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NEP 2020 and Inclusive Education in India

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Abstract: ***Education plays a pivotal role in all of our lives and paves the way for all of us to reach our highest potential. An educated person can become a great citizen in society. The modern, developed and industrialised world is running on the wheels of education. Quality education, is a major catalyst of development in families across India. NEP 2020 emphasizes upon inculcating Inclusive educational structure and inclusive educational culture in our school education system through infrastructural support and by making corresponding changes in curriculum incorporating materials on human values such as respect for all persons, empathy, tolerance etc 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. Inclusive education is a new approach to education that emphasizes access to education under one roof for traditionally excluded groups – especially children with and without disabilities and those who speak minority languages etc. Thus, inclusive education can greatly help reduce discrimination against children with disabilities and promote equality, access and rights to education and care. For that it is essential that schools try to include such learning methods in the curriculum.***

Keywords: Inclusive education, NEP 2020, CWSN

I. INTRODUCTION

The Policy advocates the provisions for CWSN as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016. NEP2020 recommends inclusion and equal participation of CWSN across all stages of school education and to that end, endorses a whole school approach to inclusion such as resourcing school complexes and resource centres, engagement of special educators, capacity building of teachers & special educators, teaching-learning materials and co-curricular activities such as arts, sports and vocational education etc., thus equipping all learners with 21st century skills.

Inclusive Education for CWSN has been one of the major interventions of the erstwhile Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA) RTE and RMSA schemes. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 mandates free and compulsory elementary education to all children including CWSN.

This act provides a legal framework that entitles all children between the ages of 6-14 years free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education. Section 3 (2) of the RTE Act lays impetus on the elementary education of children with disabilities. As per the Amendment of 2012, it also mandates that, a child with multiple and/or severe disabilities has the right to opt for home based education. In order to address the educational needs of CWSN at the secondary and senior secondary level, the scheme for Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) was, implemented.

The Scheme aimed at enabling all students with disabilities completing eight years of elementary schooling, an opportunity to complete four years of secondary schooling in an inclusive and enabling environment in the general education system at the secondary level (classes IX to XII). A centrally sponsored scheme of “Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage” (IEDSS) has been implemented since 1-4-2009 in place of CSS of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). The objective of the IEDSS scheme is to enable the disabled children who have completed eight years of elementary education to continue their education at the secondary stage (class IX to XII) in an inclusive environment in regular schools. In 1966, the Kothari Commission had highlighted the importance of educating children with disabilities in regular schools.

1) In 1974, the Government of India launched the Integrated Education for Handicapped Children (IEDC) programme, which was the first formal step towards inclusion. Sponsored by the central government, the scheme aims to provide educational opportunities to children with special needs in regular schools and is expected to facilitate their attainment and retention.
2) Inclusive Education for CWSN has been one of the major interventions of the erstwhile Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) RTE and RMSA schemes. It supports student-oriented activities, including identification and assessment of CWSN, aids, appliances, corrective surgeries, braille books, large print books, uniforms, and therapeutic services.

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II. BARRIERS IN THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA

The Government of India has made it a priority to implement inclusive education. There have been legislations, programs etc. to successfully implement this, but there is still a huge gap between policies and their implementation. There are several obstacles that stand in the way of effective implementation of inclusive education policies in India. Given the nature, diversity, structure, quality of life, literacy rate and poverty index of the Indian population, the implementation of inclusive education in India is bound by very strong chains.

The main barriers faced by CWD in India are;

1) Lack of acceptance by parents
2) Bullying
3) Negative attitude of members of society
4) Lack of positive attitude among teachers
5) Non inclusive and rigid curriculum
6) Lack of resources
7) Infrastructural Problems
8) Unawareness among parents
9) Improper execution of policies
10) Irregular plans
11) Lack of resource room
12) Lack of financial support
13) Prejudice and discrimination

A. *Different ways of Overcoming Barriers*

1) *Early Detection and Identification:* Early detection can help children understand their problems and special needs and provide appropriate help.
2) *Awareness Among Parents:* Parents should understand that every child is unique and has their own strengths and can grow to their full potential.
3) *Functional and Formal Assessment:* Standard tests and practices can help find out more about the disability.
4) *Appropriate Curriculum:* Curriculum should be flexible so that students can choose subjects according to their interests. It should be designed keeping in mind the individual differences so that each child gets ample opportunities to explore his talent and creativity.
5) *Financial Support:* Financial support should be provided to schools so that they can effectively run inclusive education programs.
6) *Teachers Training Resources Support:* Special training programs for teachers should be provided, and a special educator should be appointed in every school.
7) *Educational Placement:* Even on completion of vocational training, children with disabilities cannot find gainful employment. Educational institutions should tie-up with corporates / NGOs or government agencies to provide placement.
8) *Support Services:* Identify and utilize support services in partnership with parents, schools and government agencies.
9) *Individual Educational Plan (IEP):* customizing the education plan to suit the requirements and abilities of the child with disabilities.
10) *Parental Training and Community Outreach Programmes:* These kinds of programmes will help in fostering the efforts.

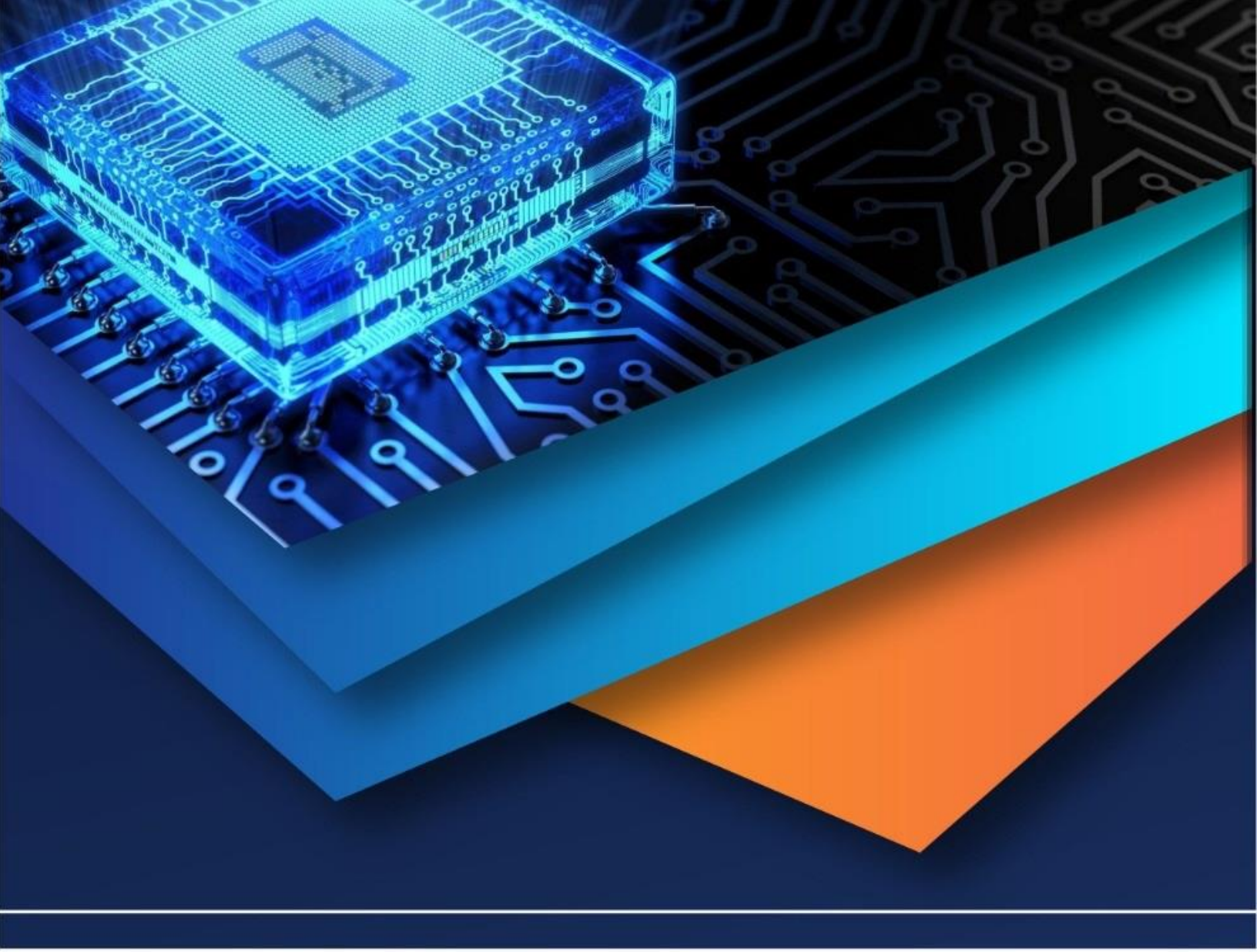
For successful implementation of an inclusive education system in India, parents, teachers and even the children without disabilities have to be educated about the system and made aware of its benefits. These people play a pivotal role in the implementation process as they interact with the children with disabilities on a regular basis and form their immediate surroundings. Children with disabilities also have access to inclusive, quality education on an equal footing with others in the communities in which they live. Disabilities impact access to opportunities for learning and achievement of a learner's full potential. It is therefore imperative to design a flexible education system that caters to the individual needs and abilities of CWSN. Equitable, inclusive and quality education identifies and attempts to eliminate barriers, promotes a sense of belonging lays the foundation for success ad better learning outcomes for all learners.

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