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## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

**Amardeep D. Jadhav**

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**Abstract:**-Inclusive education services allow children with disabilities to stay with their family and to go to the nearest school, just like all other children. This circumstance is of vital importance to their personal development. Interrupting a disabled child's normal development may have far more severe consequences than the disability itself.

**Keywords:**Inclusive education, children with disabilities

### INTRODUCTION

10% of the world's population lives with a disability, and 80% of these people with disabilities live in developing countries. The services available for people with disabilities differ widely between developed and developing countries. One of these services is education. The International Community, especially since the UN Convention on People with Disabilities, is becoming increasingly aware of the different models of special education. The three basic models, segregated, integrated and inclusive special education, have been differentiated between by international and governmental agencies, and overwhelming support is being shown by human rights activists, nonprofits, governmental organizations, governments and international agencies, all in favor of inclusive special education as the most beneficial type of education for people of all ability levels.

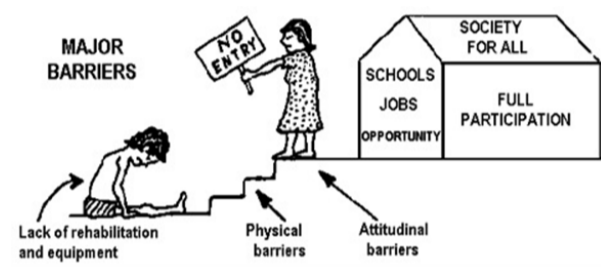


The Government of India has created numerous policies around special education since the country's independence in 1947. Although the Government of India has attempted to create policies that are inclusive for people with disabilities, their implementation efforts have not resulted in an inclusive system of education, nor have they reached their goal of "education for all" across the country. The Government of India needs to bridge the gaps in their education system to build a strong system of inclusive education in India.

## History of Special Education Policy and Inclusion in India

### Pre Independence

Documentation of efforts for or against special education in India remains sparse before India's independence from Britain. Archeologists discovered evidence of inclusion of people with disabilities in India from 2000 or more years ago in the form of adapted toys made accessible for children with disabilities. These small pieces of evidence are part of the "GURUKUL" system of education that existed in India for centuries before British rule. This system, was sensitive to the unique cultural, social, and economic needs of the students and their families and imparted life skills education recognizing the potential within each student.

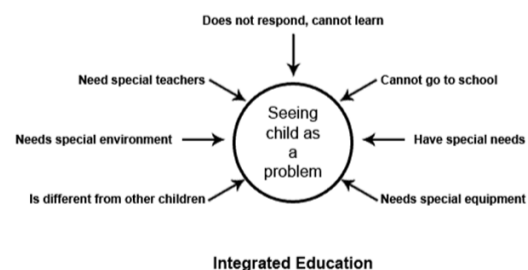


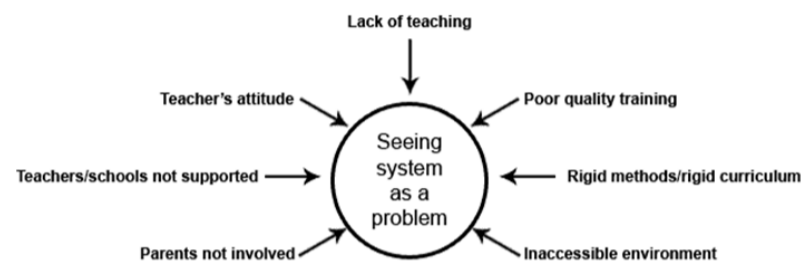
Although there is not much documentation about students with disabilities in this system, the structure is seemingly inclusive. India was colonized by Great Britain until 1947, and the GURUKUL system ended after India was colonized by the British. As a result of British rule, much of the education system in India was, and still is, "British style"-very cut and dry, based on rote memorization, with few special education services due to its inflexible nature. Pre and post independence, the Government of India on paper supported various versions of inclusive special education in policy. During this time period, the majority of children with disabilities were not in school.

### Post Independence: Creating Policies for Education

India gained independence from Britain in the 1947, and inclusive education is written into India's constitution as a fundamental right for all citizens. It is important to differentiate between constitutional rights and state policies and their legal implications. Rights are listed in the constitution; they are absolute and completely enforceable. State policies are completely subjective on a state by state basis. Part IX, Article 45 of the Constitution states, "The state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

The significance of Article 45 was reaffirmed in 1993 with the supreme court's Unnikrishnan judgment, also known as the case "Unnikrishnan vs. the state of Andhra Pradesh." In this case, the court ruled that Article 45 must be read in conjunction with Article 21 of the constitution, which states that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law." By requiring these two articles to be read in conjunction, elementary education is now considered imperative for life and personal liberty in India. A clause was added to India's constitution to this effect; however, it was not added until December 2002. The 86th amendment to the constitution, section 21A reads, "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine." Although many viewed this amendment as positive, others criticized the age restrictions. In addition, many thought that the type of education (inclusive, segregated, or other) should be specified within the law.





### Indian Scenario

Education of children with disabilities in India, as all over the world, has moved from segregation, special schools to integrated education. There is a national level central government sponsored scheme called Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC). This project was started in 1980s and designed based on the experience gathered from a UNICEF assisted pilot project called PIED (project on integrated education of disabled children).

In the mid-1980s many NGOs implemented this IEDC with grants from government, of India. This project is implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

This is basically an itinerant resource teaching approach and one resource teacher was given to every 8 children with special needs. There are around 60,000 children with disabilities getting access to education under this scheme. By and large the project is managed by the NGO sector.

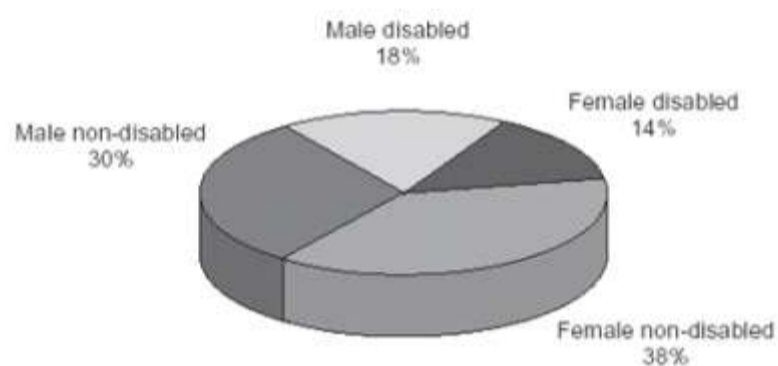
Although the goals and objectives of the IEDC program were laudable, the number of children with disabilities enrolled was woefully small. For example in Karnataka state about 2% of all children with disabilities acquire education. About 1% of these children are enrolled in special schools and the balance 1% are in the integrated education system.

Total	Special Education	Integrated Education
Number of children with disabilities who need education: Location: Karnataka Age: 0-14 Yrs Source: Karnataka Door to door survey report-1991	Number of children receiving education in special schools/institutions  (Number of Special Schools: 120)	Number of children receiving education in integrated schools  (Number of Integrated Schools: 2384)
<b>137044</b>	<b>10,000</b> <b>7.30%</b>	<b>9462</b> <b>6.90%</b>
	Total Grants received Rs. 4 crores (approx) (1 crore: Karnataka Govt. 3 crores: Govt. of India)	Total Grants received Rs 1,15,00,000
<b>Cost per child</b>	<b>Rs 4000</b>	<b>Rs 1215</b>

### Why we need to move from IEDC?

1. IEDC was heavily dependent on resource teachers in the projects implemented by NGOs.
2. IEDC implemented by Government teachers had a questionable quality because the teachers were trained only for 42 days.
3. In the NGO implemented IED model the quality and support to children in rural areas was inadequate because the resource teachers had to travel from one village to the other, often covering long distances on foot. The time actually available for resource teaching was inadequate.
4. The resource teaching approach in NGO models was also questionable because children were either pulled out from regular classes for resource teaching or they were asked to come before school and stay back after school. This was not a child friendly approach, more so for children in the 4th standard and above, who travelled a long distance, often from neighboring villages, to reach the school.

### Gender Ratio of Children Attending Inclusive Schools

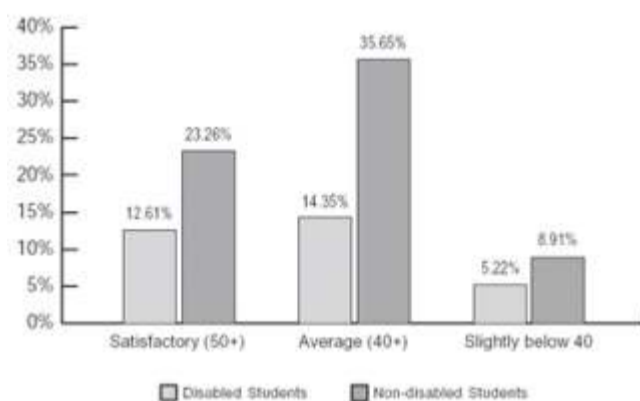


### Inclusive Education

As a system, inclusive education should be flexible. Its principle should be education in the regular classroom whenever possible. This need for flexibility must be reflected in the methods and materials used to give these children the widest possible access to the regular curriculum. When discussing the kind of service needed, the starting point should always be what is best for the particular child. Emphasising inclusive education does not rule out special schools or centres. They would still be required to cater to children with profound and complex difficulties in need of more specialised and extensive help, including e.g. many deaf children. This alternative should, however, not be considered, unless classroom placement cannot meet their needs.

In line with the new policy of inclusive education, special schools begin to function more and more as resource centres. They involve in outreach programmes, where they draw on their vast experience and knowledge. They link their activities with those of the regular schools, the families, and the communities.

### Comparison between the Academic Performance of Disabled and Non-disabled Students



In this context, it is important to stress the role parents have. They have a right to be involved in all decision-making concerning their child. They should be seen as partners in the education process. Where there is such co-operation, parents have been found to be very important resources for the teachers and the schools. As a rule, there are a number of practical problems that have to be solved before a child with special educational needs can go to school or take part in school activities. The arrangements it takes are fairly simple, provided co-ordinated local and unconventional initiatives are stimulated. One should also remember that the child's schoolmates represent a valuable potential partner who is ready and able to help in overcoming some of these problems.

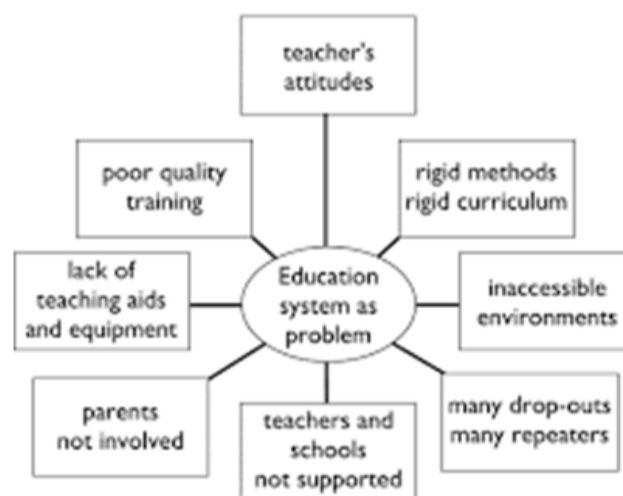
**School reform needed which facilitating learning of every child**

<b>Traditional Approach</b>	<b>Inclusive Approach</b>
Education for some	Education for all
Static	Flexible
Collective teaching	Individualized Teaching
Learning in segregated areas	Learning in Integrated areas
Emphasis on teaching subject-orientated	Emphasis on learning child-centred
Diagnostic / prescriptive	Holistic
Opportunities limited by exclusion	Equalisation of opportunities for all
Disability view	Curricular view
Labels children disability wise	Planning is made on ability levels and opposes all kinds of labeling

**Inclusion a Holistic Vision**

Any child may experience a special need during the course of educational years (UNESCO). Some children feel 'left-outs' and never enter school or enter only for a few years and, as repeaters, become 'drop-outs' or, more correctly 'pushed-outs', without their needs having been met. These children are a vivid illustration of the failure of schools to teach rather than the pupils' failure to learn. A school system emphasizing Education for All should ensure the right of all children to a meaningful education based on individual needs and abilities. (Ture Johnson 2002). The regular schools will now increasingly play a major role in making provision for children with special educational needs available nation-wide. Making the school system flexible and adopting an inclusive approach may, however, prove the most challenging task of all, a task calling for deep reflection and discussion of the two fundamental questions: "What is the overall role of education", and "What is it we want children to learn in school?" It might lead to the need of reforming the school system as a whole from a traditional, examination-oriented to an inclusive, child-oriented approach.

**Inclusive Education**



### Policy and Reality

To open up the regular school system to disabled children is not an easy task. The policy on inclusion and mainstreaming can easily become "main dumping" if not implemented carefully. It was, however, pointed out that a big gap exists between this ideal situation and the present reality. There is an urgent need for interventions for equipping general teachers with special skills, making general curricula, teaching methods. Evaluation procedures, learning material disability-sensitive and addressing the attitudes /needs of other children in the school to ensure such interventions benefits all children. It is important to have a holistic, comprehensive and inter-sect oral approach where all pieces are put together. It is not enough to present and implement one part only. An inclusion policy cannot stand-alone and "cannot be a substitute for careful planning of interventions and systematic capacity-building for the implementers of these interventions".

### The curriculum for "ALL" needs to be:

1. Child Centered: Children with disabilities need child-centered curriculum, which takes into account the individual needs of children. The curriculum needs to set specific, observable, measurable and achievable learning outcomes (SOMA).
2. Flexible: A flexible, locally relevant curriculum, teaching and learning strategies are intrinsically important for children with special needs to participate in the educational process.
3. Participatory: Children with special needs require a learning environment in which they can actively participate in learning in small groups learning settings
4. Partnership with parents: Partnership with parents is a key factor as children learn not only in the classrooms but also at home.

### Conclusion

Inclusive education must respond to all pupils as individuals, recognizing individuality as something to be appreciated and respected. Inclusive education responding to special needs will thus have positive returns for all pupils. All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to a certain type of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all its children. "That is a big and difficult task, but "where there is a will there is a way!"

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