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QUALITY, CHALLENGES AND RETENTION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Quality, Challenges and Retention in Special Education in India

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Abstract – Special education is a young field and is evolving rapidly special education is different from regular education. It takes into account the child's intra individual and inters individual differences. Special education is a profession, has its own tools, techniques, strategies and research efforts aimed at meeting the learning needs of exceptional children. Special education means specially designed instruction that meets the unique needs of an exceptional child. The services may range from consultation provided to the teacher of a disabled student to special education and related services for special needs children. "Special is the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of physical settings, special equipment's and materials, teaching procedures and other interventions designed to help exceptional children achieve the greatest possible personal self-sufficiency and academic success."

Keywords: Education, Individual, Children, Services, Success, Etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful instrument of social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure. Thereby, helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society the educational scene in the country has undergone major change over the years, resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices. In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) published a comprehensive report called the Sergeant Report on the post-war educational development of the country. As per the report, provisions for the education of the handicapped were to form an essential part of the national system of education, which was to be administered by the Education Department. According to this report, handicapped children were to be sent to special schools only when the nature and extent of their defects made this necessary [1]. The Kothari Commission the first education commission of independent India observed: "the education of the handicapped children should be an inseparable part of the education system." The commission recommended experimentation with integrated programmes in order to bring as many children as possible into these programmes [2]. The government's agenda to universalize elementary education, and its commitment to the Directive Principles of the Constitution, are guided by the recognition that a new universal system of education should be based on equity, the redressal of past imbalances, and the provision of access to quality education, especially for marginalized groups. Recent educational developments and the Seventy Third and Seventy Fourth Constitutional Amendments outline the possibility of entrusting basic education to the local elected bodies in towns and villages. This would allow for community participation in education at the elementary level and would introduce radical change, leading to the empowerment of learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The SSA Framework for Implementation covers children with Special Needs (SN) under the section on Special Focus Groups. While separating children with disabilities from other groups like girls, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and urban deprived children, it makes provisions for these children under the section on SEN. The Department of Education of Groups with SN in the NCERT itself, initiates programmes for meeting the learning needs of the disabled and the socially disadvantaged and marginalized, such as the SCs, STs, and minorities. It is important to comprehend the framework in which special education policy was created and continuously emerges out of in India. Although you can never generalize the beliefs and sentiments of an entire country, there are critical structural, historical, and religious facts that are important to know shape the course of special education and inclusion in India [3].

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

India was colonized by Britain between 1857 and 1947, and their first constitution was created in 1950.liv it is important to remember that India has only been a republic for 62 years, which is extremely

young for a country. There is a history of colonialism, discussed further below, which affects it to this day. Adding to the legacy of colonialism, 80% of India's population lives on less than about R100, or two dollars a day.lv even when adjusting for purchasing power parity, this amount puts hundreds of millions of people below the global poverty line. From the complicated history and social structure of Indian society emerges an effort towards special education and inclusive policy that are fairly remarkable for a 62 year old republic whose education system was (perhaps detrimentally) controlled by another country for over a hundred years. However, decades of inclusive policy are not aligning with the realities on the ground. India is experiencing policy implementation problems, and as a result, policies which should produce an inclusive system of education for people of all ability levels are only resulting in fragments of inclusion scattered across the country. The value of special education, once the hallmark of instruction described as carefully planned, intensive, urgent, relentless, and goal-directed [4], has been questioned in recent years, translating into confusion regarding the role of the special educator in inclusive schools. It is increasingly difficult to find consistent viewpoints on questions such as the goals of special education programs, the roles and priorities for special educators, and the ways in which special educators should organize their activities and spend their time [5]. Special educators (SETs) have the tasks of ensuring that students with disabilities are progressing towards the same state standards as their non-disabled peers, addressing their individualized education goals, and providing opportunities to access the general education curriculum with few precedents available to guide them in this work. As districts move toward greater inclusion of students with learning disabilities in their schools [6-8], special educators find themselves struggling with changing roles and often increased responsibilities. Excessive and competing responsibilities make it difficult for special educators to function effectively in inclusive classrooms.

1. Current educational status of children with disabilities:

Differing combinations of structural factors (such as caste, gender, religion, poverty etc.) intersect with disability resulting in varied individual experiences, but the broad commonalities that shape the lives of people with disabilities in India transcend these divisions. Their lives are largely marked by poverty and marginalization from mainstream social processes. A recent study [9], for example, noted that children with disability are five times more likely to be out of school than children belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes (SC or ST). Moreover, when children with disability do attend school they rarely progress beyond the primary level, leading ultimately to lower employment chances and long-term income poverty.

2. Inclusive Education Policy:

Recommendations to send children with disabilities to mainstream schools were first made in the Sargent Report in 1944, and again in 1964. Despite this, the change has been slow, with segregation in special schools dominating the scene until recently. The 1995 Persons with Disability Act (PDA) states that disabled children should be educated in integrated settings where possible, although it seems that the lack of implementation may be due to there being no enforcement agency for this legislation. Despite the promotion of inclusive education, govt. documents focus on inclusive education as being about including children with disabilities in the education system, but not specifically the mainstream. However, inclusion in the education system is not the same as inclusion in the mainstream. It is however arguable that special education is in fact regarded as superior in India due to its preferred status and that it is inclusion in the mainstream that is currently seen as the resource – constrained inferior alternative. However the limited coverage of mainly urban-based, impairment specific special schools in India may result in the exclusion of children with disabilities who do not fit the categories of their institutions or who live in rural areas. Inclusive education may be the only way of facilitating educational access for these children [10].

3. Prospects of Inclusive Education:

Inclusive education is a developmental approach seeking to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. An increasing number of publications, policy papers, workshops etc. have supported the ideology of inclusion. Some organizations and people, however, doubt whether the ordinary classroom can provide quality education for disabled children. This debate has been on, ever since people began to voice their reservation against old segregated institutions and in turn raised their concern for equality of disabled children. These concerns must be taken seriously and dispelled by showing examples of positive experiences, which clearly demonstrate that inclusive education most definitely addresses quality issues in education [11].

CONCLUSION:

This study will aim to explore the various issues and challenges in special education in India. The aim of this paper will describe and analyze the methods, which refer to techniques and procedure used in the process of data gathering. It is important to remember that Inclusive education is at a very early stage of conceptualization and implementation in India. The fact that it is being discussed, debated and in some places implemented although falteringly, demonstrates a willingness to engage with elements with elements of a new concept that has the potential to be developed in the future in a positive manner. So long as the

"struggle to achieve compulsory education for a majority of children takes precedence over meeting the needs of those with disabilities..." change for children with disabilities will continue to be sporadic and painfully slow. The division of educational responsibly for children, with disabilities and for those without, can only exacerbate this struggle, and highlight the 'different' nature of children with disabilities needs and the special needs focus of inclusive education with it. This implies that if inclusive education came under one ministry, most probably the potentially both conceptualization and implementation could be clarified and promoted, while the needs of children with disabilities could finally be mainstreamed.

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