CHALLENGES AND PROVISIONS IN INDIA : TOWARDS INCLUSION

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Abstract

The right to education is universal and must extend to all children, youth and adult with disabilities This right is enriched in the convention on the rights of the child (1989)and addressed in several significant internationally approved declarations, including the world declaration for Education for all (1990), the standard rules on the equalization of opportunity for persons with disability (1993), the UNESCO Salamanca statement and framework for action (1994)and the Dakar framework for action (2000) The Goal of the Dakar framework for action is to achieve "Education for all" by 2015. The goal of Dakar will only be achieved when all nations recognize that the universal right to education extends to individual with disabilities, and when all nations act upon their obligation to establish or reform public education systems that are accessible to and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. The United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, recommended that poverty reduction efforts has to include individuals with disabilities along with already targeted groups. These MDGs have been provided the framework for government intervention in India, contributing to legislation and programmes for inclusive education as a cost effective and quality option for all excluded children Despite these efforts for inclusive education in India, about 94%of the children with disabilities did not receive any educational services As a response the government of India introduced new policies on the education with disabilities.

This paper identifies the limitations on the context of survey findings and stresses the responsiveness of the recent policies for inclusion. The challenges of the inclusive education policy and the provisions in India will be discuss in the paper.

Key words *: Inclusion, challenges, provisions, India*

Introduction:

A society is neither efficient nor safe where, a number of persons are excluded from the meaningful partnership in the process of social, economical, political and cultural life of their communities If the right to education for all is to become a reality, we must ensure that all learners have access to quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives Still today millions of children, youth, adults continue to experience exclusion within and from education around the world.

Global Initiatives:

The UNESCO convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and other international Human rights treaties prohibited any exclusion from or limitation to educational opportunities on the bases of socially ascribed or perceived differences, such as sex, ethnic origin, language, religion, nationality, social origin, economic condition, ability…etc.. Education is not simply about making schools available for those who are already able to access them It is about being proactive in identifying the barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as in removing those barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion. The first effort in this context was made in 1990 Delegates from 155 countries ,as well as representatives from some 150 organizations, gathered at the World Conference on "Education for all" in Jomtien, Thailand (05-09 march 1990) They all agreed to universalize primary education and significantly reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade Ten years after many stakeholders maintained that in sufficient progress had been made towards the realization of Education for all(EFA) and that a renewed commitment was necessary The World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal reaffirms the goal of EFA was adopted a framework for action ,identified six goal of EFA(EFA Monitoring 2001) focusing on the achievement by 2015.

Apart from encouraging developments there are still an estimated 113 million children on the world not enrolled in primary schools (DFID,2001) In case of India, there are an estimated 25 million children school (MHRD 2003 Statics, Cited In World Bank 2004) Many of whom are marginalized by different dimensions Many national and international programmes have attempted to reach out of these excluded children but those with disabilities are often forgotten and remain invisible The Dakar World Education for all ,2000 confirmed that education can play a key role in overcoming exclusion of the disabled The MDG approved by world leaders at the

united Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 have been provided the framework for govt. intervention in India ,contributing to legislation and programmes for inclusive education as a cost – effective and quality option for all children with disability included. In India about 94% of children with disabilities did not receive any educational services and some specific groups like children/youth with mental retardation; disable children in rural areas, and girls/women with were for the marginalized and remain unidentified despite substantial efforts (NSSO;2003)The govt. of India introduced two new policies on education of children with disabilities- The Action plan for Inclusion in Education of children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD)2005, and the national policy for persons with Disabilities, 2006.

The Millennium Development Goals and Disability

International Aid agencies identified people with disabilities as another vulnerable group, noting that disability is both a cause and a result of poverty (World Bank, 2004) The MDG for education cannot be achieved without Disability Focus (DFID, 2002). Hence disability became a priority for the govt. of India to reduce poverty and various legislations were enacted Legislations for Inclusion of Person with disability in India. The govt. enacted three disability related legislations in the late 1990s

1. The Rehabilitation council of India (RCI) Act (1992) passed in the parliament, was created by the Ministry of Welfare (Presently known as the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) to regulate the man power development programmes in the field of education with special needs.

2. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 mandates that state or local government i) undertake yearly screening to identify "at risk" cases ii) ensure every child's access to a free education iii) authorize a 3% reservation quota in employment iv) provide accessibility to buildings, transport and other public services   v) appoint a disability Commissioner to monitor funds and safeguards the right of the people with disabilities.

3. The National Trust (for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities) Act 1999, with an objective to enable people with

disability to live as independently as possible within and as close to the community which they belong.

Drawbacks of the legislations

The legislation on Inclusive education service provision was found to be poor conceptualities and execution and is differently interpreted from the west (Singal 2005) further the weight age given to the medical model and clarity of disability than the social or human rights model of disability The laws were not taken seriously by the State govt. and there is a lack of compliance

Governments Recent Inclusive Education Policies

The Government of India has introduced two new policies on education of people with disabilities as a response to the drawbacks earlier efforts. The directives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have resulted in two government policies on disability.

1. The Action Plan for **Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities** (IECYD) in 2005 under the ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), to modify the existing physical infrastructure and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of all children, including children with special needs.

2. The National Policy for persons with disabilities in 2006 under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) emphasized the need for mainstreaming of the persons with disabilities in general education system through Inclusive Education.

Reality of Mainstreaming and Policy Implication

The National Policy mandates inclusion but has not defined the structure of general education system as a result of which there are selective inclusion A barrier for mainstreaming is the exam oriented curriculum, preference of alternative schooling by parents, to gain the benefit of medical rehabilitation Further the government policies focuses only on resources and physical access to regular schools or infrastructure rather than access to flexible curriculum and pedagogy and assessment

Policy Implications

Education is a fundamental right for all people women and men, of all ages, throughout the world. The Inclusive Education Policies in India need to be reformed in several ways to deal with the problems of fragmented and sporadic implementation, inadequate resources and discrimination and better implementation.

Label Free Survey

dentification and placement of students should be based on the needs for services and not on the category of special education needs.

Universal Access and Participation

Along with the physical access or infrastructural access there should be ample provision for academic access (to curriculum and instruction through adaptations and support) social access (to peers) and economic access (to affordable schooling).

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment of students outcome is one of the most significant challenges for IE,EFA There is a lack of expertise in the process of assessment and evaluation Specific training and allocate on of resources (economic- technical) will enrich the process of academic and social outcome.

Attitudinal Changes

The societal attitudes cannot be ignored when we look the policy implications To develop a positive attitude towards disability among all the stakeholders ranging from govt officials to teachers as well as parents and the community members is necessary to create a congenial environment.

Training and Professionals Developments

Teachers should be given proper training to learn curriculum developments strategies, facilities flexible structure, provide alternative/multiple assessment, and address cultural/linguistic diversity of learners Apart from the initiatives of the Action Plan for Inclusion in Education and Youth with Disabilities 2005 for the provisions of pre- service and in service training of the general as well as the special teachers ,still more efforts to be made from different levels to teach a diverse range of learners and promote Inclusive Education.

Conclusion

One of the main features of Inclusive education is development of the capacity of the general education systems to meet the educational needs of the children with disabilities India has to meet the EFA goals and the collective MGDs within a specified time frame ,there should be a strong commitment by the government and the stakeholders to provide support to inclusive education and necessary steps must be taken to embrace inclusive education Making the programme for disabilities as an integral part of the general education system rather than a system with in general education system is a unique feature of inclusive education and the easy approachability of the area of services so that children with disabilities could come to school from home and make the inclusive education approach realistic.

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