

“ROLE OF NEP-2020 IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS”

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ABSTRACT

Education is a national agenda and it is the catalytic tool that can transform the future of our children and youth. The new National Education Policy-2020 on Education in India is an important document that has attractive plans for the educational system of the country in general and for the children with disability in particular. As the policy also concerns the welfare and education of children with disability, therefore this policy will play key role in ensuring the education of the children with disability. The policy will transform India's higher education system to one of the best global education systems. It is expected to meet the people's requirement regarding quality education, innovation and research to make this country a knowledge superpower. The new draft of National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 proposes many changes in both schools and higher education institutions and it focuses more on research and innovation with good governance. The main aim of this NEP-2020 is to ensure quality education in India for a period of 20 years starting from 2020 to 2040. The draft of the new education policy, 2020 focussed on the five pillars of education, access, Equity, Quality, Accountability and Affordability. The objectives of NEP-2020 are as: (i) to equalise educational opportunities for all the children with special needs, (ii) to provide adequate education for all children with special needs and (iii) to provide opportunities for exceptionally gifted children. NEP recognises the importance of providing quality education to the children with special needs similar as provided to the other children at all levels of education. This policy ensures that every child with special needs deserve for the meaningful and quality education. For this financial support, home-based education, scholarships etc. like regular schools should be provided to the all the children with special need. Therefore it can be concluded that children with special needs have been given a great emphasis in this policy document called as NEP-2020.

Key Words:-: New Education Policy, Children With Special Needs, Inclusive Education.

INTRODUCTION:

“The NEP 2020 envisions an India Centered education system that directly contributes to the evolution of our nation enduring into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by giving them a top-class quality of education.”

The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved. The new education policy recognises the importance of providing the children with special needs (CWSN) the similar opportunities of obtaining quality education as any other children. The committee for Draft of New National Education Policy under the Chairmanship of eminent scientist Dr. K. Kasturirangan submitted its report on May 31, 2019. The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for

elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The policy aims to transform India's education system by 2040.

On the other hand The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4 August 2009, which describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between the age of 6 to 14 years in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. RTE Act providing children with special needs free and compulsory education either until the completion of the elementary stage of school education or till the age of 18 years. RTE Act also provides to parents of children with severe and profound disabilities the right to opt for home-based education.

NEP (National Education Policy) ensures that every Children With Special Need (CWSN) also have the right to have meaningful and quality education. According to UNESCO recently released in its 2019 state of the education report for India - children with disabilities - 75% of children with disabilities (CWD) in the age of 5 and one fourth of them in the age of 5 to 19 do not attend schools or any educational institution. The member of children enrolled in school has been considerably collapsing with each successive level of schooling. In addition NEP to suggesting a series of

recommendations for inclusive education and classroom practices for children with disabilities, in the draft they have also identified policies that lack inclusiveness in term of access, teaching methodologies facilities at school, funding and programmes for students and teachers with disabilities as well as their caregivers.

First time to change Vocabulary NEP draft speaks about CWD in only a few areas, the draft uses terms such as “special education” and “children with special needs” in sub-chapters. Adequate weightage have been given to the children with special needs in the policy document of NEP-2020. Students with disabilities should not be seemed to need 'special treatment' rather they need accommodations in order to be able to study like everyone else. In the draft document NEP-2019 specific additional policy initiatives to ensure that every CWSN is provide meaningful and quality education will include. The following main provisions which have been summarised in the following-

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Regular Schools New National Education Policy ensures that the children with special needs should be included in the regular schools and any kind of differentiation should be removed between different kinds of the students if it exists there in any way. Following are certain provisions made in the NEP-2020-

- Schooling should be from the foundational stage through grade-12.
- Main streaming them in neighbourhood schools.
- This policy aim to increase enrolment of students.
- Educational benefits to all the students of India.
- Ensuring foundational literacy & numeracy.

Financial Support for Initiatives for Educating Children with Special Needs It has also been emphasised that the provisions for the adequate financial assistance should be made for the children with special needs as under-

- To provide clear and efficient avenues for obtaining financial support to schools or school complexes for integration of CWSN.
- To establish resource centres at the village/block level for learners with severe or multiple disabilities.
- These centres assist parents/guardians in part time or full time home schooling.
- To develop learners skilling (including ISL or other local sign languages and accessing provisions available through NIOS).
- To ensure the expansion and improvement of education.
- To ensure adequacy and appropriateness of resourcing of school complexes.
- The New National Education Policy is committed to raising educational investment. There is no better investment towards a society's future.

Physical Access to School for Children with Needs

Following provisions have been made for making the barrier free infrastructure for the children with special needs so that easy access may be enjoyed by the children with special needs..

- To provide barrier free structure.
- Provisions should be made for ramps and handrails.
- Schools should facilitate disabled friendly toilets for learners.
- Suitable transformation should be provided for CWSN.
- Long-term goal should be formulated.
- Funding should be provided by the concerning agency.
- Schools building should be disabled-friendly for CWSM.

Inclusion of Children with Special Needs Children with special needs should be provided with adequate assistive devices and tools to facilitate and to reduce their difficulties in many ways as follows-

- Should provide Assistive devices and appropriate technology-based tools.
- Should provide adequate and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials (e.g. text books in accessible formats such as large print and Braille).
- To ensure to help CWSN to integrate more easily into classrooms and engage with teachers and its peers.
- Teachers should be trained.
- To ensure that research efforts to develop and test solutions those are effective in local contexts.
- To ensure functional and formal assessment.
- Should provide appropriate educational placement.
- Should prepare individualised educational plans (IEP).
- To ensure appropriate educational placement after assessment and preparation of IEP.

Provisions for Home-Based Education Education at the convenient place should be provided to the children with special needs so that they can easily enjoy the educational facilities to compete with the other students. Following are certain provisions which have been given in this policy document-

- Home-based education should be provided for severe and profound disability children who are unable to go to schools.
- Home-based education enabling them to complete school education including through NIOS.
- To ensure orientation of parents/caregivers along with wide-scale dissemination of learning materials to enable parents/caregivers to actively support their children's learning needs will be awarded priority.
- Programmes for inclusion education of CWSN should be implemented.
- To ensure the collaboration of resource centres for CWSN as well as NGOs and volunteers organisation who may wish to participate.
- Local resource centres and NGOs should be involved in

the planning of inclusive education.

- Local resource centres and NGOs should be involved about awareness generation, community mobilisation, early detection, identification and assessment of CWSN.

Availability of Open Schooling for Hearing-Impaired Students- NIOS has been assigned to play a key role for the education of the hearing impaired students to develop high quality modules to facilitate such students as under-

- NIOS will develop high quality modules to Teach ISL – (Indian sign language).
- NIOS will develop high quality modules to teach other basic subjects using ISL.
- To ensure that education became more ease for hearing impaired students.

Special Educators and Therapists with Cross-Disability Training- It has been emphasised in NEP-2020 that the appropriate training to the teachers should be provided to deal children with disability in the school premises in the following ways-

- Teachers should be assisting in catering to the needs of all learners.
- To ensure that each school complex will appoint an adequate number of special educators with cross-disability training to work with all schools within that complex.
- Resource centres at the block level in conjunction with special educators at the school complex level should be support the rehabilitation and educational needs of learners with severe or multiple disabilities.
- Parents/guardians should be assisting to achieving high quality home-schooling and skilling for such students.

Scholarships for differently-Abled Students- In this policy document NEP-2020 following scholarship provisions need to be made for the differently abled children-

- Scholarships should be provided for differently abled children.
- To enhance participation of differently abled children in school education, scholarships for talented and meritorious students should be provide on a more liberal scale.
- Especially scholarships should be provided at the secondary stage of education to facilitate students' entry into higher education.

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