



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: PROVISIONS AND PROGRAMMES IN THE STATE OF GOA

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Abstract: *Inclusive education is a practice of teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms with non-disabled children to the fullest extent possible; such children may have intellectual, emotional, or visual difficulties or handicaps associated with hearing or learning. In India there are constitutional provisions for Inclusive Education. Education is the right of all children, and IE aims to ensure that all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their community. This education starts in the home with the family, and it includes formal, non-formal and all types of community-based education initiatives. Article 14, Article 21A, the 86 Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 of the Indian Constitution clarifies that "all" includes children with disabilities as well. The NEP 2020, on the other hand, has moved away from the traditional categorization of the marginalized and, to some extent, has recognized the interconnectedness and multidimensionality of these sites of exclusion. The policy makers have moved beyond the simplistic understanding of boxing these categories individually and taken crucial intersectionality's into account by putting them into the broader category of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).*

It is crucial to clarify that inclusion and equity could be much more than just social identities and categories of marginalization. A holistic framework towards inclusive education not only focuses on these categories but also takes equal cognizance of tools, processes, learning environment, skills etc. This article emphasis on Concept of inclusive education, Specific Terms in inclusive education such as Disability, Special Educational Needs, Reasons for Inclusion and provision and programmes for children with special needs.

Key Words: *Inclusive education, Provision, Learning Environment Children with special needs.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Inclusion is a philosophy built on the belief that all people are equal and should be respected and valued, as an issue of basic human rights. It is an "unending set of processes" in which children and adults with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in all community activities offered to people who do not have disabilities (UNESCO, 1997). Inclusive education is a practice of teaching handicapped children in regular classrooms with non-disabled children to the fullest extent possible; such children may have orthopedic, intellectual, emotional, or visual difficulties or handicaps associated with hearing or learning. It differs from previously held notions of 'integration' and 'mainstreaming', which tended to be concerned principally with disability and 'special educational needs' and implied learners changing or becoming 'ready for accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the school's duty to accept. It is about, rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason-ability, gender, language, care status, family income, disability, sexuality, colour, religion or ethnic origin; maximizing the participation of all learners in the community schools of their choice; making learning more meaningful and relevant for all, particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary pressures; rethinking and restructuring policies, curricula, cultures and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs. Education being one of the primary determiners of our lives, which enables us to achieve further goals, the necessity to find out the status of education scenario as far as persons with disabilities are concerned was felt from the very beginning.



Emerging Trends

It has been realized that majority of Differently abled Persons can lead a normal life if they have effective access to rehabilitation services, which would include early identification, intervention, education, vocational training, employment opportunities and the availability of Aids and Appliances.

Existing Law

In 2016 RPWD, the Right of Persons with Disabilities act was promulgated. As provided under Act and Rules the Government of Goa has constituted State Coordination Committee under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Minister of Social Welfare and State Executive Committee under the Chairmanship of the Secretary. The Secretary (Social Welfare) is also designated the State Commissioner of Disability and both the collectors as Additional Commissioners of Disabilities for monitoring and implementation of various provisions of the Act.

State Policy Statement

The State policy recognizes that "Differently abled Persons" are an important resource for the state and seeks to create an environment that provides them equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation in society. The policy specifically focusses on the following.

Prevention and Early Detection

Since disability in large number of cases, is preventable there is strong emphasis on prevention of disabilities. Early detection of disability and early intervention helps in minimization of impact of Disability. Therefore, there is emphasis on early detection and intervention. Necessary, facilities including dissemination of information is ensured to enable such detection and necessary intervention.

Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation services including counseling, strengthening capacities of persons with disabilities and their families, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, surgical correction and intervention extended to cover all the talukas in the State by action involvement and participation of Local Level Institution, N.G.O.s including associates of Parents of Differently abled Persons.

Education

There is a need for mainstreaming of the persons with disabilities in the general education system through inclusive education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched by the Government of India has the goal of eight years of elementary schooling for all the children including children with disabilities in the age group of 6-14 years by 2010. The State has joined the SSA in the year 2005.

Under the scheme a shelf of education options learning aids and tools, mobility assistance, support services, etc. are available for children with disabilities. This include education through an open learning system and open Educational Institutions, alternatives schooling, distance education, home bases education, remedial teaching, part time classes, community bases rehabilitation (CBR) and vocational education and cooperative programmes. The programme also envisages augmentation of teaching skill and capabilities of teachers.

The Government of Goa has introduced a scheme in which Government is providing stipend and scholarship to the students with disabilities for pursuing studies at school level as well as college level including professional vocational courses. The State Government also introduced a holistic scheme in the year 2005 through the Education Department in which State provides traveling allowance, escort allowance, books, uniform and stationary to the parents of students with disabilities. Also the state Government attendance allowance to the Educational Institutions for improvement of attendance in the school. The Government has also notified additional time to be given to the students while answering the examinations.

2. Employment for persons with disabilities :

Differently abled Person has given equal opportunities for production and gainful employment. The State Government has ensured through executive instructions that three percent reservation for persons with Disabilities is provided against identified posts in accordance with statutory requirements

1. Employment in private sector encouraged for Differently abled persons by development of appropriate skill for their employability opportunities for self-employment and by developing a package of incentives that would help in creating opportunities for them in this sector.
2. Best Employer has given an Award of amounting Rs.25000/- who has sympathy towards employees/Disabled employee, 4% Disabled Person in organization, barrier free Access and equal service condition than other normal employee's additional facilities of transport/ housing.
3. Best Employees given three awards (One of each category i.e. visual disabled, hearing disabled and physically disabled.) amounting Rs.25000/- on the basis of performance of last 3 years records.



4. To encourages the self-employment by the differently abled person the State Government also provide financial assistance to the Differently abled persons.

Barrier free environment

Public building / Places / transportation system, etc. made barrier free through design changes, use of appropriate materials and strict adherence of building bye laws, space standards for barrier free built environment. Best District has given an Award amounting Rs.25000/-

The State Government has been assisting the Differently abled persons in procuring durable and scientifically manufactured modern standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities.

Every year the Differently abled Persons with be provided with devices such as prosthesis and orthoses, mobility aids, such as tricycles, wheel chairs, surgical footwear and devices for activities of daily living, learning materials, low vision aids, special mobility aids, various types of hearing aids, educational kits and other assistive devices suitable for the Differently abled persons including persons with mental disabilities. The availability of devices will be accelerated to uncovered and un-serviced areas.

Disability Certificate

The State Government has notified guidelines for evaluation of disabilities and procedure for Certification. Formats for issue of disability Certificate has also been prescribed under these guidelines. The disabilities certificate is issued by the Medical Board notified by the State Government

The Government ensured that the Differently Abled Persons obtain the disability Certificate without any difficulty in the shortest possible time by adoption of simple transparent and client friendly procedures.

Social Security for Persons with Disabilities

Differently abled persons, their families and care givers incur substantial additional expenditure for facilitating activities of daily living, medical care, transportation assistive devices, etc. Therefore, there is a need to provide them social security by various means. The State Government is providing disability pension to the differently abled persons for their life time irrespective of their age under Dayanand Social Security Scheme. The State Government is also providing Award to the persons who select Differently abled his/ her life partner. The State Government also reserves the flats constructed by the Goa Housing Board for the Differently abled persons.

3. Promotion of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) :

The NGO sector is a vibrant and growing one and has played a significant role in the provision of the services for the differently abled. Voluntary efforts will be promoted and supported and effort will be made for interaction with NGO's on disability issues and on services to be provided. Networking exchange of information and interaction among NGOs will be encouraged and facilitated within the constraints of available resources. The State Government also provide financial assistance to the NGO working in the field of Differently abled persons.

Collection of regular information on Differently abled Persons

A Data base of the persons with disability prepared and the important information made available on the comprehensive web site for Differently abled persons which created under the Department of Social Welfare.

Transport

The State Government is providing Rs.100/- P.M. conveyance allowance to its Differently abled employees. The State also provide free transport in State on public Transport and 15 ltrs. of petrol / diesel or 50% cost whichever is less to assist the differently abled persons to use the vehicle to the place of work and rehabilitation center.

Research

The Government encourage and support research for improving the quality of life for Differently abled persons. The research will be supported on their Socio Economic and Cultural Context, reasons for incidence of Disabilities, development of user friendly aids and appliances and matters connected with disabilities in which research is considered necessary.

Sports and Recreation

Differently abled Persons have the right to access sports and recreation facilities. The Government will take necessary steps to provide them opportunity for participation in various sports and recreational activities.



Media

The Government taken necessary steps to create awareness about the benefit and facilities available for the Differently abled persons.

4. Plan of Action :

Prevention and Early detection

In order to ensure prevention and early detection of disabilities the following action taken with the assistance of health, education, Panchayat, Rural Development Organization both in Government and Non-Government Sectors.

1. Regional and Local Programmes of immunization (Children as well as expectant mothers) public health and sanitation undertaken to ensure prevention of outbreak of diseases that may lead to disabilities.
2. Medical and para medical personnel adequately trained and equipped for early detection of disability amongst children and to follow through with appropriate intervention to minimize the impact of the disabilities.
3. Government as well as Non-Governmental bodies ensure that all institutions responsible for training of medical and para medical health functionaries and pre-school education (eg. ICDS functionaries, Primary School Teachers) develop modules and facilities for training in disabilities prevention, early detection and time intervention through medical and social rehabilitation.
4. Special attention paid towards improving awareness, nutrition, health care, sanitation, etc. of adolescent girls, expecting mothers, women in reproductive period. Awareness programme for preventions will be built in at the school level and at the level of teachers training courses.

Training of care givers has given Rehabilitation Strategies

The following rehabilitation strategies adopted.

1. Rehabilitation services provided at the district level through District Disability Rehabilitation Centre. Additionally, the capacities of the existing centers with the Medical and health Departments, Social Welfare Departments or any other organizations including NGOs shall be upgraded to provide such services in talukas not covered by DDRCs.
 2. Appropriate Centers designed to undertake a package of functions including Human Resource Development, research and long term specialized rehabilitation services suiting to the requirement of Differently Abled Persons.
- The course of rehabilitation and strategies adopted for the purpose shall be designed in consultation with Differently abled person their parents / legal guardians, etc.

Human Resource Development

The State Policy recognizes the importance of trained human resources engaged in the taste of comprehensive rehabilitation.

1. Programmes undertaken to meet the manpower requirement for rehabilitation of Differently Abled Persons. The human resource will be developed in the following area.
 - * Training of Primary Level Workers both in health care and in community development comprising of Anganwadi Workers, Nurses (mid wife's) etc.
 - * Support for training and orientation of personnel of NGOs providing services to Differently abled Persons.
 - * Training and sensitization of community decision makers such as members of Panchayats, heads of Families, etc.

Education

The policy recognizes that education is the most effective vehicle of social and economic development. In keeping with the constitutional mandate and personal aspiration of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, education is made available to all the children with disabilities upto the minimum age of 18 years. Education would be viewed in its full dimension i.e. the systematic development and cultivation of the natural powers by inculcation, examples, etc. any structural training in an institution of learning, the formation of knowledge and skills resulting from instruction and training. All educational efforts will be child centric and will be designed for the enhancement of natural powers and formation of productivity oriented skill. It will be ensured that every child with disabilities have access to appropriate preschool, primary and secondary school level education by 2010. Special care will be taken to.

1. Pre-school taken as a part of Education Policy.

2. Make school (building approaches, toilets, play grounds, laboratory, library, etc) barrier free and accessible for all types of disabilities.



3. Medium and method of teaching will be suitably adapted to the equipment of most disability candidates.
4. Teaching / hearing tools and aids such as educational toys, Braille / talking books appropriate will be given to expand facilities available. Incentives will be given to expand facilities for setting up of general libraries, e-libraries, Braille – libraries, talking libraries, resource rooms, etc.
5. Curriculum designs suitably amended to cater to flexible system of education and examination.
6. National open school and distance learning programme will be popularized.
7. Sign language, alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) modes as a viable medium in inter personal communication recognized.
8. Educational Institutions located within the easy traveling distances. Alternatively, viable travel arrangement made.
9. Parents – teachers counseling and grievances redressed system formalized within the school setting.
10. There is separate mechanism to review annually the intake and retention of girl child with disability at primary and secondary level of education.
11. Many children with disability may not be in a position to join inclusive education system due to the nature and degree of disabilities. These children would continue to get educational services through special Educational Institutions. Special Educational Institutions shall be appropriately re-modeled and re-oriented based on technological development so that they may act as agents for change in all Educational Institutions.
12. Adult learning / leisure centers for adults with severe disabilities will be promoted.
13. Facilities for technical educations designed to inculcate and bolster skill development suited to various types of productive activities by suitable adaptation of the existing institutes or accelerated setting up of institution in un-served / underserved arrears will be encouraged.

3.5 Employment

1. Considering small population of differently abled persons existing Employment Exchange maintain separate record of differently abled persons.
2. Special recruitment drive
3. A policy and supporting structure of services to ensure that differently abled persons in both Urban and Rural arrears have equal opportunities for productive and gainful employment will be adopted. Rural employment of appropriate tools and equipments in agro based activities.
4. Vocational training and on the job training consistent with the differently abled persons abilities and the demands of the job market provided in an ordinary or specialized institutional set up by the state or voluntary organization and in industry in adequate numbers.
5. The integration of differently abled persons into open employment ensured through a variety of measures such as in center – oriented quota system, reservation is designated employment, formalism of cooperatives with exclusive or priority production items, provision of sheltered industries etc.

5. Additional steps taken to:

- a) Ensure reservation in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in identified posts for Differently abled Person in the Government sector.
- b) Develop appropriate home based employment programmes for the Differently able persons who opt for such programmes and specially for severely differently abled persons.
- c) Lay special emphasis on promoting self-employment of Differently abled persons by providing credits at preferential rates of interest and necessary training.
- d) Provide assistance through appropriate agencies like marketing federation, DRDA's in marketing of goods and services produced by Differently abled persons.
- e) The Director of Social Welfare or his representative shall be co-opted as member as member of the Departmental selection and promotion Committees.
- f) Annual review of 4% reservation in Government Sector.

Barrier Free Environments

Public building (functional or recreational) transport amenities including roads, subways, pavements, railway, platform, bus stops, modes of transport (bus, train, planes), playgrounds, open spaces, etc. made accessible through design changes, use of appropriate material in their construction and strict adherence to their maintenance standards by 2008. Architects construction engineers who are professionally involved in the design and construction of physical environment sensitized to the needs of persons with Disabilities through in-service training as well as suitable modification to the curricular in technological institute as part of their professional studies.



Full adoption of comprehensive studies and space standards for barrier – free built environment made to ensure adoption of the bye laws and space standards by all the Panchayat and Municipal bodies in the state. All future infrastructure development will ensure universal access.

State transport undertaking shall ensure disabled friendly features in their vehicles, both at the production as well as operation stages. The Government ensure by appropriate measures that Industrial establishment, offices, public utilities both in public and private sector provided differently abled friendly work place for their employees. Building byelaws amended. Pro-active steps taken to ensure differently abled friendly IT environment in the State.

Assistive Devices and Personal Mobility

Personal mobility enhanced through aids and appliances which continuously upgraded. Communication needs of the Differently abled Persons addressed through making information services and public documents accessible. Braille, tape – service, large print and other appropriate technologies used to provide information for persons with visual impairment. While appropriate technologies would be provided to persons with hearing impairment. Use of sign language in all public functions encouraged. A comprehensive public information programme about the needs, abilities, rights and concern of differently abled persons would be put in the public domain in a universally accessible format for the purpose of creating positive attitudinal changes. A state disability information system shall be established. A resource directory that includes all Government schemes/facilities and private/non-governmental facilities in the state of Goa prepared. The information also be made available on web site. Goa Doordarshan start programmes for the hearing impaired and also develop schemes that assist in the development of literature in Braille for the visually impaired.

Non-Government Organizations

1. The following programme undertaken under N. G. O. sector.

A Directory of N.G.O.'s working in the field of disability prepared. The Directory of N.G.O.'s shall properly map all the N.G.O.'s by geographic region along with their major activities. For N.G.O.'s supported by the Central / State Government their resources position both Financial and man power etc. also be shown. Steps shall be taken to encourage and accord preference to N.G.O.s working in the un serviced and inaccessible areas. N.G.O.s will be encouraged to draw and adopt minimum standards codes of conduct and ethics through interaction among themselves. Opportunities provided for orientation and training of manpower, transparency and accountability, procedural simplification etc. guiding factor in striving for improvement in the N.G.O. Government partnership. The N.G.O.s encouraged to mobilize their own resources to reduce the dependence of grant in aid from the Government and also to improve the availability of funds for the services in the sector of disability. Tapering of assistance in a schematic manner also be considered so that the number of N.G.O.s to be helped within the available resources could be maximized.

Sports and Recreation

The Government shall take measures to ensure that Differently abled persons have equal opportunities for recreation and sports through the following means:

Make places for recreation and sport, hotels beaches, sports areas, gym hall etc. accessible.

Travel agencies, hotels, voluntary organization and others involved in organizing recreational activities or travel opportunities should offer their services to all taking into account the special needs of Different Abled Persons. Suitable training will be provided to the agencies engaged in such activities. Formation of sports organization for Differently Abled Persons will be encouraged. There will be mechanism to support the participation of Differently abled persons in National and International events.

Media

The State policy recognizes that media has a very important role to play in highlighting the changing situation of Differently Abled Persons and in identifying encouraging issues and arrears of concern.

The policy aims to involve mass media as well as informal and traditional communication channels on disability issues. It is necessary to provide opportunities to media personal to have access to information apart from their own independent source of information and reporting of field situation. The participation of media in orientation programmes on issues related to disabilities will be formulated. The use of media intensified to spread knowledge and awareness about the facilities available as well as about groups and individuals working in the area of disabilities so as to encourage inter personal exchange and formation of support groups.

Goa Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: It has been playing a vital role in promotion & facilitation of Inclusive Education to the CWSN of the State. It is undoubtedly a fact that the number of CWSN identified every year is less than 2% but the



GSSA has reached out to this number and made their Educational life comfortable which otherwise would have been a distant possibility.

Online Training Programs for Special Educators

The state planned for online training for resource room life skills teachers and special educators in the state to be held in the month of June 2020. The training curriculum has been devised in consultation with external partners wherein the special educators dealing with children with intellectual and behavioral disabilities will be trained to use technology to transact their instructions and they will also be trained in a number of assistive technologies.

Implementation

The Department of Social Welfare have the nodal departments to coordinate all matters relating to the implementation of the policy. In addition to implementing its own programme and schemes the Department will play a pro-active role in pursuing with concerned authorities any issues which impinge on the rights of the Differently abled Persons. An inter Department body to coordinate matters relating to implementation of State policy will be formed.

The State Commissioner shall play key role in implementation of State policy apart from their statutory responsibilities. Every five years a detailed review will be done on the implementation of the State policy. The review will be a public document and will be discussed in a State convention. Awareness Campaign about the schemes of differently abled will be organized at the Village Panchayat level. Panchayati Raj Institutions encouraged to participate in the implementation of the State policy to address local level issues and draw up suitable programme which will be integrated with the Village and District plan.

Implications for practice and recommendations

Based on this study, the author recommend that governments continue in their efforts to enforce their civil rights, laws and provide resources to meet them. Similarly, school boards need to develop inclusive policies and procedures and direct resources to that effort. Principals need to ensure that their schools are fully inclusive and take a lead role in modeling inclusive attitudes and behaviors. Teachers need to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to adapt their teaching to include all children and the willingness to learn about the experiences of children with disabilities. Finally, we all need to stop and listen to students with disabilities to better understand their realities. We need to provide the necessary effort, educational policies, and resources to ensure that our values and principles are met.

6. Conclusion:

Some programmes could focus specifically on educational provision for children with disabilities, others could mainstream disability alongside gender and other exclusionary dimensions such as poverty. This would ensure the inclusion of all in programmes intended to widen the impact of institutional systems such as education. With the development of much-needed research into the inclusive education discourse and the implementation and outcomes of IE policy, reconceptualization of inclusive education as a whole school quality issue for all children may be able to grow alongside this merging of agendas.

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