

# UNDERSTANDING EFFECTS OF STATE INITIATIVES ON EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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## **Abstract:**

*There is some section of children with developmental disabilities encountering learning disabilities. It means the performance of the child is found to be lower than the expected performance of a particular class level. Some conditions may be easily detected where as others need closer observation and detailed assessment in order to diagnose the condition variously The study investigates the problems of students with disabilities in the process of education and the state initiatives to provide basic amenities to Persons with disabilities to make them part of community. The study reveals that most of the families of children with special needs are living with low annual income irrespective of their caste. There is a big difference between the abilities claimed by parents than they are actually living with. Most of the children with special needs have problems in speaking, writing, mobility, bathing, clothing, and managing themselves in the toilet. This intensity necessitates the inculcation of taking care of special needs and giving support. The children with special needs have interest in playing kids but because of their low cognitive growth and parental restrictions, some of them are playing with younger age children than them and some are staying back at home without playing.*

**KEY WORD:** *Inclusion, State initiatives, CWSN, Education System, India*

## **I. Introduction**

The prime focus is on Education because, it is perceived to be one of the instruments of social change in all the developing countries. The entire gamut of literature on social change places high premium on the role of education as the most important vehicle of social change. However, the emphasis on education in contemporary times does not mean the education was not given its due importance in earlier times nevertheless, it was not adequate. Scholarly concern on the relationship between education and other fields of social interaction is not new. The political philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, have affirmed principles embodied in phrases: “As is the state so is the school” or “what you want in the state, you must put into the school”. To elaborate, political thinkers too recognized the association between the educational and political system because education plays a crucial role in political development<sup>1</sup>. So, education helps in removing political immaturity of

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people. Paulo Freire says that the greater the political immaturity of the people, the more easily they can be manipulated by those who do not want to lose their power.<sup>2</sup>

A review of the available literature in the field of education, the research infers that magnitude of the studies undertaken in terms of special needs education is far from adequate. There is a strong need for more studies on the multifarious dimensions of education of people with disabilities. Mishra and Gupta (2006)<sup>3</sup> were keen on the limitation of various rehabilitation measures adopted by the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in India. They have a long history of neglect, isolation, segregation, poverty, deprivation, charity, pity and even self-pity. Since the persons with disabilities, as yet, do not have any economic or political or media power in India, they tend to be mostly ignored by community. At this crucial juncture, literacy will give much more meaning to a person with disability, as it lessens her/ his plight and opens up opportunities for development. Madan (2004)<sup>4</sup> says that if India is to claim to be a democracy; we need to create systemic conditions that will support such an equality of access.

The nonexistence of appropriate education and training has always singled out persons with disabilities from family. In such cases, families having children with disabilities were under constant stress of looking after the child with sense of shame. The new concepts of Integration, Normalization and Equal Opportunities of education have, got attention only after World War-II, reflected on growing awareness of the capabilities of persons with disabilities [Sethi:2005]. Hence, the state had to take the responsibility for the well-being of the citizens irrespective of their various socio-economic circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

Inclusive Education focuses on family because, the family is supposed to play a very crucial role and responsibility in identifying needs and necessities of children to shape the mind and personality of every child. While emphasizing education and special needs, Rajesh (2002)<sup>6</sup> observes that the parents and teachers have always been silent and invisible stakeholders in education process. Contrasting to it, some of the initiatives of professionals, NGOs, and social activists in educating and training children with disabilities have helped families to realize the individual abilities of these children<sup>7</sup>. According to Amita Sharma<sup>8</sup> the whole thinking on education, at its foundational level, has been sequentialised into access, retention and achievement, as if these are three chronologically progressive stages of history. The physical understanding of school is reflected in this spacing between access and retention and achievement. The spatial identity of the school dominates the understanding of education. This is what marks the school as a site of exclusion. This exclusion is social, cultural and epistemological. The school borrows its cultural paradigms from the socially dominant groups, either rejecting or seeking to modify all other forms of cultural expressions on its own terms.

There is some section of children with developmental disabilities encountering learning disabilities. It means the performance of the child is found to be lower than the expected performance of a particular class level. Some conditions may be easily detected where as others need closer observation and detailed assessment in order to diagnose the condition variously. Nonetheless, nature of support drawn from special education field, depend on specific characteristics of a child's nature of learning difficulties.<sup>9</sup>

The present phase of globalization is not only integrating consumer markets but it is also creating new inequalities, unbalanced information flows and challenges to the protection of human rights, particularly with reference to persons with disabilities. Hence, the emergence of new concept of human poverty calls for pro-poor

and pro-environment growth and strong civil community alliance.<sup>10</sup> In the context of globalisation, Market needs the people who work fast, readily accessible and work long hours, which keeps many persons with disabilities out of the jobs instead of taking the responsibility of providing them accessibility.

### **The Concept of Inclusive Education**

Education systems have come to be guided by policies to raise educational standards, on the one hand, and by policies to promote inclusion on the other<sup>11</sup>. As education is a fundamental right for all, enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and protected through various international conventions, this is a very serious problem. In a most of countries, there is a big difference in the educational opportunities for disabilities and general children.

### **Benefits of Inclusive Education**

When the children with disabilities are separated from community - educated in separate classrooms in schools, employed in sheltered workshops, and engaged in separate leisure activities - alienates them from general friendships. On the contrary, having friendly people around, and opportunities to interact and make new friends forms important ingredients of a meaningful life.

### **Inclusive Education in India**

The process of Inclusive Education though has a long history in India however, impact has not been encouraging. The process has been expanding in its scope to the contemporary needs and understanding. In this long journey, the first school for the deaf and mute was set up in 1888. Later, the services for physically disabled were initiated in the middle of the twentieth century but individuals with mental retardation were given the least attention with the first school for the mentally challenged being established only in 1934.<sup>12</sup>

To achieve the goal of Primary Education, the Government has introduced few initiatives like Non-formal education program, Minimum Levels of Learning program, District Primary Education Program (DPEM) and Sarva Sikha Abhiyan (SSA). Hence, the education of children with disabilities becomes integral part of these national initiatives for obvious reasons because:

- Education for all cant possible without children with special needs
- Primary school in the village or in urban block becomes the natural choice keeping in view its proximity, and
- Issue of non-discrimination and human rights to prevent children with special needs from segregation, but include them in the mainstream schools.

### **Children With Special Needs (CWSN) in the SSA**

The major thrust of the SSA is on inclusion or mainstreaming the Children with Special Needs into the fabric of formal elementary schooling. Experiences of programs like DPEP and studies on Inclusive Education have shown that inclusion is best determined by the individual needs of the child. Most children with special needs can join in regular schools if support is provided to them. There might also be still some CWSN with severe profound disabilities, who would require an educational program and intensive specialized support completely beyond the purview and scope of a formal school in the current situation.<sup>13</sup>

### **Operational Design under the SSA in India**

The Sarva Shisha Abhiyan, in India has identified needs of the children with disabilities and designed the program accordingly. The needs are various for each group as their problems are various. The road map of inclusive education was prepared by Coordinator, Inclusive Education, the SSA, India. The primary objective of this road map is to provide education to all the children without excuses.<sup>14</sup> . The government has developed a mechanism to achieve this goal. The outlined goals are sending children from Habitation to School, Habitation to special Residential Bridge Course (RBC) to school and Habitation to Home -Based -Education (HBE) to school. The final destination of every child is school. There is a fourfold path at habitation level which will create a route to achieve the goals. They are identification, assessment, classification and counseling. In the first phase, children out of school will be identified. In the second level special needs of the children will be assessed, in the third levels, children's needs are classified as Mental Retardation, Cerebral Palsy, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, and Learning Disability. Then each category is also classified into mild, moderate, severe and profound levels on the basis of their intensity. In the last level, parents are provided with counselling to understand the needs of the children and to care for the future. The role of parents is very crucial from beginning to end while dealing with children with special needs

#### **Statement of the problem:**

Inclusive Education has been a concern of Indian government since the beginning. The primary target is to maximize the education opportunities for each and every student including the children with special needs. The present research would help in understanding dissimilar problems of students with disabilities in the process of education and the state initiatives to provide basic amenities to Persons with disabilities to make them part of community.

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

- To study the Special Needs Education programs in India.
- To understand and analyse Inclusive Education with reference to Children With Special Needs (CWSN)

## **II. Methodology of the Study:**

The present study depends on secondary as well as primary data. The secondary sources includes books, articles, journals, records from Region and districts' educational offices, daily news papers, gazettes, and annual reports of the concerned departments. The primary data includes information collected with the help of personal interviews with structured questionnaires. The study was conducted using simple random sampling methods, purposive sampling, snow ball sampling. The total number of respondents considered for the study was 90 children with special needs of india. And chi-sqaure statistical tools has neen applied for data analysis.

### Data analysis

**Table-1: Region wise Respondents' Disability Categories in India**

Region	NORTH INDIA		SOUTH INDIA		EAST INDIA		WEST INDIA		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
VI	2	9.5	4	11.8	2	10.0	3	20.00	11 (12.2)
HI	0	0.00	12	35.3	7	35.0	1	6.7	20 (22.2)
OI	4	19.0	4	11.8	3	15.0	1	6.7	12 (13.3)
MR	15	71.42	12	35.3	8	40.0	10	66.7	45 (50.0)
CL	0	0.00	2	5.9	0	0.00	0	0.00	2 (1.1)
TOTAL	21 (100)		34 (100)		20 (100)		15 (100)		90 (100)

Chi-square Estimated Value = 13.90451  
Degree of Freedom = 12  
Results = Highly Significance (P < 0.001)

NB : VI - Visually Impaired, HI - Hearing Impaired, OI - Orthopedically Impaired, MR - Mentally Retarded, CL - Cleft lip

Among the selected sample, half of the respondents are affected with Mental Retardation followed by Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Orthopedical Impairment and Cleft Lip. The North India Region has the highest number of respondents affected with Mental Retardation, but no one is affected with Hearing Impairment. The South West India Region has the highest number of respondents affected with Hearing Impairment and Mental Retardation and lowest number affected with Cleft Lip. The East India Region has the highest % of respondents from Mental Retardation category and lowest in Visual Impairment category. Finally, the West - India Region has the highest number of respondents from Mental Retardation category and lowest percent in the Visually Impaired and Orthopedical Impairment categories. One of the reasons for the highest % of respondents identified with Mental Retardation in North India and Hearing Impairment in South India is the impact of Inclusive Education Resource Teacher's specialization in the respective Regions. The Inclusive Education Resource Teacher has freedom to choose highest number of children from their own specialization under Home Based Education. Accordingly, Inclusive Education Resource Teacher (previous) from North India is specialized in dealing with Mental Retardation category and South India is specialized in dealing with Hearing Impairment category children.

This fact is tested statistically by applying Chi-square Test and result come out to be highly significant (chi-square = 13.90451, Degree of Freedom = 12, P < 0.001) in table 1. Thus Chi-square test's result is conforming that are highly significant impact of among the selected sample, respondents are affected with Mental Retardation, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Orthopedical Impairment and Cleft Lip and Region in India.

### Interests of the Children With Special Needs (CWSN)

After a thorough understanding of needs of children with disabilities, and their abilities dealing in regular life, it is also important to know their interests in certain activities. The basic learning skills in life and interest will help them to learn better in education also. Hence, the focus is given on play, watching television, and visiting school. An attempt is made to understand their day long activities and to locate the area where they are active. Some of the views in this section are collected from parents about their children because some of the children could not respond.

**Table: 2: Category-wise Respondent's Interest in Play**

Category	Play				Total
	Stay at Home	Play With kids	Interest to play	Not interest to play	
VI	1 (9.1)	0 (0.00)	10 (90.9)	0 (0.00)	11 (100)
HI	0 (0.00)	1 (5.0)	15 (75.0)	4 (20.0)	20 (100)
OI	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (25.0)	9 (75.0)	12 (100)
MR	1 (2.2)	3 (6.7)	30 (66.6)	11 (24.0)	45 (100)
CL	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (100)	2 (100)
Total	2 (2.2)	4 (4.4)	58 (64.4)	26 (28.9)	90 (100)

Chi-square Estimated Value = **4.715909**  
 Degree of Freedom = **12**  
 Results = Highly Significance (P < 0.001)

NB: VI - Visually Impaired, HI - Hearing Impaired, OI - Orthopedically Impaired, MR - Mentally Retarded, CL - Cleft lip

Out of total 90 respondents in the selected Regions, the respondents interested in playing constitute 64.4 percent of the total sample. While 4.40 percent of respondent are interested in playing with kids, and 2.20 percent of respondents are interested to play only at home. Almost one-third of the respondents have never showed their interested in playing. This self restriction is because of their inadequate coping mechanism with their peer groups. Parents play a crucial role in restricting their children to home. They are afraid of the other children because Children With Special Needs (CWSN) were beaten by them several times. To avoid such confrontations with children and their parents, Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are forced to restriction. The highest number of respondents in every category is interested to play except OI category. This may be because of their locomotor restriction.

This fact is tested statistically by applying Chi-square Test and result come out to be highly significant (chi-square = 4.715909 , Degree of Freedom = 12, P < 0.001) in table 2. Thus Chi-square test's result is conforming that are significant impact of Category-wise Respondent's Interest in Play and impact among respondents are affected with Mental Retardation, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Orthopedical Impairment and Cleft Lip in India.

### **Impact of Inclusive Education Resource Teacher [IERT]**

Inclusive Education Resource Teacher is central to educate Children With Special Needs (CWSN). IERT job is to give primary training to Children With Special Needs (CWSN) to mainstream them in general schools. As part of his/ her job, they should have regular visits to Children With Special Needs (CWSN) homes. It is called as Home Based Education. It is an attempt to understand their regularity in visits. Their regularity in visits is very crucial because their visits are scheduled only once a week and four times in a month. This following opinion is collected from parents.

**Table 3: Parents' opinion on IERT Visit**

Region	NORTH INDIA		SOUTH INDIA		EAST INDIA		WEST INDIA		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Have Not visited	11	52.4	9	26.5	9	45.00	2	13.3	31
Have Visited	10	47.6	25	73.5	11	55.0	12	80.0	58

Enrolled in school	NIL	0.00	NIL	0.00	NIL	0.00	1	6.7	1
	21	100.00	34	100.00	20	100.00	15	100.00	90
Chi-square Estimated Value = <b>450.4786</b>									
Degree of Freedom = 4									
Results = Highly Significance (P < 0.001)									

Table 3 is an attempt to estimate the commitment from IERT towards Children With Special Needs (CWSN). The table shows that the majority of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are not provided with IERT facility and around one percent of the CWSN are enrolled in a special school. Only 34.4 percent of the Children With Special Needs (CWSN) were provided by IERT facility under Home Based Education. Hence, the study represents that the coverage of CWSN in all the Regions is not equal and non coverage of the CWSN is higher than the covered Children With Special Needs (CWSN) in Home Based Education. The study also observed that there is a scarcity of resource persons. The district authority was able to recruit only 50 percent of the resource persons every year. As a result, most of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are left out of Inclusive Education process.

This fact is tested statistically by applying Chi-square Test and result come out to be highly significant (chi-square = 4.715909 , Degree of Freedom = 4, P < 0.001) in table3. Thus Chi-square test's result is conforming that are significant Parents' opinion on IERT Visit and Region in India.

**Table 4: Opinion on Pension details of Children With Special Needs**

Region	NORTH INDIA		SOUTH INDIA		EAST INDIA		WEST INDIA	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Not receiving pension	3	14.29	0	0.00	3	15.0	3	20.0
Receiving Pension	18	85.7	34	100	17	85.0	12	80.00
Total	21	100.00	34	100.00	20	100.00	15	100.00
Chi-square Estimated Value = <b>6.428571</b>								
Degree of Freedom = 3								



Results = Highly Significance (P < 0.001)

Table 4 is an attempt to know details of disability pension. Out of all the four Regions selected, 90 percent of the respondents are receiving disability pension and 10 percent of them do not receive pension. The reasons behind not receiving pension are political parties, migration, lack of medical certificates, and unawareness. Lot of politicization is seen sanctioning the disability pension at rural level. Some of the names are deleted because they are from the opposition party. Some of the Children With Special Needs (CWSN) could not get because they have migrated to a new place but their parents could not transfer their ration card. The pension is given only to natives of the particular Region. Some of the parents of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are unaware of pension procedures and getting medical certificates of their CWSN. As registering names for disability pension is not a regular process, they have to wait till the next call for registration. As a whole, majority of the Children With Special Needs (CWSN) are benefited with disability pension. It helps parents to buy medicines and some parents save through postal deposits.

This fact is tested statistically by applying Chi-square Test and result come out to be highly significant (chi-square = 6.428571 , Degree of Freedom = 3, P < 0.001) in table 4. Thus Chi-square test's result is conforming that are significant Opinion on Pension details of Children With Special Needs and different resign north, south , east and west India.

The special needs education in India has high aims in creating an inclusive community with reference to children with disabilities. The intended inclusiveness is not completely seen in the empirical study. The reasons are social, economical and cultural in understanding of the special needs of children with reference to education. The efforts of the state government are not enough in providing appropriate education. The structural changes are needed both at teaching methodology and valuing the child. The multilevel convergence of various departments related to children could be a big hope to empower the child both in terms of education and health.

### **III. Conclusion**

Inclusive Education is a Responsibility. It draws the attention of each and everyone in the community. Every law or policy could be successful only when community gives its best support. Inclusive Education raises the level of community awareness to recognize and identify the capacities and potential of ever child around them. This process has shifted the whole responsibility from individual to environment. Invoking this responsibility by schools would realize the right to education and may begin to accommodate various socio-economic- cultural backgrounds of those children and their broader range of learning styles, behaviors, capabilities, and potentials in all sensory domains.

The study reveals that most of the families of children with special needs are living with low annual income irrespective of their caste. There is a big difference between the abilities claimed by parents and IERTs than they are actually living with. Most of the children with special needs have problems in speaking, writing, mobility, bathing, clothing, and managing themselves in the toilet. This intensity necessitates the inculcation of taking care of special needs and giving support. The children with special

needs have interest in playing kids but because of their low cognitive growth and parental restrictions, some of them are playing with younger age children than them and some are staying back at home without playing.

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