Inclusive Education: NEP- 2020 Perspective

Dr. Arti Bhatnagar and Ms. Neha Madan

Abstract

Each learner is unique in oneself in this diverse society. The responsibility of including all in the process of development lies on all the stakeholders involved in this path. And equal responsibility lies on the shoulder of education system of this country. Achieving this potential lies in the concept of Inclusive Education, though from centuries many efforts have been made at global level to make society inclusive but still there are barriers, which lead to lack of access. In the present paper entitled-- ***Inclusive Education: NEP 2020 Perspective-- attempt has been made to highlight the attempts made in NEP—2020, to ensure inclusion. The present paper*** would discuss the strategies to overcome barriers in the pathway to achieve Education for All by emphasizing on **6 E's i.e. Equity, Equal Access, Equal Opportunity, Equal Dignity, Effective Communication and Embracing Culture and 5R's to make inclusion possible into reality i.e., Reach, Right, Responsibility, Relationship, and Respect,** by which diverse needs of learners can be addressed. Moreover, schemes launched by the government to ensure inclusion and strategies related to empowerment of teachers in making classroom safe place for development of all learners would also be discussed.

Key Words: Inclusive Education, NEP-2020, Empowerment, Strategies

Introduction

The right kind of education is not concerned with any ideology, however much it may promise a future utopia: it is not based on any system, however carefully thought out, nor is it a means of conditioning the individual in some special manner. Education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free, to flower greatly in love and goodness. That is what we should be interested in, and not in shaping the child according to some idealistic pattern. The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual, who is capable of dealing with life, as a whole.

J. Krishnamurti

No one can deny in accepting the reality that education is important to live with happiness, and which enables students to do the analysis and critical thinking, while making life decisions. As we move on, life gives various survival challenges to humans but if we have education as guide to us, we can fight the failure and achieve success in life. The only one thing that can remove corruption, unemployment, and environmental problems is education itself. If we can lead life where we can stay independently on our feet, this is the real purpose of education. It should free the perception that education only deals with degrees. With this view in

Dr. Arti Bhatnagar, Associate Professor Guru Ram Dass College of Education
Ms. Neha Madan, Assistant Professor Guru Ram Dass College of Education

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 9 30-12-2022 10:17:18

mind each nation in the world wants to bring development, through education as powerful weapon in hand. Similarly, for governments and nations, to make their country developed, their first budget allocation must be on the education, its infrastructure in schools and colleges. And progress can be ensured if all are included, that is, each human is included in the path of development.

Moreover, education today is also greatly influenced by the views of Mahatma Gandhi who regarded education as an effective medium of bringing out the best in any individual and developing his personality in a harmonious way. For this, he dreamt of "Swaraj" wherein every citizen of the country would be living a life which would be free from all kinds of exploitations and would be having the atmosphere of total equality and fraternity and this can be made realistic, only if society is Inclusive, that is, it includes all. Moreover, as prescribed by **The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995)** an inclusive society is "society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play".

And for this, various education policies, commissions came up with innovative recommendations for the progress of nation through holistic development of learners by including all. Recently National Education Policy -2020 was published (came into existence) and it is being implemented to enable its citizens to not only learn but also learn how to learn so that they can cope up with rapid changes undergoing in the knowledge landscape at global level, which is possible through Inclusive Education.

Especially with enactment of Right to Education (RTE) which mandates free and compulsory education to all children from 6-14 years of age, classrooms are getting more diverse day by day at elementary level. One of the key objectives of RTE- SSA is Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Three important aspects of UEE are access, enrollment, and retention of all children in 6-14 years of age. And for achievement of this objective, UEE has further been facilitated by the Constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, by making free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right, for all the children in the age group of 6-14 years. This Amendment has given a new thrust to the education of Children With Special Needs (CWSN), as without their inclusion, the objective of UEE cannot be achieved and social change is not possible. In fact, inclusion of one of the groups, which is extremely crucial for UEE, is perhaps that of the CWSN and this aspect is emphasized in NEP-2020 also which focuses on Human Rights Approach aiming at-- Creating an inclusive culture in an inclusive society.

Presently, the government is coming up with many new schemes/ policies through which efforts can be made to ensure inclusion of all. But there are many gaps in the form of physical, participation and learning outcomes, which need to be overcome in reality.

Hence in the conceptual based paper entitled ***Inclusive Education: NEP 2020 Perspective*** would discuss strategies to overcome barriers in the pathway to achieve Education For All by emphasizing on 6 E's i.e. Equity, Equal Access , Equal Opportunity, Equal dignity, Effective Communication and Embracing Culture and 5R's to make inclusion possible into reality i.e. Reach, Right, Responsibility, Relationship and Respect by which diverse needs of learners can be addressed to. As in the school, most significant role played in learning process of child is **classroom.** The classroom is a platform, which offers a dynamic, productive space where ideas, values, information, knowledge are shared and conveyed between main components in the process of learning i.e., students and teachers. In the present paper recent schemes launched by government to ensure

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 10 30-12-2022 10:17:18

inclusion and strategies related to empowerment of teachers in making classroom safe place for development of all learners has been discussed.

The main highlights of the paper are:

- Need for an Inclusive Society
- Meaning of Inclusive Education
- NPE- 2020 : Perspective on Inclusive Education
- Making Inclusion a reality – 6E's and 5R's
- Government Scheme: Samagra Shiksha Scheme
- Empowering teachers in the process of Inclusion

Need for an Inclusive Society

If anybody talks about progressive society then they need to reflect on **inclusive society** which is expressed thus-- *An inclusive society is a society that over-rides differences of race, gender, class generation, and geography, and ensures inclusion, equality of opportunity as well as capability of all members of the society to determine an agreed set of social institutions that govern social interaction. (Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, Helsinki, July 2008)*

The World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen 1995) defines an inclusive society as-- "society for all in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play". Hence such inclusive society must be based on respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultural and religious diversity, social justice and the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, democratic participation, and the rule of law-- ones which are promoted by social policies that seek to reduce inequality and create flexible and tolerant societies that embrace all people.

In the eyes of law every citizen, irrespective of other norms, is being provided equity, justice and equal opportunities and in this process legal instruments assure about the guiding principles that will guarantee that all citizens are being provided, and violators of human rights should be brought to justice. The judiciary which serves to protect just societies must be impartial, accountable, and inclusive to give weight to the opinions of those who defend the inclusiveness of the society at the local, regional, and national levels. To gain feeling of atmosphere of inclusion and participation in society, maintenance of security of all individuals is of paramount importance.

> *Inclusion is community. No one becomes included by receiving handouts, even if these handouts are given by public bodies and with public resources. No one becomes included by being treated by a program in which they are no more than a number or a statistic. Inclusion is connection to the network of community development, it is to become more than a speck of dust, to have a forename and surname, with one's own distinctive features, skills and abilities, able to receive and give stimulus, to imitate and be imitated, to participate in a process of changing one's own life and collective life.*
>
> *(Busatto, 2007: 4)*

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 11 30-12-2022 10:17:18

The above quotation places emphasis on the recognition of the individual and the relationship between community and the individual. This suggests that inclusion is a mutually beneficial state for both the community and the individual and in this path **inclusive education** plays key role and it can reach peak when it leads to inclusiveness.

Meaning of Inclusive Education

Promoting inclusion is about reforming the education system. Inclusive education is much more cost effective than a segregated system, not only in terms of the running costs but also the long-term costs on the society.
--Roger Slee (UNESCO, 2005).

Inclusive education means education of all students, where all students are equal participants in the learning process. The term 'inclusive education' is a step ahead of integrated education in that, it goes beyond children with disabilities and refers to an education system that includes all.

An inclusive class may have amongst others, children who are disabled or gifted, street or working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children belonging to religious, linguistic minorities or children from scheduled tribes, scheduled castes or other backward classes. Hence, we can summarize meaning of inclusion as:

Inclusion

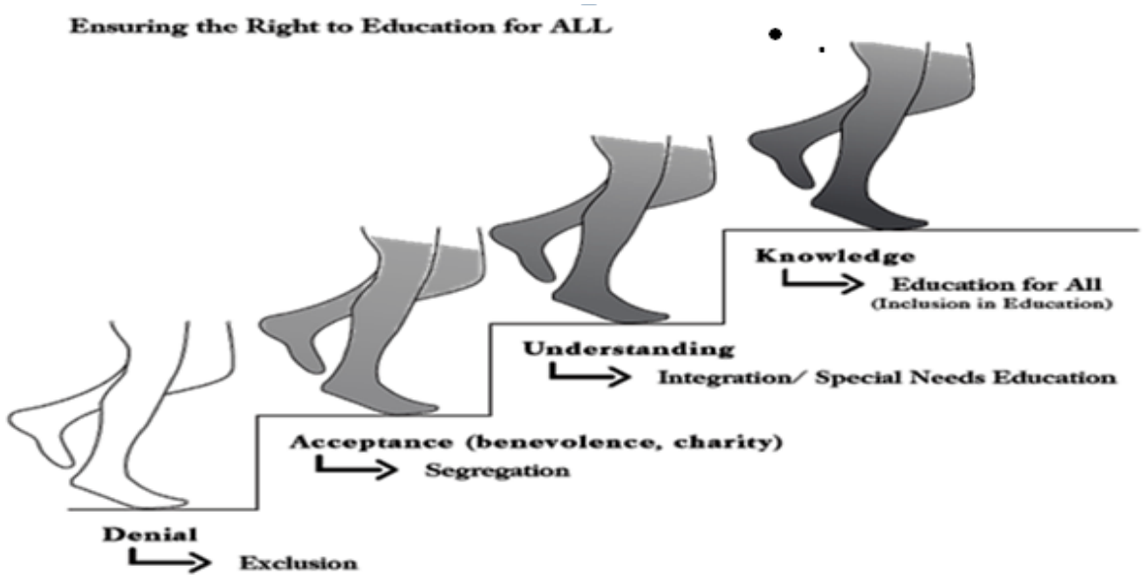
Inclusion is not:

- Focusing on an individual or small group of pupils for whom the curriculum is adapted, different work is devised, or support assistance is provided,
- About how to assimilate individual pupils with identified special educational needs into existing forms of schooling.

Inclusion is:

- A process (rather than a state), by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals.
- Regards inclusion and exclusion as connected processes; schools developing more inclusive practices may need to consider both.
- Emphasizes the reconstructing of curriculum provisions in order to reach out to all pupils as individuals.
- Emphasizes overall school effectiveness.
- Is of relevance to all phases and types of schools, possibly including special schools, since within any educational provision teachers face groups of students with diverse needs and are required to respond to this diversity.

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 12 30-12-2022 10:17:18



Steps from Exclusion to Inclusion 5

Source: Lise Vislie, 2003.

NPE- 2020: Perspective on Inclusive Education

There is no doubt to accept the fact that India has witnessed visible improvement in education especially with regard to educational infrastructure and students' enrollment in the recent years. In particular, the Right to Education Act 2009 has successfully managed to increase enrolment in the upper primary level (Class 6-8). Nationally, between 2009– 2016 the number of students in the upper primary level increased by 19.4 percent. In NPE- 2020 attempts have been made to address the growing inequality and inequity-plaguing country's education system today. Through survey, the NEP- 2020 recognizes high dropout rates among socio-economic strata and vulnerable minorities. More importantly, recognition of barriers that lead to inefficient resource allocations, such as small school campuses and causes for lesser participation of the girl child in rural areas. And due to most of the children living in difficult geographical areas education needs are not met. NEP-2020 has emphasized on human rights approach and focused that every human being has the freedom to dream, thrive and contribute to the nation and to achieve this, it aims at creating an inclusive culture to build up inclusive society.

During surveys, it was found that, in reality, there are so many gaps-- such as there is lack of access to learning and infrastructural facilities which lead to lack of participation of such students. Therefore, in NEP-2020, recommendations have been given to bridge the gap by making accessible all aspects of learning, with infrastructure facilities etc. and by ensuring meaningful, age- appropriate participation of learners through adoption of universal design of learning, with a view to enhanced learning performance adaptations in terms of curriculum transaction and assessment to be followed. It broadly aligns with the objectives of The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016, and also focuses on creation of Special Education Zones (SEZ).

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 13 30-12-2022 10:17:18

Making Inclusion a Reality – 6E's and 5R's

A thought often comes to the mind of educators, when they observe children that -- **"*Children have multiple and diverse identities. But why do children look similar? Imagine children at school with their school uniforms! Don't they look similar? In fact, they do; not only in their physical appearances, but also with respect to certain perceptions about them. Generally, attributes like playfulness, innocence, purity, goodness, naiveté, etc. are used while talking about a child. A child is a child after all!"***

It is our duty as an educated citizen to ensure inclusion of all and for this if we reflect on analysis of NEP-2020, it has focused on **6E's and 5R's i.e.** Equity, Equal Access, Equal Opportunity, Equal Dignity, Effective Communication and Embracing Culture and 5R's to make inclusion possible into reality i.e. Reach, Right, Responsibility, Relationship and Respect.

For implementation of 6E's and 5R's, empowerment of teachers in following ways can help to ensure inclusive education.

- **Establish and maintain a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere for ensuring participation of all.**

To develop sense of belonging, feeling of self-esteem, self-image motivation to achieve, speed of adjustment to the larger classroom and new demands, general behavior, and general level of achievement, positively affects the student achievement and development of personality. Fostering positive social relationships between students with disabilities and their peers requires the preparation of nondisabled peers in the classroom so that they understand the needs of their new classmates. One of the most critical things, an inclusion classroom teacher must do is to establish and maintain a positive and supportive classroom atmosphere. Students are more likely to follow directions, work hard, and exhibit positive classroom behavior when they feel wanted and appreciated by the teacher.

Creating a Positive Inclusion Classroom Climate

- Learn and use students' names and know something about each student.
- Hold daily classroom meetings each morning to help build a sense of community and provide opportunities for conversation among students.
- Provide unstructured time (e.g., recess) when students can practice their social skills with peers and experience feedback.
- Encourage journal writing to improve self-awareness.
- Provide opportunities for students to participate noncompetitively (without (Placeholder1) tryouts or auditions) in all curricular activities. Avoid unnecessary competition among students.
- Provide ways for students to provide feedback regarding their experience at school and show them that their input is taken seriously.
- Make a point of connecting briefly and informally, over a period of several days, with individual students who are having difficulties. This establishes a relationship that will be helpful if the student's situation requires a more formal discussion at another time.

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 14 30-12-2022 10:17:18

- **Enhancing Performance Through Modification in Classroom Strategies**

1. Team Teaching

Team Teaching is an approach in which two or more teachers, come together, plan together, teach together and evaluate together. As an educator, we have to work out the depth in which the therapists and doctors give their inputs and how they can be related to education and behaviour of the child in school. In inclusive schools the regular education teacher and the special education teacher also work together in providing service to children with Special Needs in the classroom. In inclusive education, meeting the special educational needs of children is the joint responsibility of the regular teacher, the special teacher, and other professionals.

2. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning is a strategy used by group/number of students to achieve a common goal with mutual collaboration and support. In an inclusive classroom where a large number of children with and without disabilities have been enrolled, children can be taught with the help of cooperative learning in which they have common goals. If a child with Special Need is to be taught, he/she should be placed with the children who have the sensitivity and skills to deal with them.

3. Role Playing and Observation

Role-playing is a helpful technique for engaging student interest and provides opportunities for practice and feedback. One way to establish motivation and to inject some humor into the learning process is to ask students to role-play a situation in which the identified skill is lacking. Role-playing allows students to take on roles, provide feedback to one another, and practice new skills. Role-playing enables students to simulate a wide range of school, community, and workplace interactions. For students with intellectual disabilities, role-playing can provide an opportunity to practice appropriate small talk, a social skill that is key to acceptance in the inclusive classroom.

- **Modification in Assessment Pattern**

National Assessment Centre, **PARAKH** will be formulated to create equitable systems of assessment for children with learning disabilities. Alternate models for schooling are proposed to advance this objective.

- **Creation of Special Educational Zones**

One of the standout recommendations of the NEP-2020 is the proposal to set up Special Educational Zones (SEZs) in regions with significant population belonging to Socio Economically Disadvantaged Groups. The key purpose is to spread education in the remotest and farthest places in India. This will be done by pumping extra resources and aligning multiple schemes and programmes of Centre and States to transform these backward regions.

While this idea is novel and holds promise to transform educational access in inaccessible areas of the country (such as urban ghettos with substantial minority population), the policy hasn't specified what the criterion for these zones would be and how will they be distinguished in urban and rural landscapes.

- **Government Schemes: Samagra Shiksha Scheme**

Another initiative taken by government is in the form of **Samagra Shiksha Scheme.** The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the school education programme Samagra Shiksha Scheme 2.0 till

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 15 30-12-2022 10:17:18

the 2025-26 financial year. An integrated scheme for school education covering the entire gamut from pre-school to Class XII which will deliver inclusive, equitable, and affordable school education. subsumes the three Schemes of **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).** This scheme covers **1.16 million schools,** over 156 million students and 5.7 million Teachers of Govt. and Aided schools (from pre-primary to senior secondary level). And it includes a **provision to support out of school children** from age 16 to 19 with funding of Rs. 2000 per grade to complete their education via open schooling. There will also be **greater focus on skills and vocational education,** both for students in school and dropouts.

Conclusion

NEP-2020 perspective on Inclusive Education has done well by loudly recognizing the challenges faced by gendered categories, minorities and children with special needs. It has also done well in terms of proposing a series of laudable steps including education SEZs to address the structural challenges of education in inaccessible regions. Through modifications, opportunities to all can be made accessible. As **Inclusion** means-- **Vision + Placement + Support + Resources + Leadership + 5As (Acceptance, Access, Adapted Curriculum, Adapted Assessment, Adapted Teaching).**

Hence, we can say regular schools with this inclusive orientation 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 education system capable of positive change itself in society.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education

References

Batra, Poonam. 2005. "Voice and Agency of Teachers: Missing Link in National Curriculum Framework 2005", *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 1, pp. 4347- 4356.

Das, Deepa. 2009. Unpublished paper presented in the workshop Classroom Curriculum, Pluralism and Social Inclusion organized by Deshkal Society in collaboration with UNICEF November 11-12, NEIBM, Guwahati

DISE (2013). Elementary Education in India: Progress towards UEE. Delhi,

India: NUEPA and MHRD, GoI. p. 27.

Hargreaves, A. (1994) Changing teachers, changing times: teachers' work and culture in the post-modern age, London: Cassell.

GOI. 1993. "Learning Without Burden", Report of the National Advisory Committee, MHRD, New Delhi

GOI. 2009. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department) accessed from the website:

GOI. 2009b. *Teacher Development and Management, Discussions and Suggestions for Policy and Practice Emerging from an International Conference on Teacher Development and Management*, New Delhi: MHRD, Department of School Education and Literacy.

NCERT. 2005. *National Curriculum Framework, 2005*, New Delhi.

NCTE. 2009. *National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher,* New Delhi.

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 16 30-12-2022 10:17:19

Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (n d) Training Module on Cerebral Palsy and Loco-motor Impairment. Retrieved from http://ssa.nic.in/inclusiveeducation/training-module-for-resource-teachers-for-disablechildren/Module%205%20Cerebral%20Palsy.pdf/at_download/file. Accessed on 20/12/2013.

Singh, L. C & P. C. Sharma (1995), Teacher Education and the Teacher, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House

SSA. Inclusive Education SSA. Accessed from htp://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/India/India_Inclusive_Education.pdfon 2.02.2010

Polloway, E.A. et al. (1989). Strategies for Teaching Learners with Special Needs. Fourth Edition. Merrill Publishing Company. A Bell & Howell Information Company, Columbus, Ohio 43216.

UNESCO. 2003. *Overcoming Exclusion through Inclusive Approaches in Education: A Challenge and a Vision*, Paris.

UNESCO (1994), The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. Paris: UNESCO.

Vislie, L. (2003), "From integration to inclusion: Focusing global trends and changes in the western European societies", European Journal of Special Needs Education, Vol.18, No.1. Routledge.

https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/equitable-and-inclusive-vision-in-the-nep-2020/

01-IJTET23Jan01_p10-17.indd 17 30-12-2022 10:17:19