

Present status of inclusive education in India

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Abstract

The democratic system of governance around the world is consistent with the philosophy of inclusion. The same policy was introduced in the field of education in the name of Inclusive Education in the world. The purpose of this study is to elaborate the background of inclusive education and enumerate the present status of inclusive education in India. This work evaluates the policies taken by the government regarding Inclusive education. Documentary analysis method of qualitative research has been followed in this present study. On the basis of historical evidences and evaluating the documents about inclusion in education the researchers have tried to fulfill the purpose of the study. The paper also shows the various policies which have been taken by the documents of Indian government in the perspective of Inclusive Education.

Keywords: Inclusive Education; Philosophy of Inclusion; Indian Inclusive Education; Education for All

1 Introduction

Every child is the concern of his/her nation; he is the future citizens of the country. Individual Citizens are called upon to contribute to the development of a nation. Each child is unique and different (Sharma, 2018). They have variant abilities and learn in various ways at a several motion. For development of a nation, every child of that nation must be developed and this work is possible only through education. Therefore, every child in the country must be included in education. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act 2009) is one of the strong steps towards achieving this goal in India. The educational system must provide equal opportunities to every child in education for optimal development. The diversity that exists among students as active members of the community drives a sense of inclusiveness in all sector such as education (Gómez, et al., 2021). Inclusive Education has emerged as a guiding principle regarding this aspect. Inclusive Education recognizes that these differences are valuable and bring creativity and through them ideas are shared and experienced (Lakshmi, 2018).

India is a democratic country where equality of opportunity is guaranteed to the citizens. Despite this constitutional right, the informal discrimination is common in our society like the deviation in social, economic, cultural, physical, intellectual and behavioral attributes. Recognizing this unusual inequality, national and international declarations support the inclusion of all children in schools without any discrimination. The democratic system of any governance across the world follows the philosophy of inclusion and the same policy was introduced in the field of education in the name of Inclusive education in India. Often it is seen that children with mental retardation are not accepted with equality in comparison to the normal child of the society (Kumar, Sharma, & Gunthey, 2010). Inclusive education means participating in education by all types of students under one roof that is to give equal opportunity to all learners in education. Inclusive Education is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof (Kumar & Kumar, 2007).

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Inclusion is about building the inner strength and confidence in children. Several policies affirm the right of all children to be valued equally, treated with respect and provided with equal opportunities within the mainstream school (Avaramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Inclusion isn't an experiment to be tested but a value to be followed (Hasan, Halder, & Debnath, 2018). According to UNICEF (2003), the central and state governments have taken a number of initiatives to improve the enrollment and achievement of children with disabilities, but most services for children with disabilities are concentrated in large cities (Sharma, 2018). Following the publication of the Salamanca Report in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994), a large number of developing countries began formulating their policies to include students with disabilities in mainstream schools (Singh, 2016).

There is a lack of consistent information on the level and educational status of disable learners in India according to gap felt during review of relevant literature. The researcher here shows what the present state of inclusive education in India is and what steps the government of India has taken in the perspective of inclusive education and criticizes them.

Objectives

The major objectives of the research work are as follows-

- To state the background of Inclusive Education in India.
- To investigate the present status of inclusive education in India.
- To evaluate different types of acts, policies and programmes relating to Inclusive Education in India.

2 Methodology

Methodology of the study is Qualitative in nature. The researchers have followed the method of Documentary Analysis Method. Documentary analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents- both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material (Bowen, 2009). The researchers have also taken help of reports & journals of various committees/commissions of India and Census report 2011 of India.

3 Results

According to the objectives of the study the researchers analyze the data and also describe the data chronologically.

3.1 Background of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a new approach which has had a long history. For looking the history of inclusive education, it has been divided into seven periods which depend on the acceptance of disability (IGNOU, 2017).

Exclusion period

In this period abolition and abandonment represent the initial story of the creation of disability. During this period, as soon as a disable child was born, he/she was killed, burned, abandoned or vanished. That is, disabled children were excluded from the society.

The period of acceptance as an entertainer

At this period disabled children were accepted in the society as a subject of ridicule, amusement or any other purpose like servants, prostitutes and slaves.

Discrimination period

This is the medieval period when disable children were discriminated in the name of religious sanctity. And these children were used in witchcraft.

The period of sympathy and asylum

In this stage, the disable people were starting to be thought as a subject of pity, sympathy and asylum and consequently many asylums and institutions were established during these days for their care and rehabilitation.

The period of isolation and special school

This was the period of Renaissance movement in the western world. At that time special schools for children with disabilities were established separately where they could study outside the mainstream school. This isolating system of education later became known as a special education as a branch of education.

The period of segregation

This period began in 20th century. In this time, the special education was moved in segregated setting of the special classes within the regular classes from isolated setting of special school. The reason for taking this initiative was to make all disable children without consideration for admitting in schools.

The period of inclusive climate

This is the modern period of special education which is moved in inclusive setting schools. In this period all children are being treated equally and they are being welcomed in the mainstream schools. The special children are attending in the regular classes with the normal children. This approach is called Inclusive Education.

The implementation of RTE act, SSA (Sarva Siksha Abhiyan) and RMSA (RashtriyaMadhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan) has been playing a significant role in the field of inclusive education of children with disability (IGNOU, 2017).

4 Discussion

4.1 Present status of Inclusive education in India

According to Census, 2011 of India, allover 61% population of disable children are attending to educational institutions & 12%of disable population attended to educational institutions earlier. But 27% of disabled children have never attended to educational institutions. The country is facing the challenges to be enrolled the absence of disabled children in education and retain them in educational institutions.

The gender ratio of children attending Inclusive schools, there are 30% non-disable male children and 18% disable male children in school. On the other side 38% non-disabled female children and 14% disabled female children are attending in Inclusive Schools (Census, 2011 of India).

According to Census, 2011, there are significant differences between disable students and non-disable students in their academic performance. 12.31% disable students and 23.26% non-disable students are in satisfactory (50+) academic performances. 14.35% disable students and 35.65% non-disable students are in average (40+) performance. And 5.22% disable students and 8.91% non-disable students are in slightly (below 40) performance.

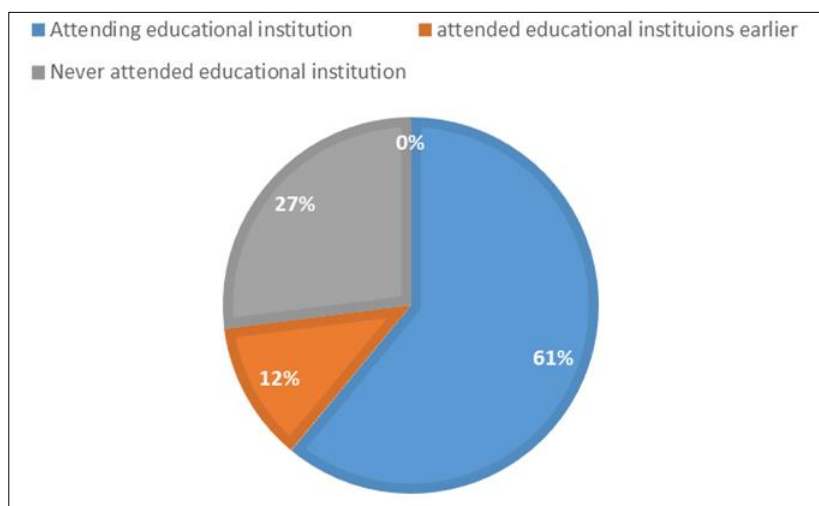


Figure 1 Status of school attendance of disable population 5-19 years in India (in percentage) according to Census, 2011

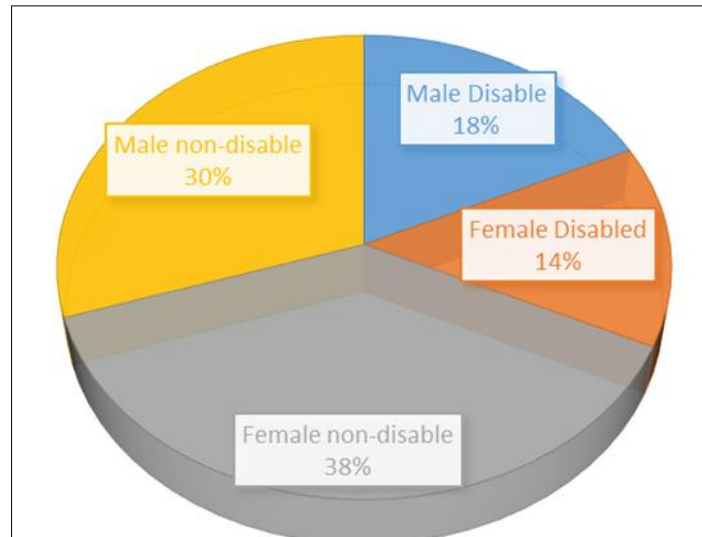


Figure 2 Gender ratio of children attending in Inclusive schools – Census, 2011

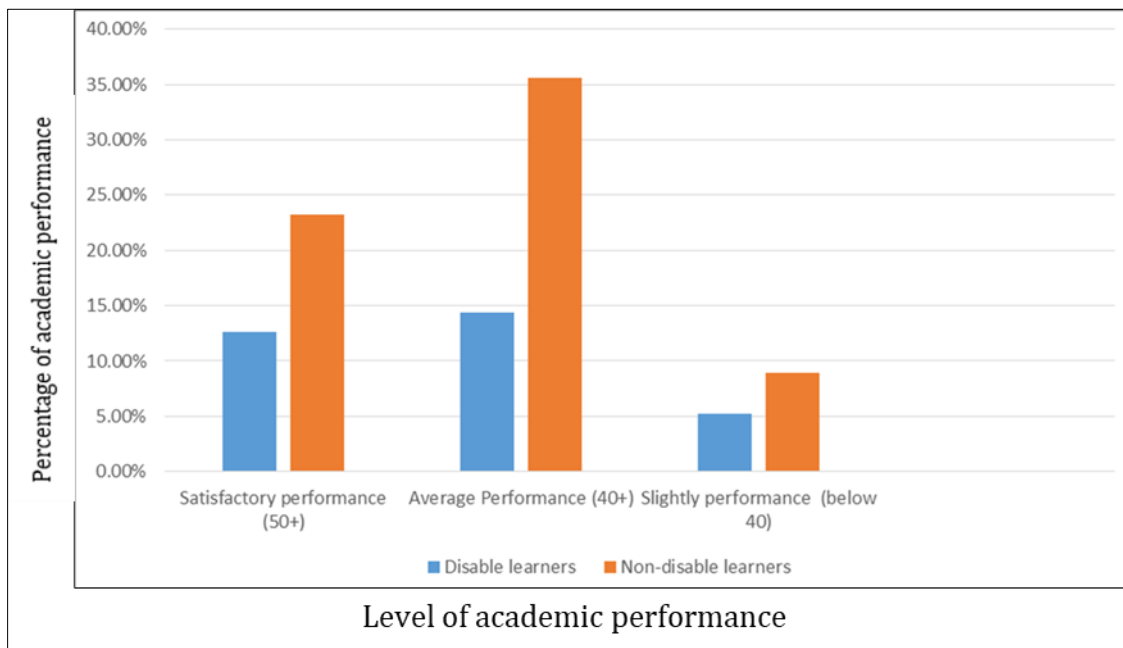


Figure 3 Comparison between the academic performance of disable and non-disable learners in their academic performances – Census, 2011

4.2 Evaluation of different types of acts, policies and programs regarding Inclusive Education in India

There are several acts, policies and programs initiated by the government of India to develop the inclusion in mainstream school. Over the years, the government has launched different programs and schemes for the welfare of persons with disabilities.

The policies and acts initiated by government of India for the welfare of disable children are discussed chronologically in the following:

The Mental Health Act (1987)

The Mental Health Act, 1987 consolidates and amends the law related to the treatment and care of the mentally ill people so that better provisions may be made for them as appropriate and in relation to the subject matter and so on.

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI-1992)

The Indian parliament enacted the RCI act on September, 1992 and this act was amended in 2000. Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) works on manpower development to provide rehabilitation services. The RCI standardizes the quality of syllabi and improves the quality of all professionals and staffs working in the field of Rehabilitation and special education.

Person with Disability Act (PWD- 1995)

It was the most important legislation enacted by the parliament in the relevance of disability of India. This Act was passed in December, 1995. Person with Disability act stands for equal opportunities for every person and it gives protection of right and full participation of disable person. This act provides education, vocation, appropriate environment, social security etc. for all disable people. According to the act, every disable child will get free education in a good organization climate up to eighteen years. This act ensures that the responsibility of government for prevention and protection of disability persons and removes the discrimination against the disable person.

Right to Education Act (RTE- 2009)

Right to Education act is also called The Right of children to free and compulsory education act. This act was approved by the cabinet of the parliament of India on 2nd July, 2009. This act tries to protect the rights of children belonging to the backward groups from any kind of discrimination and ensure their completion of elementary education. The RTE act ensures the inclusion of children with disabilities (including children with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, autism and multiple disabilities) to pursue free and compulsory education.

The Rights of Person with Disabilities Act (RPWD Act- 2016)

The RPWD Act, 2016 provides equality, dignity and respect to the PWD for his or her own integrity equally with others (Narayan & John, 2017). According to this act, disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept. This act gave 21 types of disabilities.

The national programs in the field of education are presented below

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA- 2001)

In 2000, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched for elementary education. This is a national level project. SSA aims to ensuring quality education for every child from 6 to 14 years age up to eighth grade. SSA attempts to implement inclusive education. SSA provides orientation of all teachers to the education of children with special needs. The school has assisted in the necessary construction work to create a barrier-free environment. SLRO and DLRO have been created with the aim of enlisting the help of voluntary organizations experienced in the education of children with special needs at the state and district level. Special educator will be recruited through DLRO for the purpose of providing special services.

Inclusive Education for Disable at Secondary Stage (IEDSS-2009)

The scheme of Inclusive Education for Disable at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) was launched in the year of 2009-2010. This scheme replaced the earlier centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education for Disable Children (IEDC) and would provide assistance for the inclusive education of the disable children in classes IX-XII. The principal objective of the program was to identify the disable children at secondary level and each disable student would be supplied learning material, all infrastructural barriers in schools would be removed for the disable students and all general school teachers at secondary level should be provided basic training on inclusive education.

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA- 2009)

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in March, 2009. The purpose of the program was to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality. The scheme aims to improve students' enrollment at the secondary school within a reasonable distance of residence, with the aim of keeping your general enrollment 100% by 2017 and universal retention by 2020.

5 Conclusion

In view of the present study, it can be concluded that after a long struggle, a period of education has started in India where all students have equal rights in education. And the Government of India is introducing a variety of scheme, policy

and act to keep this stream of education flowing. But even after introducing so many regulation, act and scheme, the ultimate success has not been achieved. Therefore, along with the government, teachers and guardian also need to be aware enough about inclusion in education. And every child needs to be included in education. Every child should be given equal dignity and respect without any discrimination. Only then the inclusive education may get a great success in our country.

Compliance with ethical standards

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