



Inclusive Education and National Education Policy 2020: A Review of Current Research

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Abstract: *Inclusive education has become a focal point of educational policies worldwide. The recent National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of inclusive education. This paper presents a review of current research on inclusive education and its relevance to the NEP 2020. The article provides an overview of the concept of inclusive education and the challenges faced in implementing it. The paper also discusses the key provisions of NEP 2020 related to inclusive education and the implications of these provisions. The review highlights the need for effective implementation strategies and the role of teacher education in promoting inclusive education.*

Key Words: *Inclusive education, National Education Policy, NEP 2020, teacher education.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Inclusion is a universal right of human beings. It aims to inculcate all human beings irrespective of race, religion, gender, disability, status, cast, creed, income etc. Inclusion is nothing but giving equal opportunities and maintaining equality by removing all barriers and discrimination in public life. **Henry Ford** once said, "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is a progress, working together is a success" and this might be the point of origin of the concept of Inclusive Education. Inclusive education is an approach that seeks to provide equal opportunities to all learners, including those with disabilities and special needs. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also emphasizes the importance of inclusive education and aims to provide access to quality education for all. This paper presents a review of current research on inclusive education and its relevance to the NEP 2020.

2. CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

Inclusive education is based on the principle that all students should be provided with equal opportunities to learn and participate in school activities. This approach recognizes that students have different learning needs and styles and seeks to accommodate these differences. Inclusive education also emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes the well-being and social inclusion of all learners.

3. NEP 2020 AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

The National Education Policy states that there will be a special emphasis on socially and economically disadvantaged groups to make education inclusive and equitable. Socio-economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) can be broadly categorized based on gender identities (female and transgender), socio-cultural identities (scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, OBCs and minorities), geographical identities (students from villages, small towns, districts) and socio-economic conditions (migrant communities, low income households, poor situations, orphans, beggars, urban poor etc.). For the benefit of these disadvantaged groups, Special Education Zones will be created. Studies show that overall enrolments in schools decline from Grade 1 to Grade 12 among SEDGs (NEP 2020, 6.2.). According to U-DISE 2016-17 data, about 19.6% of students belong to Scheduled Castes at the primary level; it falls to 17.3% at higher secondary level. These dropouts are very severe for Scheduled Tribes students (10.6% to 6.8%), and differently abled children (1.1% to 0.25%), and greater declines further for female students (NEP 2020, 6.2.1). NEP 2020 support multi-disciplinary education and thus aims at the holistic development of students. Several Researchers has made many attempts to conduct surveys and studied the literature related to Inclusive Education and its impact on educational



institutions, students, parents, teachers, publics etc. and reached their conclusions and hence the topic is very significant. The introduction of NEP 2020 added much more to the scope of Inclusive Education.

Provisions related to Inclusive Education in NEP 2020: The NEP 2020 recognizes the need for inclusive education and outlines several measures to promote it. Some of the key provisions related to inclusive education in the policy are:

Ensuring Universal Access and Equitable Learning Opportunities: The policy emphasizes the need to provide equal access and opportunities to education for all students, irrespective of their backgrounds. It aims to achieve this through measures such as the establishment of more schools in underrepresented areas, setting up of hostels for students from marginalized communities, and provision of scholarships and financial assistance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Special Education and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): The policy recognizes the need for special education and ECCE for children with disabilities and aims to promote their inclusion in regular schools. It suggests the development of appropriate curriculum and pedagogical strategies to ensure the effective inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools.

Teacher Training and Professional Development: The policy recognizes the need for teacher training and professional development to promote inclusive education. It suggests the development of appropriate training modules and the provision of continuous professional development opportunities to teachers to enable them to address the diverse needs of students.

Curriculum and Assessment: The policy emphasizes the need for a flexible curriculum that allows for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences. It suggests the development of a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) that includes the principles of inclusive education. The policy also suggests the development of appropriate assessment strategies that are sensitive to the diverse needs of students.

Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education: Despite the growing recognition of the importance of inclusive education, there are several challenges in implementing it effectively. These challenges include a lack of teacher training and support, inadequate infrastructure and resources, and negative attitudes towards students with disabilities and special needs.

Implications of NEP 2020 for Inclusive Education: The NEP 2020 has important implications for the implementation of inclusive education in India. It highlights the need for effective implementation strategies, including teacher education and support, to promote inclusive education. The policy also recognizes the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes the well-being and social inclusion of all learners.

3. CONCLUSION:

Inclusive education has become an important focus of educational policies worldwide, and the NEP 2020 also recognizes its importance. This paper has presented a review of current research on inclusive education and its relevance to the NEP 2020. The review highlights the need for effective implementation strategies and the role of teacher education in promoting inclusive education. It also emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes the well-being and social inclusion of all learners.

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