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## **EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY**

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# Education of Children with Disabilities in India: A Case Study

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**Abstract – Education is the right of every child because it equips him to meet the challenges of life. The children with disabilities (CWD) need this all the more, to supplement their differential talents so that they can prepare themselves for a happy productive and useful life. Efforts to educate children with disabilities began soon after independence in India. An attempt has been made to examine the policies and legislations for educating the children with disabilities in India after post- constitution era. In the final section, challenges for providing education to CWD and in that light some recommendations were made. In India, different definitions of disability conditions have been introduced for various purposes, essentially following the medical model and, as such, they have based on various criteria of ascertaining abnormality or pathologic conditions of persons.**

**Keywords: Inclusive Education, Special Needs, Human Rights, children, etc.**

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## INTRODUCTION

India is the biggest democracy in the world. According to Census 2011, there are 1.2 billion people in the country, out of which, about 833 million people live in rural areas. Census 2011 data on disability has not been publicized yet. United Nations observes that 10% of the population has disability and there are about 120 million people with disabilities in India. Disability is problematic to describe since it differs in type, form and intensity. Understanding disability will necessitate understanding of these differences. As per the World Health Organization; Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, movement limitations, and contribution limitations, impairment is a problem in body function of structure; an activity limitation is difficulty encountered by an individual in performing a task or action; while a contribution limitation is a problem knowledgeable by an specific in involvement in life situations (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2009). Thus disability is a difficult phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the civilization in which he or she lives. The Resolution on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the first officially binding disability particular human rights convention, accepted by the United Nations gives two descriptions of disability. The Introduction to the Resolution states that "Disability results from the interaction between peoples with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barricades that hinder their full and actual participation in civilization on an equivalent basis with others" (Ahmad, 2012). Again it emphasizes that "Persons with disabilities include those who have extended term

physical, mental, intellectual or sensory damages which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". Both the expressions reproduce a shift from a medical model to social model of disability. In the medical model, persons with confident physical, intellectual, psychological and mental impairments are taken as disabled. According to this, disability lies in the individual as it is connected with limitations of activity with the burden of adjusting with environment through cures, treatment and reintegration (UNESCO, 1994). In difference in the social model the focus is on the society, which enforces excessive limitations on the behaviour of persons with impairment. In this, disability does not lie in individuals, but in the communication between individuals and society. It supporters that persons with disabilities are right holders and are permitted to attempt for the removal of institutional, physical, informational and attitudinal barriers in society (Bhattacharya, 2010).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In India, different definitions of disability conditions have been introduced for various commitments, fundamentally following the medical model and, as such, they have based on various criteria of determining irregularity or pathologic conditions of persons. In absence of a conceptual framework based on the social model in the Indian context, no regularization for appraising disability across methods has been completed. In common parlance, dissimilar terms such as disabled, handicapped, crippled,

physically challenged, are used inter-changeably, indicating noticeably the importance on pathologic conditions. In India Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 defined as an individual suffering from not less than forty percent of any disability as certified by a medical authority (Bindal & Sharma, 2010). The disabilities identified are, blindness, low vision, intellectual palsy, leprosy, leprosy cured, hearing impairment, loco motor disability, mental illness and mental obstruction as well as multiple disabilities. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) considered disability as “Any restriction or lack of abilities to perform a movement in the manner or within the range deliberated common for human being” (Julka, (ED) (2007). It excludes illness / injury of recent origin (morbidity) resulting into temporary loss of capability to see, hear, speak or move. Currently, there has been a considerable shift in the understanding of disability, from earlier medical clarifications of seeing disability as a deficit within the individual to that of watching it in the context of a Human Rights issue. Education is a human right with immense power to transform. Education of children with disabilities (CWD) has been a part of policy improvements in India for the past few periods. The strategies of the government of India towards the education of children with disabilities have been reproduced in the performances, schemes and through institutions recognized for various relevant activities (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2012).

### 1. Profile of Elementary Education and Literacy of CWD:

According to the NSS 58th round (Jul.–Dec. 2008) 25 percent of the literate population of people with disabilities had established education up to the primary level (five years of schooling), 11 percent up to the middle level (eight years), while a mere 9 percent had nine or more years. Interestingly, enrolment ratios for those with disabilities aged 5 to 18 years in a mainstream school were higher in rural areas than in the urban areas (Mondal, & Mete, 2012). Data on children with disabilities in elementary classes composed under District Information System for Education (DISE) discloses that their number differs from year to year. In the year 2003–04, there were 1.75 million such children as against 1.40 million in 2004–05. However, their number has always continued around one percent of the total enrolment in uncomplicated classes. In 2006–07, about 1.42 million children with disabilities were enrolled in uncomplicated classes across the country, of which 1.04 million were in primary and 0.38 million in upper primary classes. The percentage of children with disability, in primary, is 0.79 and in upper primary 0.80 of the total enrolment in these classes. The corresponding percentage at the elementary level is 0.80. Table–1 indicates the differences in enrolment according to the type of disability. Almost one in every three children with disabilities in elementary classes has some problem in moving (28.56 percent). About

24 percent are visually handicapped, 12 percent hard-of-hearing, 12 percent disabled in speech, about 17 percent are mentally retarded and 7 percent have other types of disabilities. Some interesting differences are apparent as children make the transition from primary to upper primary classes. Compared to 20.79 percent of children with visual impairment in primary classes, their percentage in upper primary classes is as high as 32.87. On the other hand, figures for children with mental retardation show an important decline in numbers. More recently, there has been developing possibility regarding issues of access and enrolment of the CWD in the mainstream for their integration into society. The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 and the Right to Education Act, 2009 have given a new thrust to the education of children with disabilities, as without including those the objectives of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) cannot be achieved.

Disability in	Enrolment(%) in Grade		
	I – V	VI – VIII	I – VIII
Seeing	20.79	32.87	24.02
Hearing	11.69	11.04	11.52
Speech	13.04	8.28	11.77
Moving	27.28	32.09	28.56
Mentally Retarded	19.68	8.62	16.73
Others	7.51	7.10	7.40
Percent to Total Enrolment	0.79	0.80	0.80

**Table 1: Enrolment According to the Type of Disability**

### 2. National Policy on Education (NPE):

The NPE brought the fundamental issue of equality centre stage. The policy clearly focuses on the needs of the children with disabilities. “The objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growing and to qualify them to face life with bravery and confidence (Kauts, & Bhardwaj, 2012). The following measures will be taken in this regard:

- Wherever it is practicable, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others;
- Special schools with hostels will be provided, as far as possible at district headquarters, for the severely handicapped children;
- Adequate arrangements will be made to give vocational training to the disabled;
- Teachers’ training programmes will be reoriented, in specific for teachers of primary classes, to deal with the special complications of the handicapped children and

- Voluntary effort for the education of the disabled will be encouraged in every possible manner”.

### 3. Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC):

The Government of India's appreciation of the need to integrate children with disabilities came in 1974, when the Union Ministry of Welfare launched the centrally supported scheme of Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) (Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 2013). In 1982, this scheme was transferred over to the then Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The centrally supported scheme of Incorporated Education of the Disabled Children provides educational opportunities for the disabled children in common schools, to facilitate their retention in the school system, and also to place in common schools, such children previously placed in special schools after they acquire the communication and the everyday living skills at the functional level (Ministry of Law, 1996).

### CONCLUSION:

There is no doubt that the dream for discrimination free and equal education for the children with disability may necessitate a comprehensive change in the institutional arrangements and legal requirements but the most significant change has to come in our minds, in our thinking and approach towards the disabled. The need of the hour is determined efforts amongst various stakeholders to be made in a time – bound method. We need to achieve our responsibilities to this country and to the international community. What is immediately needed is the political will to confirm that disability is involved across all policies, across and all Ministries and Departments, and a time is fixed to make our facilities, schools, colleges, public places, etc. accessible for all people with disabilities and adequate resources allocated. Removing barriers to accessing education and to learning for children with disabilities are prerequisites for the realization of Education for All. To confirm that all children have access to excellence education, education policies and practices must be inclusive of all learners, encourage the full participation of all, and diversity as a resource, rather as an obstacle. Inclusive education will pave the way to prosperity for persons and for the civilization. This prosperity will, in turn, lead to a more pacific and supportable improvement of humanity. To conclude, we repeat the words of Prof.

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