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# Educational Policies for Persons Living with Disabilities in India

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## ABSTRACT

*The World Health Organization states that among the 650 million people who are currently living with disabilities in the world, 200 million are children. This statistics is alone suffice to show the importance of education for persons living with disabilities. Despite the need of education for the disabled community, the same has not been met by them. To cater this, several nations around the world has framed various educational policies for the persons living with disabilities. India is also not an exception to this, because the educational policies of India had brought persons living with disabilities within the purview of it. This article focuses on the educational policies which are in force for the persons who are living with disabilities in India.*

**Keywords:** *Persons with Disabilities, Sarva Shiksha Abiyan, IEDC, RPWD Act.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities are one of the most susceptible and downtrodden community in the world. In most instances, they are living in the below poverty line in India. Living in a very backward economic situation they are not in a position to offer education to their children who are disabled. As a solution to these problems, various laws, schemes and policies has been enacted by the lawmakers of the country and put into implementation. But the scenario and the education of the children who are living with disabilities shows only a little development.

## II. FACTORS HINDERING EDUCATION OF DISABLED

There are several factors which hinders the education opportunities of persons were living with disabilities in India. Some of such factors are as follows:

### (A) Special school background

Most of the children with disabilities who are availing education is by means of special schools. But the special school background was effective in the traditional days but now a days special school is not appropriate for the children with disabilities they are ought to have study along

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with the non-disabled students in the mainstream educational system. At present it is the time for the children with disabilities to move from special school to general school which is more accessible for them.

#### **(B) Lack of accessible school environment**

The current educational policies or legislations or any other schemes related to the children with disabilities concentrates more on providing inclusive education for them. Inclusive education means a system in which both the disabled and non-disabled children study along in a same curriculum. But this requires more accessible standards to the children with disabilities. Those accessible standards has not been met by most of the schools were currently engaging children with disabilities in their schools. For instance establishment of ramps lives and other accessible standards because they are basic standards.

#### **(C) Need of special teaching aids and appliances**

Children who are living with disabilities can enjoy a better inclusive schooling education only with the help of specific teaching aids and appliances. In addition special educators are also needed to teach them. The ratio of special teachers and children with disabilities are not adequate. Also the special teachers and educators are not in a position to teach them without the help of special educators and appliances. The inclusive schools are not able to afford the special teaching aids and appliances as the cost of these appliances are very high. In this regard the appropriate government has to interfere and offer the schools who are providing inclusive education for children with disabilities with special aids and appliances so that special aids and appliances will not be an obstacle for the education of children with disabilities.

#### **(D) Educational expenses**

As most of the families with disabilities hails from poor economic background, the monthly expenses of the family would be met out for the treatment of the disabilities which prevails in the family. They think education as additional burden to their family expenses and providing education in special school or inclusive school, then the expenses are more. Keeping this in mind the lawmakers, the appropriate government has to provide free and compulsory education as provided in the RPWD Act, 2016 and has to enforce the said provision very strictly and promptly.

### **III. EDUCATIONAL POLICIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

#### **(A) The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006**

One of the policy statement of this National Policy states that both educational rehabilitation

along with vocational training and special education would be provided to the persons who are living with disabilities. This will be extended throughout the country by covering all the districts of the nation. In this regard assistance and help may be obtained from NGOs, state governments and local governments. The girls children who are living with disabilities were also brought under the purview of the scheme. This policy in addition has explained some of the educational schemes which are extended to persons living with disabilities as well. Some of such policies are:

### **(B) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**

SSA has been launched by the central government in the year 2010 with the prime objective of providing free and compulsory education to all the children who are between the age group of 6 to 18 years. This scheme covers all the children indirectly this theme is applicable to children who are living with disabilities also. Therefore the children with disabilities or entitled to all the benefits which are given under this SSA. This means children who are living with disabilities are entitled to education system such as open school community based rehabilitation distance education home school special education and so on.

### **(C) Integrated Education for Disabled Children**

IEDC is a scheme which has been specifically launched for the children who are living with disabilities in India by the central government in the year 1974. For the better implementation of this scheme, assistance has been sought from state governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and other voluntary organizations who are engaged in working for the persons with disabilities.

### **(D) Project for Integrated Education Development**

PIED has been launched by the central government of India along with the assistance given by UNICEF in the year 1987. This scheme has been launched in some selective states of the country. In those States schools for inclusive education has been established and special training has been given to the teachers who are teaching the children with disabilities.

Further the national policy for persons with disabilities has given various recommendations related to education of persons were living with disabilities which has to be met by the end of 2020. Some of the recommendations are providing barrier free and accessible environment in schools, setting up of model schools to provide inclusive education for children who are living with disabilities, and other recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Meira Kumar, National Policy.pdf

**(E) National Education Policy, 2020**

NEP, 2020 is considered as one of the success of the RPWD Act, 2016 because the policy has been made by considering the provisions of the said Act. The new policy stipulates that home based education may be granted for the children with disabilities. In addition special schools may be observed by the children who are living with benchmark disability. In addition the policy gives special emphasis to Indian Sign Language which is very essential for teaching the children who are living with deaf blindness. Further the national education policy 2020 focuses on giving training to the educator who are engaged in teaching to the children who are living with disabilities. This policy also gives statement which says that the curriculum for the children who are living with disabilities will be changed in constructor in consultation with the department of empowerment of persons with disabilities<sup>3</sup>.

**IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF VARIOUS COMMISSIONS AND LEGISLATIONS****(A) Kothari Commission**

Kothari Commission stressed on providing inclusive education for children who are living with disabilities in the general school along with non-disabled children. Providing education for such children who are living with disabilities should not be based on solely on humanitarian grounds but it should be based on the ground of that the education should make them to emerge as the successful citizens of the country. In this regard fund has to be allocated for their education by the Ministry of Education. But these recommendations of the commission has not been implemented so far in the nation<sup>4</sup>.

**(B) The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**

The RPWD Act is the recently enacted legislation which has comprehensive provisions related to persons who are living with disabilities and education. Further, this Act has been enacted on par with UNCRPD so the current legislation has met the international standards as well. The RPWD Act in provision 16 provides for inclusive education to the children who are living with disabilities. In addition section 31 of the act stipulates free and compulsory education to all the children who are living with benchmark disabilities between the ages of 6 to 14 years this provision has been made in addition to the provision contained in right to Education Act 2009<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Tanushree Sarkar, Examining Disability Inclusion in India's New National Education Policy, <https://candereasearch-wordpress-com/>

<sup>4</sup> Ritika Gulyani, Educational Policies in India with Special Reference to Children with Disabilities, <https://www.researchgate.net/>

<sup>5</sup> Kohima, Educational Provisions for children with Disabilities under RPwD Act 2016, <https://morungexpress.com/>

At last the act also provides for 5 percentage reservation to children for suffering with benchmark disability in their higher education.

## **V. CONCLUSION**

Despite having all these educational policies schemes and legislative enactment for the person who are living with disabilities education seems to be below power when compared to the general non-disabled community. In this regard serious and stringent enforcement of the provisions has to be made by the appropriate government. Further assistance can be made from Non-governmental organizations voluntary organizations channel public and other stakeholders for the better education for the better economic development of the nation it is right to say that the future of the nation lies in the hands of the disabled community as well and they cannot be kept aside from the development of the nation.

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