemented Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE), which provide free and compulsory education to all the children of 6-14 age groups.

**Present situation of IEDSS in Haryana**

Children with disabilities form one of the largest groups that are still outside the fold of the general education system. The proposed scheme by the Central Government for Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (I.E.D.S.S.) is therefore envisaged to enable children and young persons with disabilities access to secondary education and to improve their enrollment, retention and achievement in the general education system.

The Centrally Sponsored I.E.D.S.S. Scheme aims to enable all students with disabilities completing eight years of elementary schooling an opportunity to complete four years of secondary schooling (classes IX to XII) in an inclusive and enabling environment; provide educational opportunities and facilities to students with disabilities in the general education system at the secondary level (classes IX to XII); and support the training of general school teachers to meet the needs of children with disabilities at the secondary level.

## The objectives of the scheme will be to ensure that:

1. Every child with disability will be identified at the secondary level and his educational need assessed
2. Every student in need of aids and appliances, assistive devices, will be provided the same
3. All architectural barriers in schools are removed so that students with disability have access to classrooms, laboratories, libraries and toilets in the school
4. Each student with disability will be supplied learning material as per her requirement
5. All general school teachers at the secondary level will be provided basic training to teach students with disabilities within a period of three to five years
6. Students with disabilities will have access to support services like the appointment of special educators, establishment of resource rooms in every block
7. Model schools are set up in every state to develop good replicable practices in inclusive education.

## Target Group:

The scheme will cover all children of age 14-18 + passing out of elementary schools and studying in secondary stage in Government, local body and Government-aided schools, with one or more disabilities as defined under the Persons with Disabilities Act (1995) and the National Trust Act (1999) in the age group 14+ to 18+ (classes IX to XII), such as Blindness, Low vision, Leprosy cured, Hearing impairment, Locomotor disabilities, Mental retardation, Mental Illness, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, and may eventually cover Speech impairment and Learning Disabilities, etc. Girls with disabilities will remain as special focus and efforts would be made under the scheme to help them gain access to secondary schools, as also to information and guidance for developing their potential.

The Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) has been replaced by the scheme of Inclusive Education for the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) with effect from 1.4.2009. The scheme IEDC was meant to cover all classes in the school education stage. With the coverage of children with special needs in the elementary stage under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the scheme of IEDC was replaced by IEDSS under which children with disability in the secondary stage (classes IX to XII) are covered. During the present study the investigators collected the data for three years i.e. 2009 to 2011 which showed the enrolments of children disability wise in the different secondary and senior secondary schools in Haryana. In

Haryana 145 resource centres in inclusive schools has been identified and established in 119 blocks of 21 districts of the State with the help of SCERT.  Four non-government organizations (NGO) are also working with the State Government for the education of disabled children at secondary stage. The tables-1 to 3 showed the enrolment in 5000 schools in the state the data reflects that every year the enrolment of disabled children increasing and it is due the effort made by the administrators, special educators/resource teachers, parents and general teachers working at block, district and state level.

### Inputs to Inclusive Education

- Demand issues provide arguably the predominant challenges to IE. To meet the demand for CWSN, access, retention, and drop-out rates have plagued efforts in this area. Access issues are affected by factors at all levels of inputs: student, school, family/community and national. Probably most influential are socio-economic and cultural factors within the family: family economic survival needs (e.g., mothers' choices between sending children to school and having children work to generate income needed for family survival), traditional societal attitudes towards disability that may involve shame, guilt, under-expectations, and sheltering/patronization. These factors often combine with distance to school, mobility, school-building accessibility, discrimination, shortage of trained teachers and resource supports to address teachers' working conditions, and shortage of school places. Typical responses to access issues have been modifying buildings, knowledge dissemination and awareness campaigns, teacher and parent training on SNE.
- Finding, identifying and encouraging children to go to school have been another critical challenge.
- Conditions of teachers' work are yet another critical input in IE programs. Most implementation efforts focus on teaching teachers effective instructional strategies and ignore the conditions within which teachers must carry these out.  Other conditions of teachers' work reported to have a significant impact on their ability to deliver effective instruction: class ratios, classroom physical layout, administrative support and supervision, incentives for participation, and release time for preparation and evaluation. The Teacher Development Initiative in India noted that: "The most serious barrier to the project has been the attitude of administrators who have insufficient time and patience to learn about and understand its objectives.  Further, positive attitudes toward IE have been directly linked to teacher supports.
- Retention and drop-out rates have been linked to curriculum and instruction. Typically the focus has been on adapted curriculum and upgrading teachers' skills by providing training in child-centered, active pedagogy/instruction. Less often, the curriculum content itself is challenged.
- Available evidence suggests that less than 10% of children and youth with disabilities have access to any form of education. This compares with an enrolment rate of over 70 per cent for non-disabled children and youth in primary and upper primary education. This situation

exists despite international mandates declaring that education is a basic right for all children and calling for the inclusion of all children in primary education. Governments should ensure the provision of appropriate education which responds to the needs of children with all types of disabilities in the next decade.  The exclusion of children with disabilities from education results in their exclusion from opportunities for further development, particularly diminishing their access to vocational training, employment, income generation and business development. Failure to access education and training prevents the achievement of economic and social independence and increases vulnerability to poverty in what can become a self-perpetuating, inter-generational cycle.

## Action Required to Achieve Targets

1. State Government should enact legislation, with enforcement mechanisms, to mandate education for all children, including children with disabilities, to meet the goals of the Dakar Framework for Action and the millennium development goal of primary education for all children by 2015.   Children with disabilities need to be explicitly included in all national plans for education, including national plans on education for all of the Dakar Framework for Action.
2. Education Department should formulate educational policy and planning in consultation with Families and organizations of persons with disabilities and develop programmes of education which enable children with disabilities to attend their local primary schools.
3. Policy implementation needs to prepare the school system for inclusive education, where appropriate, with the clear understanding that all children have the right to attend school and that it is the responsibility of the school to accommodate differences in learners.
4. A range of educational options should be available to allow the selection of a school that will best cater for individual learning needs.
5. Adequate public budgetary allocation specifically for the education of children with disabilities should be provided within the education budget.
6. State Governments, in collaboration with others, should collect comprehensive data on children with disabilities, from birth to 16 years old, which should be used for planning appropriate early intervention and educational provision, resources and support services, from birth through school age.
7. Targets should be set for the enrolment of children with disabilities in early intervention, pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary (post-school) education.
8. Department of Health and other concerned departments should establish adequate early detection and identification services in hospitals, primary health care, centre and community-based health care services, with referral systems to early intervention services for all disabled infants and children. Governments should routinely screen high-risk pregnancies and high risk newborn babies for early detection of disabilities at birth or soon thereafter.
9. Department of Health and Education should establish early intervention services, in collaboration with other concerned ministries, self-help organizations, NGO and community-based agencies, to provide early intervention, support and training to all disabled infants and children with disabilities and their families.
10. Governments, including Department of Education, should work in partnership with NGOs at the national and local level to conduct public awareness campaigns to inform families of

children with disabilities, schools and local communities, of the right of children and youth with disabilities to participate in education at all levels, in urban and rural areas, and with particular emphasis on the inclusion of girls with disabilities where there is a gender imbalance in school attendance.

11. The following measures should be taken, where appropriate, by Governments in the region to improve the quality of education in all schools, for all children, including children with disabilities, in special and inclusive educational contexts: (a) conduct education and training for raising the awareness of public officials, including educational and school administrators and teachers, to promote positive attitudes to the education of children with disabilities, increase sensitivity to the rights of children with disabilities to be educated in local schools and on practical strategies for including children and youth with disabilities in regular schools; (b) provide comprehensive pre- and in-service teacher training for all teachers, with methodology and techniques for teaching children with diverse abilities, the development of flexible curriculum, teaching and assessment strategies; (c) encourage suitable candidates with disabilities to enter the teaching profession; (d) establish procedures for child screening, identification and placement, child-centred and individualized teaching strategies and full systems of learning and teaching support, including resource centres and specialist teachers, in rural and urban areas; (e) ensure the availability of appropriate and accessible teaching materials, equipment and devices, unencumbered by copyright restriction; (f) ensure flexible and adaptable curriculum, appropriate to the abilities of individual children and relevant in the local context; (g) ensure assessment and monitoring procedures are appropriate for the diverse needs of learners.

12. State Government should implement a progressive programme towards achieving barrier-free and accessible schools and accessible school transport.

13. State Government should encourage programmes of research at tertiary institutions to develop further effective methodologies for teaching children and youth with diverse abilities.

14. Organizations of and for disabled persons should place advocacy for the education of children with disabilities as a high priority item on their agenda.

15. Local cooperation needs to be strengthened to facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices and to support the development of inclusive education initiatives.

## Acknowledgements

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