National Guidelines and Implementation Framework on Equitable and Inclusive Education

High Quality of Education

Equity & Inclusion
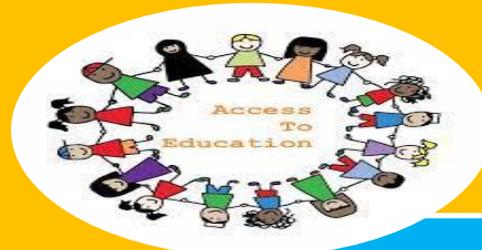
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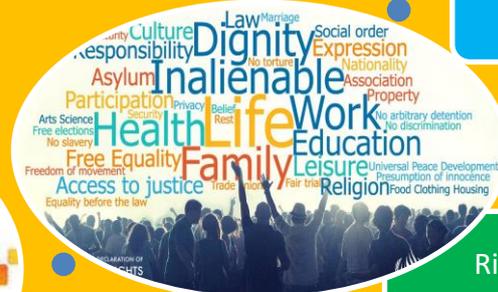
Rights

Diversity

Developed
by
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Foreword

We are happy to present the National Guidelines and Implementation Framework on Equitable and Inclusive Education (NGIFEIE). The guidelines are a collective outcome of active consultations with diverse stakeholders who are engaged in education in India. We hope, you will find the NGIFEIE, 2021-2030 a guiding road map to achieve the vision of a school for all learners, leaving no child behind!

The Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), Ministry of Education, Government of India has constituted a committee to formulate guidelines for implementing Equitable and Inclusive Education across all Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) in the light of the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020).

To ensure the scope of the Equitable and Inclusive Education guidelines in addressing the diverse needs of all learners, a number of consultation webinars were conducted with experts and educationists working in the area of research, policy making, training, capacity development and other aspects to support inclusive education, non-government organizations, national and international level experts, ministries, states, directors of national institutes of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and universities etc. In addition, suggestions from education departments of states/Union Territories and organisations working in the area education at central level were invited.

In India we need this broad vision of Equitable and Inclusive Education to ensure each and every school/learning center becomes truly inclusive in its design and implementation. We all understand that separate services for separate set of children in segregated settings defeats the very core purpose of equitable and inclusive education. Equity to promote fullest manifestation of potential inherent in every child within the broad framework of inclusion is the way forward.

The National Guidelines and Implementation Framework on Equitable and Inclusive Education will be applicable to all learning environments that include government schools, private schools, home based education, open system of schooling and alternative forms of schooling. NGIFEIE will have implications on all boards of education including open schooling system, and teacher education programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

We look forward to the active participation of all stakeholders in the effective implementation of the NGIFEIE, 2021-2030 to make an impact in the life of every child. Let us work for the inclusion of every child in every learning centre in every nook and corner of the country.

Acronyms

ALIMCO	:	Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation
ASHA	:	Accredited Social Health Activist
B.Ed	:	Bachelor of Education
BFEe		Barrier-free enabling environment
BRCs	:	Block Resource Centres
CARE	:	CARE India
CBR	:	Community Based Rehabilitation
CPD	:	Continuous Professional Development
CRC	:	Composite Regional Centre for Skill Development, Rehabilitation & Empowerment of Persons with. Disabilities
CRCs	:	Cluster Resource Centres
CRE	:	Continuous Rehabilitation Education
CSR	:	Corporate Social Responsibility
CwDs	:	Children with Disabilities
DDRC	:	District Disability Rehabilitation Centers
DEICs	:	District Early Intervention Centers
DIET	:	District Institute of Education and Training
DIKSHA	:	Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing
ECCE	:	Early Childhood Care and Education
EIE Cell		Equitable and Inclusive Education Cell
GOI	:	Government of India
GwDs	:	Girls with Disabilities
HBE	:	Home Based Education
HFW	:	Health and Family Welfare
ICDS	:	Integrated Child Development Services
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
KGBVs	:	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas
MoE	:	Ministry of Education
MOOCs	:	Massive Open Online Courses
MSDE	:	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
MSJE	:	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
MTA	:	Mother Teacher Association
MWCD	:	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NCERT	:	National Council of Educational, Research and Training
NCFSE	:	National Curriculum Framework for School Education
NCTE	:	National Council for Teacher Education
NDEAR	:	National Digital Education Architecture
NEP-2020	:	National Education Policy 2020
NGIFEIE	:	National Guidelines and Implementation Framework on Equity and Inclusive Education
NGOs	:	Non-Government Organizations
NHM	:	National Health Mission

NIOS	:	National Institute of Open Schooling
NISHTHA	:	National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement
OBCs	:	Other Backward Classes
ODL	:	Open and Distance learning
OoS	:	Out of School
PARAKH	:	Performance Assessment Review & Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development
PG	:	Post Graduation
PRI	:	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTA	:	Parents Teachers Association
PTR	:	Pupil Teacher Ratio in terms of number of teacher for all pupils, and number of special education teacher for pupils with disabilities
RBSK	:	Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)
RCI	:	Rehabilitation Council of India
RPwD	:	The Rights of Persons with Disability
RTE	:	The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education
SCERT	:	State Council of Educational, Research and Training
SCPCR	:	State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
SCs	:	Scheduled Castes
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goals
SED	:	Socio-Economically Disadvantaged
SEDG	:	Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups
SEZs	:	Special Education Zones
SHGs	:	Self Help Groups
SMCs	:	School Management Committees
SMDCs	:	School Management and Development Committees
SMILE	:	Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise, SMILE-Foundation
SOTPs	:	Short Orientation/Training Programmes
SSA	:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyana
STs	:	Scheduled Tribes
SVNIRTAR	:	Swami Vivekanand National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research
LTMs	:	Learning Teaching Materials
U-DISE	:	Unified District Information System for Education
UDID	:	Unique Disability Identity Card
UDL	:	Universal Design for Learning
UN CRPD	:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children's Fund
UWs	:	Urban Wards
VDR	:	Village Disability Registers
VEC	:	Village Education Committee
WHO	:	World Health Organization
WMG	:	Working Mothers Groups

Terminology

Terminology	Description of key terms used in the guidelines
Accessibility	Accessibility is about providing equal access to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, health and education, information and communication to enable everyone to fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2016 (section 40) articulates for laying down the standards of accessibility for the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including appropriate technologies and systems, and other facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas.
Barrier-free enabling environment	Barrier-free enabling environment (BFEe) refers to a learning environment which provides the optimal conditions for effective learning and teaching to take place. BFEe welcomes, nurtures and educates all learners regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other characteristics.
Barriers	Barriers mean any factor including communicational, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional, political, social, attitudinal or structural factors which hamper the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society.
Children At Risk	Children At Risk refers to infants and young children who are physically, medically, or psychologically in danger of failing to thrive and also includes children who are affected by diverse economic, environmental, and geographical factors. Risk factors are the biological or environmental causes of potential disabilities. When children are considered to be at high risk or at risk, they are seen to be more prone to developing some form of disabling condition or for adverse effects of school learning and behaviour.
Continuous Professional Development	Continuous Professional Development refers to training of teachers and teacher educators in order to update and enhance their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
Continuous Rehabilitation Education Programme	Continuous Rehabilitation Education Programme refers to training of rehabilitation professionals / personnel registered with the RCI u/s 19 of the RCI Act of 1992 and working in the field of disability rehabilitation and special education in order to update and upgrade their knowledge, skills and attitude.
Disability	Disability refers to a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder one's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.
Diverse needs	Different needs of persons/children belonging to disadvantaged or advantaged groups.
Diversity	Diversity refers to differences or dimensions that can be used to differentiate groups and individual persons from one another, including body appearance, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, social class, level of education, religion, work experiences, languages, cuisines, attires, life styles and cultures and being sensitive to emerging diversities and needs.

Early Childhood Care and Education	National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy to reiterate the commitment to promote inclusive, equitable and contextualised opportunities for promoting optimality in development and active learning capacity of all children below 6 years of age.
Early Intervention Services	Early Intervention Services are special services for infants and toddlers at risk for developmental delays. These services are designed to identify and meet children's needs in five developmental areas. These are physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional development, sensory and adaptive development.
Equitable Education	Equitable Education means that each child receives what they need to develop to their full potential.
Equity	Equity in education ensures education of all learners with equal importance.
Foundational literacy	Foundational literacy means being able to read with comprehension.
Foundational Literacy and Numeracy	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy refers to building adequate literacy and numeracy skills during the foundational stage of school education (first 5 years of school education up to class 2)
Foundational numeracy	Foundational numeracy is making sense of numbers and ability to do basic operations like addition and subtraction etc.
High Quality Education	High Quality Education refers to a system that serves all learners in such a way that it prepares them for their future by making provisions for a relevant curriculum, appropriate assessment, high quality teaching, mutual leadership and accountability to peers and families. High quality education has high expectations for all.
Home-based education	Home-based education, a right for children with severe and multiple disabilities, who can be educated in the combination of home-based and alternate educational settings to enable them to achieve independent living skills. HBE provides opportunities for learning of social skills, vocational skills and implementation of life skills.
Inclusive education	Inclusive education means a system of education wherein students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities.
Individualized Education Plan/Programme	Individualized Education Plan/Programme refers to the planning of educational programmes based on individual learner's needs and the process of planning, implementing and evaluating a curriculum programme as well as the holistic development of the learner.
Learners/students	Learners/students are children who are attending Child Care Centres, Kindergarten, preschool, Aanganwadi, Balwadi, Early Intervention Centres, Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, Secondary classes/Schools, Resource Centres, Learning Support Centres, Open schools, Home Based Education, Alternative Learning Centres and any other educational institutions.
PARAKH	A National Assessment Centre, Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH) to be set up as a standard-setting body for all recognized school boards under National Education Policy 2020. PARAKH will bring greater synergy in board examinations conducted by different Board of Education.

Parents	Parents are the biological or legal guardians of the learner(s) attending the school.
Reasonable accommodation	Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of rights equally with others
Samagra Shiksha	Samagra Shiksha is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12.
School complex	The NEP strongly endorses the idea of the school complex/cluster. The aim of these school complexes/clusters will be greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance and management of schools in the cluster.
School Management Committees	The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE), mandates the formation of School Management Committees (SMCs) in all elementary government, government-aided schools and special category schools in the country. Parents have been entrusted with certain powers through the SMC elected by them; proper exercise of the same can initiate a process of improving schools.
Schools and Learning Centres	Government run schools, private schools, open schools, special schools, home/community based learning centres, etc.
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups	• Gender identities: particularly female and transgender individuals. • Socio-cultural identities: Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities. • Geographical identities: students from villages, small towns and aspirational districts. • Disabilities: Disabilities recognized under the RPwD Act 2016 • Socio-economic conditions: migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor.
Special Education Zones	Certain geographical areas contain significantly larger proportions of SEDGs. There are locations that have been identified as Aspirational Districts by the Government which require special interventions for promoting their educational development.
Specific learning disabilities"	Specific learning disabilities mean a heterogeneous group of conditions wherein there is a deficit in processing language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself as a difficulty to comprehend, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations and includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and developmental aphasia.
Sustainable Development Goals	Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by UN in 2015, are an urgent call for action by developed and developing countries in a global partnership for ending poverty and other deprivations and to improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Universal Design for Learning	Universal design for Learning (UDL) is designed to serve all learners, regardless of ability, disability, age, gender, or cultural and linguistic background. UDL provides a blueprint for designing goals, methods, materials, and assessments to reach all students including those with diverse needs. It calls for varied and flexible ways to present or access information, concepts, and ideas-the "what" of learning; Plan and execute learning tasks-the "how" of learning and get engaged and stay engaged in learning-the "why" of learning.
Children in Vulnerable Situation	Children living in difficult circumstances have difficulty to get fully included in the inclusive development arising due to different factors like social, cultural, socio-economic, geographical, linguistic, gender or any other factor.

Executive Summary

The constitutional obligations of an equitable, inclusive, and plural society is guiding the Indian education system to be equitable and inclusive in nature. The National Education Policy, 2020 has a vision of transforming India by providing high-quality equitable and inclusive education to ensure that all students with diverse learning needs are able to thrive in the education system with equal learning opportunities in an inclusive environment to realize their full potentials.

The National Guidelines and Implementation Framework on Equitable and Inclusive Education is formulated based on the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020. This guideline will be applicable to all learning environments that include Government schools, Private schools, Home Based Education, Open System of Schooling and Alternative Forms of Schooling. NGIFEIE will have implications on all Boards of Education including Open Schooling System, and Teacher Education programmes for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

The stake holders are teachers, special education teachers and other allied teaching personnel, Students belonging to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), school administrators and leaders, school Management Committee and School Complex Management Committees, families and communities, block, district, state and national level government organizations, non-government organizations, ministries, departments and any other bodies in the area of education, social welfare, health and allied areas and institutions/organizations running teachers education programmes.

Followings are the major components of the NGIFEIE:
- Guidelines for Foundational Stage of Schooling
- Guidelines for Creating Inclusive Schools
- Guidelines for Home Based Education
- Guidelines for Teacher Education
- Guidelines for Collaboration with different organizations

The National Guidelines and Implementation Framework will be helpful in providing the roadmap for implementation of recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 through Samagra Shiksha Scheme. This will provide a prototype map to the states for developing their annual work plan in their respective areas of intervention to realize equitable and inclusive at ground level in school. Students, teachers, parents, administrators, social worker, counsellor, volunteers, school/school complex management committee will benefit with collaborative approach of implementation of inclusive education approach from the foundational stage to secondary stage of school education. The administrative agencies involved in school education and allied areas at block, district, state and national level along with institutes running teacher education programme will work in unison sharing the same/similar platform for implementation of their respective schemes towards education and support to students.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals. The constitutional obligations of an equitable, inclusive, and plural society is guiding the Indian education system to be equitable and inclusive in nature. The National Education Policy, 2020[1] has a vision of transforming India by providing high-quality equitable and inclusive education to ensure that all students with diverse learning needs are able to thrive in the education system with equal learning opportunities in an inclusive environment to realize their full potentials. As stated in the National Education Policy 2020, "the aim must be for India to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background". The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 states that education is a human right and a force for sustainable development and peace. Ambitions for education are essentially captured in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) of the 2030 Agenda which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

1.2 Legal and Policy Perspectives

India has signed and ratified several international conventions for elimination of discrimination and providing equal rights to all individuals. In tune with this, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was signed in 2006 and ratified in 2007. Many other numerous Acts were also enacted to ensure the rights of children belonging to Socio-economically Disadvantaged Groups, such as scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act-2009 and Right of Persons with Disabilities Act-2016[2]. A number of policies, programmes and schemes have also been framed that address the needs of all children, especially SEDGs like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2001, Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme for the welfare of religious minorities, 2006, Scheduled Caste Sub Plan and Tribal Sub Plan, 2007, Rashtriya Madhamik Shiksha Abhiyan, 2009, the National Policy for Children, 2013, Samagra Shiksha Scheme, 2018 &2022, and National Education Policy,

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[1] The National Education Policy, 2020 , Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi available at https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
[2] The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act,2016 available at https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A2016-49_1.pdf

2020. The NEP, 2020 has made several recommendations for bridging social category gaps through educational interventions and supportive measures that value diversity and enable all children to experience success, dignity and a meaningful learning experience.

1.3 Objectives

Evolving and dynamic guidelines are crucial for interweaving equity and inclusion in the school education system for a logical and cross-sectional progression. Guidelines should also be aligned with the legal instruments and policy measures. The NGIFEIE is developed to ensure the smooth and effective implementations of the recommendations of the NEP, 2020 with regard to equitable and inclusive education for all.

The objectives of the guidelines are to

1. Develop a sense of belongingness, respect and acceptance of diversity by recognizing, identifying and fostering the capabilities of every individual.

2. Sensitize stakeholders and to develop the capacities of teachers to address the learning needs of students from different backgrounds.

3. Facilitate effective multi-sectorial coordination amongst concerned government agencies and other organizations to ensure non-discrimination, provision of necessary support, equity and inclusion in education from foundational to secondary stage.

4. Provide implementation tools to ensure that all students are able to benefit from the education system and to achieve the goal of learning for ALL.

1.4 Stakeholders

The stakeholders are the partners in school education. They are the prime implementers of the equitable and inclusive education programme at the ground level for making it successful. The list of stakeholders includes the following:

- Teachers, special education teachers and other allied teaching personnel (including resource persons, therapists, school psychologists, counsellors, social workers, health care providers, CBR workers, tutors and volunteers in the community)

- Students, especially students belonging to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). They are broadly categorized based on
  - Gender Identities: particularly female and transgender individual
  - Socio-cultural identities: Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities

– Geographical identities students from villages, small towns, hilly and remote areas, and aspirational districts)

– Disabilities (locomotor disability, leprosy cured person, cerebral palsy, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy, acid attack victims, blindness, low-vision, deafness, hard of hearing, speech & language disability, intellectual disability, specific learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, mental illness, chronic neurological conditions, multiple sclerosis, parkinson's disease, haemophilia, thalassemia, sickle cell disease and multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness as specified in the schedule of the RPwD Act 2016 or as further notified.)

– Socio-economic conditions: migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor)

● School administrators and leaders

● School Management Committee and School Complex Management Committees, Families and Communities

● Block, District, State and National level Government organizations, non-government organizations, ministries, departments and any other bodies in the area of education, social welfare, health and allied areas.

● Institutions/organizations running teachers education programmes. Eg. Universities Department of Education, National Institutes on Disabilities and other Regional, State, District level Institutions running teachers education programmes.

2.0 Data and Dynamics

2.1 Reflection from the Data

According to the Census 2011, among the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups, the Scheduled Castes constitute 16.63% of the total population and Scheduled Tribes constitute 8.63% of India's population. The Muslim population is 17.22 crore (14.23%), Christian 2.78 crore (2.30%), Sikh 2.08 crore (1.72%), Buddhist 84.43 lakh (0.70%) and Jain 44.51 lakh (0.37%). Data for Parsi (Zoroastrian) is not available in the Census 2011. As per NSSO Report No. 563 (2011-12), the population of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in India is 44%. The prevalence of disability (percentage of persons with disability in the population)

was 2.2% with 2.3% in rural and 2.0% in urban areas. Among males, prevalence of disability was 2.4% while it was 1.9% among females (2011 Census). The UDISE+ data of 2021-2022 shows that India had nearly 14.89 lakh schools with 26.52 Crore children (pre-primary to higher secondary) and 25.57 Crore children (primary to higher secondary) in schools across the country. Of these 22.67 lakh (pre-primary to higher secondary) and 22.40 lakh were students with disabilities (SwDs). The percentage of functional toilets for SwDs was 25.7% and ramp with handrails was available only in 49.72% of schools. The percentage of OBC, minority and Muslim minority was 44.9%, 17.8% and 14.3% respectively. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for primary grades was 103.39%, while for upper primary, secondary and higher secondary were gradually decreasing as depicted as 94.67%, 79.56% and 57.56%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8 and 10. The GER of Students belongs to SC at primary grades was 113.10%, while for upper primary, secondary and higher secondary were gradually decreasing as depicted as 103.79%, 84.91% and 61.49%, respectively and GER of Students belongs to ST at primary grades was 106.50%, while for upper primary, secondary and higher secondary were gradually decreasing as depicted as 97.95%, 78.06% and 52.02%, respectively. These enrolment drop-offs are more severe for students with disabilities (enrolment of SwDs at primary-11.31 lakh, upper primary-7.10 lakh, secondary-2.88 lakh and higher secondary-0.49 lakh). The decline in enrolment in higher education is even steeper (NEP2020).

2.2 Educational Issues and Concerns of Children belonging to SEDGs

There are many issues and concerns related to children belonging to SEDGs that have reflected in studies and field visits. These are mainly related to lack of identification of learning needs of children belonging to SEDGs, stereotypes against providing educational opportunities children belonging to SEDGs, unavailability of local teachers, lack of context specific teaching-learning material in local language, infrastructural lags like labs, library, residential school facilities etc., lacking in use of technology in education of children belonging to SEDGs and inaccessible support system and untimely distribution of scholarships and other incentives.

In case of children with disabilities, identification and misdiagnosis are the prime concerns. Early identification and intervention facilities as well as preschool education services are lacking. Misconceptions on disabilities are still prevalent in society. School teachers and

special education teachers are not adequately trained and oriented in equitable and inclusive education. There is a lack of special education teachers trained across different disabilities to meet the needs of children in inclusive schools. Resource centres/rooms for support services to children with disabilities are established mainly at block/cluster level. Students studying in rural and remote areas are unable to receive services from the resource centres/rooms. There is a lack of support to families especially in rural areas.

2.3 Assumptions of Equitable and Inclusive Education

- All children can learn to the best of their potentials provided schools meet the diverse needs of different learners.

- Equity in the classroom will reflect in all children's learning.

- All teachers and other stakeholders are sensitized to welcome and respect diversity in the classrooms and have knowledge, skills and attitude to address the learning needs of children.

- Teachers adopt a child centred approach to teaching and learning and high expectations from all learners to participate actively in different forms of learning activities.

- Inclusion in education would require schools being prepared for accepting diverse groups of children.

- Children would also be required to be prepared to participate in different learning activities in group or on individual task. They should also learn to know and understand others, accommodate others, relate to qualities and conditions of others that may be similar or different from one another.

- Quality of education should be equivalent across different systems of education, whether formal, non-formal, open schooling, home based or alternative forms of schooling.

Setting Benchmark

| All learners have access to opportunities for participation in learning activities of school education and learning centres. | All teachers employ effective teaching approaches that are more representative of and responsive to diversity that foster a Universal Design for Learning. | All stakeholders recognize the potentials of diverse learner groups and support their learning in whatever way they can, by establishing collaborative mechanism (s) | All schools are supported through well organised support sharing mechanism through school complexes that embrace shared cultures and ethos of diversity. | All teachers have access to flexible teacher education programme that supports their work in bringing equity in education and delivering quality Inclusive Education. |

2.4 **Dynamics of Equitable and Inclusive Education**

2.4.1   Equitable and Inclusive education is a dynamic process which brings change in the society. The need of the hour is to address the diverse socio-economic, geographic, cultural and idiographic issues during teaching and learning. Adopting the policy of 'Teaching all children together' and facilitating 'Equitable and outcome based Learning for All' are the hallmarks of school education. This message should be reflected in all activities of the school, for example, in prospectus, display boards, letterheads, visiting cards and school websites etc.

2.4.2   School based interventions for individual child to ensure participation of each and every child, including children belonging to SEDGs, is mandatory to follow a non-discriminatory, equitable and inclusive approach. Concerted efforts are required to take measures for accessible[3&4] school and classroom infrastructure, provision of curriculum and pedagogy based on Universal Design for Learning including LTM and evaluation system, harnessing of technology in curriculum transaction for all, provision of supportive services, assistive devices (eg. hearing aids, walkers, wheelchairs, communication devices, etc.) and technology and appropriate incentives schemes in time bound manner.

2.4.3   Understanding the diverse needs of children from SEDGs. These include children in extreme poverty, girls, boys and transgender children, children living in difficult circumstances, children with disabilities, children of migrant workers, children from scheduled tribes, children living in tribal areas, children from schedules castes, gifted and talented children, children living with health disorders and children of parents living with chronic health disorders.

2.4.4   Learning resources should include socio-cultural capital of the students, language, local specific context and illustrations, vocational skills based on local trades, traditional artefacts, to make the teaching-learning joyful, contextual, participative and effective.

2.4.5   It is necessary to educate and orient teachers on the issues related to school education of children belonging to SEDGs. Teacher should be up to date with recent practices of

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[3] Accessibility Code for Educational Institutions available at
https://www.cbse.gov.in/cbsenew/documents/Draft_Guidelines_on_ACEI_04032022.pdf

[4] Priya -The Accessibility Warrior available at https://ncert.nic.in/ptaw.php

equity and inclusion for adopting the transforming nature of practices into classroom teaching and learning.

2.4.6 Counselling for children and parents during challenging times is required. NEP, 2020 recommends services of school psychologists and counsellor from the school complexes. These can be mobilized through a smooth and effective mechanism of sharing of services within schools. Some of the common challenges faced by the children and parents include crisis in case of acquired disability, bullying, changes occur during adolescence period, not understanding the themes/topics/concepts persistently, attempts to withdraw child from school due to lack of finances or frequently changing towns and cities etc.

2.4.7 Awareness regarding equity and inclusion should be generated on a regular and continuous basis to transform the attitude and beliefs of society at large. It is therefore required to plan out activities throughout the year to steer public attitude towards inclusion. For example, celebrations of specific day, week long or fortnight programmes like organizing school debates / essays / painting / drama / music / sports etc. to promote equitable and inclusive education (Annexure-I). It is also essential to generate community support through involvement of media, local bodies and communities in these awareness programmes. The products and creativity of the children can be showcased to the masses to build up confidence among the children and change public attitudes.

2.5 **Recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020**

2.5.1 *Early Childhood Care and Education: The Foundation of Learning:* Schools providing quality ECCE reap the greatest dividends for children who come from families that are economically disadvantaged. Inclusion and equal participation of children from these groups and for children with disabilities in ECCE and the schooling system is of highest priority. "*The overarching goal will be to ensure universal access to high-quality ECCE across the country in a phased manner. Special attention and priority will be given to districts and locations that are particularly socio-economically disadvantaged. ECCE will also be introduced in Ashramshalas in tribal-concentrated areas and in all formats of alternative schooling in a phased manner.*"

2.5.2 *Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: An Urgent & Necessary Prerequisite to Learning:* "The nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors, and community involvement into the schooling system. All school children shall undergo regular health check-ups especially for 100% immunization in schools and health cards will be issued to monitor the same."

2.5.3 *Curtailing Dropout Rates and Ensuring Universal Access to Education at All Levels:* "For providing equitable and quality education from the Foundational Stage through Grade 12 to all children up to the age of 18, suitable facilitating systems shall be put in place". To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)[5] and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people in India who are not able to attend a physical school".

2.5.4 *Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools:* Learning should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging. "All efforts will be made early on to ensure that any gaps that exist between the language spoken by the child and the medium of teaching are bridged. In cases where home language/mother tongue textbook material is not available, the language of transaction between teachers and students will still remain the home language/mother tongue wherever possible". Specific actions including the use of appropriate technology enabling children to work at their own pace, with flexible curricula to leverage each child's strengths would be initiated. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment. Local sign languages will be respected and taught as well, where possible and relevant.

2.5.5 *Special Education Zones (SEZs):* Certain geographical areas contain significantly larger proportions of SEDGs. Also, there are locations that have been identified as Aspirational Districts by the Government which require special interventions for promoting their educational development. The Policy recommends that regions of the country with large populations from educationally-disadvantaged SEDGs should be

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[5]Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) for Open Schooling, 2022 of National Institute of Open Schooling available at https://www.nios.ac.in/media/documents/Inclusive_Education_Policy_2022.pdf

declared Special Education Zones (SEZs), where all the schemes and policies are implemented to the maximum through additional concerted efforts, in order to truly change their educational landscape. Providing quality education to girls is the best way to increase the education levels for SEDGs, The policy thus recommends that the policies and schemes designed to include students from SEDGs should be especially targeted towards girls in these SEDGs to eliminate any remaining disparity in access to education (including vocational education) for children from any gender or other socio-economically disadvantaged group not just in the present but also in future generations.

2.5.6 Provisions

2.5.6.1 Gender-Inclusion Fund to provide equitable quality education and for assisting female and transgender children in gaining access to education through different mechanisms such as making provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, conditional cash transfers, etc. will be available to States. This will enable States to support and scale effective community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers.

2.5.6.2 Inclusion Fund schemes will be developed to address access issues for other SEDGs. The Policy aims to eliminate any disparity in access to education (including vocational education) for children from any gender or other socio-economically disadvantaged group.

2.5.6.3 Building free standard boarding facilities available in school locations where students may have to come from far, and particularly for students from SED backgrounds with suitable arrangements for the safety of all children, especially girls.

2.5.6.4 Strengthening Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and expanding to increase the participation of girls in quality schools (up to Grade 12).

2.5.6.5 Building additional Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas around the country, especially in aspirational districts, SEDs, and other disadvantaged areas, to increase high-quality educational opportunities.

2.5.6.6 Special hostels, Bridge courses and financial assistance: As a part of the efforts to enhance participation in school education, special hostels in dedicated regions, bridge courses, and financial assistance through fee waivers and scholarships will be offered to talented and meritorious students from all SEDGs on a larger scale, especially at the secondary stage of education, to facilitate their entry into higher education.

> *a) Policies and schemes* such as targeted scholarships, conditional cash transfers to incentivize parents to send their children to school, providing

bicycles for transport, etc., that have significantly increased participation of SEDGs in the schooling system in certain areas will be significantly strengthened across the country.

b) *Making a Single window system* (single agency and website) for scholarships, other opportunities and schemes for SEDGs will be coordinated to ensure that all students are aware of, and may apply in a simplified manner on such a 'single window system'.

2.5.6.7 *Enabling harnessing of the natural talent and unique potential of students* opening NCC wings in secondary schools located in tribal concentrated areas of different states will be encouraged with collaboration and support from the Ministry of Defence to motivate them for a successful career in the Defence forces.
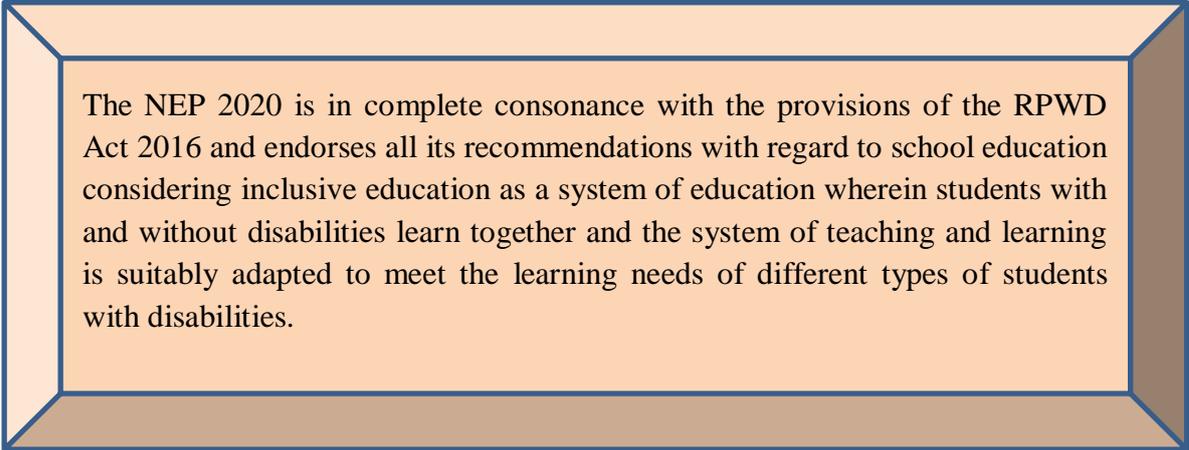
The NEP 2020 is in complete consonance with the provisions of the RPWD Act 2016 and endorses all its recommendations with regard to school education considering inclusive education as a system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities.

2.5.7 *Assessment and certification agencies:* Assessment and certification agencies (National Assessment Centre, PARAKH) will formulate guidelines and recommend appropriate tools for conducting assessment, from the foundational stage to higher education (including for entrance exams), in order to ensure equitable access and opportunities for all students with learning disabilities.

2.5.8 *Involving Social workers and Counsellors* for working and connecting with students, parents, schools, and teachers in order to improve attendance and learning outcomes of children belonging to SEDGs and disability categories would be a priority action.

2.5.9 *Teacher education programmes:* Inclusion and equity will become a key aspect of teacher education and training for all leadership, administrative, and other positions in schools. The following are the specific recommendations:

2.5.9.1 *B.Ed. programmes* will include training in effective as well as the most recent techniques in pedagogy addressing human rights and human values, learner-centred, collaborative including pedagogy with respect to foundational literacy and numeracy, multi-level teaching and evaluation, teaching children with disabilities, teaching children with special interests or talents, use of accessible educational technology.

2.5.9.2 *Shorter post-B.Ed. certification* courses will also be made widely available, at multidisciplinary colleges and universities, to teachers who may wish to move into more specialized areas of teaching, such as the teaching of students with disabilities, or into leadership and management positions in the schooling system, or to move from one stage to another between foundational, preparatory, middle, and secondary stages.

2.5.9.3 *In-service teacher education programmes* will include awareness and knowledge of how to teach children with specific disabilities (including learning disabilities) as an integral part of all teacher education programmes, along with gender sensitization and sensitization towards all underrepresented groups in order to reverse their underrepresentation.

2.5.9.4 *Building Capacity of Alternative schools teachers* in the teaching of science, mathematics, language, and social studies will be developed including orientation to new pedagogical practices.

2.5.10 *Alternative forms of schools* will be encouraged to preserve traditions or alternative pedagogical styles These schools will be supported to integrate the subject and learning areas prescribed by the NCFSE into their curricula in order to reduce and eventually eliminate the underrepresentation of children from these schools in higher education. Financial assistance will be provided to introduce science, mathematics, social studies, Hindi, English, State languages, or other relevant subjects in the curriculum, as may be desired by these schools.

2.5.11 *Libraries and laboratories* will be strengthened and adequate accessible reading materials like books, journals, etc., and other learning materials in accessible formats will be made available. High-quality modules to teach Indian Sign Language and to teach other basic subjects using Indian Sign Language will be developed and made available.

2.5.12 *Sensitization of all stakeholders* in the school education system, including teachers, principals, administrators, counsellors, social workers and students to the requirements of all students with the notions of inclusion and equity, and the respect, dignity, and privacy of all persons will be a major endeavour. Technology-based

solutions will be used for the 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 accorded priority.

2.5.13 *Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes* and sharing of resources across complexes will improve support for children with disabilities and children belonging to SEDGs. The specific details are given below:

2.5.13.1 Schools/school complexes will be provided resources for the integration of children with disabilities, recruitment of special education teachers with cross-disability training, and for the establishment of resource centres, wherever needed, especially for children with severe or multiple disabilities.

2.5.13.2 Schools and school complexes will work and be supported for providing all children with disabilities accommodations and support mechanisms tailored to suit their needs and to ensure their full participation and inclusion in the classroom.

2.6 Suggestive Interventions for Children with Disabilities in the Samagra Shiksha Scheme

2.6.1 Early screening, identification and assessment of children with disabilities for enabling full participation in the schooling process at all levels (from foundational stage to secondary stage).

2.6.2 Provision of adequate resources to school/ school complexes for inclusion of CwD including: - special education teachers with cross disability training, general teachers training on curriculum adaptation, well-equipped resource centres, assistive devices, appropriate technology based tools and language appropriate teaching learning material.

2.6.3 Individualized reasonable accommodation and support plan to be developed for each child with disability.

2.6.4 Interventions for Children with specific learning disabilities (SLD) including capacity building of teachers for identifying children with SLD, use of appropriate technology and allowing children to learn at their own pace using a flexible curriculum to leverage each child's strengths.

2.6.5 Effective community participation in school and out of school. This will require identification and orientation of community leaders on the nature and needs of various

types of disability as per RPwD Act, 2016 and the training of SMCs/SMDCs for effective inclusion of children with disabilities (CwDs).

2.6.6 Convergence of different schemes run by various ministries and departments for mapping of various funding resources and creating awareness about existing schemes and entitlements (including examination provisions).

2.6.7 Partnerships with relevant organizations and stakeholders including NGOs, CSRs, voluntary organizations, parents' and community networks.

2.6.8 Provision of early identification & intervention services, arrangement of therapeutic services for younger children with disabilities, 'AT RISK' children and children belonging to other SEDGs having health complications & nutrition deficiencies, in foundational and preparatory stages of school education.

2.6.9 Proper identification criteria and declaration of special education zones to enhance quality education opportunities for children with disabilities.

2.6.10 Under curriculum & pedagogy, like differentiated curriculum, UDL activities, accessible LTMs & resources, individualized approach, multi-sensory approach, multiple means of communication, accepting and applying the accessible format for feedback, technology[6] are some of the ways to incorporate equal opportunities for learning.

2.6.11 Provision of multiple options, choosing subjects including local trades based, vocational based, scientifically, technologically advanced & culture-oriented subjects of their interest and competencies from middle stage onwards.

2.6.12 Teaching in classrooms and interaction in schools in the language (home language, regional language, local language, link language, Indian Sign Language etc.) of the children.

3.0 Guidelines for Implementation of Equitable and Inclusive Education

3.1 Guidelines for School Education

To facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on SEDGs, the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes (*NEP, 2020).*

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[6] Guidelines for the Development of e-Content for Children with Disabilities, Ministry of Education, Government of India available at https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-06/CWSN_E-Content_guidelines.pdf

3.1.1 Guidelines for Foundational Stage of Schooling (ECCE & Early detection and Intervention Programmes)

The NEP 2020 accords the highest priority to the inclusion and equal participation of children with disabilities in ECCE to enable them to be fully involved in regular schooling from the Foundational Stage onwards. This emerges out of the research that shows us the crucial importance of the early years for all children and the number of initiatives that have been taken in this direction. In the new pedagogical and curricular structure outlined in the NEP, the foundational years cover ages 3-8.

> 'ECCE ideally consists of flexible, multifaceted, multilevel, play-based, activity-based, and discovery-based learning about, e.g., alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem solving, drawing/painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement.'(NEP2020)

Given this, these guidelines aim to help realise the thrust of the NEP with regard to equitable and inclusive education in these years.

Hands in hand……

At the anganwadi that Sania goes to, there is a shelf with a number of slim Hindi books. At age 4, Sania can recognise many letters in Bengali, her home language, and some letters in Hindi. She spends a lot of her time looking at the books, choosing one with great care. Though she can't read the full sentences in Hindi yet, she flips through the pictures on each page many times with close attention. The anganwadi worker, Kirti, is worried about Sania because she does not interact with any of the other children, despite their repeated attempts. When Kirti does not allow her to read by herself and makes her play with the others, Sania is severely agitated - she mumbles to herself and rocks back and forth. This lasts for many minutes. It continues to happen every time Kirti asks her to play outside. Kirti is confused, and is worried when Sania stays home the next day. She requests help from her friend Jia, who is a primary school teacher. Jia has recently attended training on including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in regular schools, and she suggests that Kirti sit with Sania and her mother to draw a schedule for her time at the learning centre. She also asks her to try and understand what is upsetting her in the playing area.

After some time of speaking to Sania and her family, Kirti is able to help make a schedule for Sania. She also makes some adjustments in the playing activities after understanding that Sania was averse to physical contact and many loud noises at the same time. With this knowledge, Sania willingly spends a short amount of time in the playing area each time and has begun to have short interactions with the other children. She is most comfortable and content, however, with the books. Kirti does not treat Sania differently in any way from before, and does not label her. Since she does not have the tools herself, she suggests to Sania's mother that they may get her a screening for disabilities done at the primary school so that they are better able to understand Sania's needs. Kirti explains that if Sania is diagnosed with a disability, it does not mean that she can't grow up and learn well with other children. A diagnosis will mean that her family will be able to understand her better, that her future teachers will be able to teach her better, and that she will be able to understand herself better as well.

- Acceptance and respect all children from the early years of 3 to 6 must be encouraged by the teachers in preschools and by anganwadi workers and for 6 to 8 by teachers in primary schools through the use of accessible/adapted play materials, the availability of accessible infrastructure, and an inclusive, safe and enabling environment in all centres. Respect for diversity, for home language, and the use of local materials will set the stage for all learners from a young age.

- Early identification[7] and intervention for children with disabilities must take place along with health check-ups and growth monitoring so that they receive support early, particularly through teachers who can plan according to their needs. As per the principles of inclusive education, this early identification should not be to label or to categorise a child but to better understand and cater to their learning needs from a young age. This will also give the children more support to flourish in regular schooling systems.

- A BFEe must be ensured in all centres through which ECCE is delivered. This involves classroom furniture and layouts which facilitate access and free movement for all children, modified toilet facilities for children with disabilities, buildings with ramp access with handrails.

- The anganwadi workers, teachers of preschool and primary schools across school complexes must design learning activities and ensure active participation of all young learners in activities. These personnel should interact and share the level of children's progress through a portfolio as and when required, which is crucial particularly for children with disabilities. This interaction across levels of schooling must involve parents and will contribute to creating a positive attitude in communities.

- Foundational literacy and numeracy teaching must be made inclusive[8], taking into account multilingualism including local, tribal, sign language, special needs and plus curriculum[9]. The play, activity-based learning experiences and other aspects of pedagogy must focus on strengthening children's skills of reading, writing, speaking, counting, arithmetic, and mathematical thinking as per their needs and abilities. NEP provides that at the culmination of class III, a school-based assessment will be conducted to assess the foundational literacy and numeracy skills of all the learners.

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[7] The World Health Organization's Ten Questions Screening, National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage, NCERT, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, 2022 or PRASHAST.

[8] Teaching learning interventions in inclusive classrooms available at https://ciet.nic.in/tlclassroom.php?&ln=en

[9] Part of core curriculum specific to develop skills and competencies of children with disabilities necessary for independent living in an inclusive society, for example, mobility skills, communication using Sign Language and other modes, Braille reading & writing skills, daily living skills etc.

The standards for this will be established by a new national assessment centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment Review & Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development).

● Assessment in preschool programs must be 'for learning' and not assessments 'of learning'. They should be continuous, comprehensive, and based on the child's experiences. There must be facilities to adequately adapt all assessments for children with special needs, and assessments must be non-competitive. Their objective must be recognising and encouraging strengths, identifying areas which need additional support, and most importantly, understanding how to teach the child better for the teacher. Assessment should involve observing and documenting the development of the child, i.e., their health and nutritional status, participation and involvement in day-to-day experiences, and art. Anecdotal records, checklist, portfolio and interactions can be used.

● As stated in the NEP, the establishment of a "Preparatory Class" or "Balvatika" system for every child prior to the age of 5 or before Class 1, which has an ECCE-qualified teacher who will deliver play-based learning with a focus on developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy in an inclusive manner. Preparing a child for regular schooling is particularly important for children with disabilities, and the Balavatika system must be equipped to play an important role in socio-emotional and physical preparation of students and their families for primary school.

● Alternative forms of early schooling will be recognised, such as Ashramshalas in tribal-concentrated areas, and ECCE will also be introduced in a phased manner.

Implementation mechanism

The NEP states that ECCE will be delivered through Anganwadis, pre-schools, and grade 1 and 2 of primary schools. This necessitates the expansion and strengthening of early-childhood education institutions, which involves:

● **Strengthening Anganwadis:**
  ○ Sensitisation of workers and teachers to diverse learning needs, disabilities, paying close attention to young children with regards to their learning progress.
  ○ Easy to use tools in a number of different languages for the preliminary screening of children for further referral to assessment camps for disability

certification. At this stage children should not be diagnosed and labelled, but only referred further after discussions with parents/guardians.

  ○ Integration with school complexes/clusters.

  ○ Provision of high-quality, accessible play and early learning materials that is suitably adapted/made accessible for the use of children with diverse needs.

- **ECCE training of Anganwadi workers and teachers:**

  ○ The planning and implementation of early childhood care and education curriculum will be carried out jointly by the Ministries of Education, Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), Panchayati Raj, Social Justice & Empowerment (MSJE) and Tribal Affairs.

  ○ Certificate and diploma programs in ECCE will be designed and run through offline as well as digital/distance mode as per convenience of participants. Those with qualifications of 10+2 and above shall be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE; and those with lower educational qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme covering early literacy, numeracy, and other relevant aspects from the perspective of inclusion of diverse learners.

  ○ This training of Anganwadi workers/teachers will be mentored by the Cluster Resource Centres of the School Education Department which shall hold at least one monthly contact class for continuous assessment. In the longer term, State Governments shall prepare cadres of professionally qualified educators for early childhood care and education, through stage-specific professional training, mentoring mechanisms, and career mapping.

- Effective early intervention works towards making optimum use of every potential in the child to move on the path of holistic child development[10] in all domains such as cognitive, language and communication, socialization, motor development and self-help skills development. Early childhood interventions in care, development and education also prevent problems occurring, or to tackle them head-on when they do, before secondary problems set in. It also helps to foster a whole set of personal strengths and skills that prepare a child for inclusive education.

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[10]National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage, 2022, Ministry of Education, available at https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NCF_for_Foundational_Stage_20_October_2022.pdf

- Pre-school inclusive education programme lays a firm foundation for preparatory and middle stages of school education. This needs active partnership with families, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, NGOs support to schools.

- There are many ECCE holistic child development training programmes/refresher courses starting from screening to planning interventions for preparing children who are at risk, development delays, disabilities, chronic illness, epilepsy, premature birth etc. available in India which can be used by ECCE personnel, which would be available on DIKSHA/SWAYAM/NDEAR portals free of cost and these training courses are open for parents, teachers, Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers, CBR and community workers and others involved in early childhood care and education.

- State/district level studies (eg. action research) related to education of young children at preparatory stage should be conducted, reported and disseminated for further improvement in quality of the pre-school education programme.

3.1.2 Guidelines for creating inclusive schools

It is important for schools to facilitate the inclusion of all children including the SEDGs in education by:

- Developing a vision for their school to facilitate inclusive education that values , respects and celebrates students' diversity and communicate it to various stakeholders including parents, community members and the administrators;

- Discouraging any kind of discrimination, negative dispositions and violence against/amongst students;

- Encouraging parents to send out of school children to school especially children with disabilities. For this positive and encouraging messages should be communicated;

- Include parents of SEDGs in the school management committee for addressing the concerns of these groups;

- Ensuring admission to all children and not rejecting any child on the basis of lack of resources in the school;

- Encouraging collaboration with community, NGOs, parents and other relevant organizations for developing better vision and mobilizing resource support;

- Equipping the resource centres and other support mechanisms to enable all children to gain access to education including technology based support & services, vocational exposure and skill development;

- Making curriculum flexible, culturally and socially accommodating, inculcating development of social skills, and facilitating overall development to make transition to higher and vocational education;

- Transacting the curriculum through the total communication approach- using signs[11], oral, auditory, written and visual and tactile aids-for addressing the different learning styles of children;

- Encouraging teachers to develop knowledge and skills to teach all children in a class, by designing and implementing adapted, modified or differentiated curriculum as per individual needs; by using variety of ways of interaction, may be individualized, in pairs, buddy, small groups or through UDL-based whole class approach and by experimenting different aspects of pedagogy;

- Developing assessment tools that are inclusive by design and no special efforts are needed to make separate tools. This leads to meaningful and continuous feedback to strengthen learning;

- Providing adequate facility of resource persons, and frequency of support in the school such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, physiotherapists etc.;

- Communication channels between teachers and students are open enough for students to share their feelings and inform about any abuse.

Implementation Mechanisms

- Ensuring implementation of equitable and inclusive education programme in schools and classrooms from foundational stage to secondary stage through establishing/strengthening equitable and inclusive education (EIE) cell at state/UT department of education in coordinated manner through districts, blocks, clusters, school complexes and finally at schools. EIE cell will have the responsibility to provide adequate resources including human and financial resources to schools in time and regular monitoring of activities related to creating equitable and inclusive schools, for example, activities related to identification, assessment, diagnosis, certification, (re-)admission, placement, accessible infrastructure & curriculum, provision of services at resource room/centres, incentives for students, aids and appliances, assistive devices, technological support, other support & therapeutic

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[11] National Institute of Open Schooling-exemplary video resources in Indian Sign Language available at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXBn5q8Zv4Bz-LZXWWD7Jxw

services, students' learning & development, maintaining PTR, HBE & other learning centres programmes, individualized interventions & package programmes, capacity building and sensitization programmes, partnership & collaboration with other organizations etc.

- Partnership with local bodies such as Panchayati Raj Institutions, SMCs, parents, volunteers and communities for sharing the resources and services in the school complexes;

- Strengthening resource centres by equipping them with assistive devices, supportive services, vocational exposure & skill training, and human resources like speech therapists, occupational therapists, primary health workers, social workers, physiotherapists, counsellors, special education teachers, local vocational instructors etc.

- Training teachers across disabilities and for meeting the needs of SEDGs Teachers in School, designing group learning and individualized learning plan (print/digital/other formats), e-content materials and other curricular resources in accessible formats;

- Maintaining pupil teacher ratio, both for number of teacher for all pupils and number of special education teacher for pupils with disabilities as per the norms and standards for a school of the RTE Act 2009 & the RTE (amendment) Act 2022.

- Making maximum use of time to enhance students' learning outcomes matching each student's potential;

- Taking support from local language speakers, sign language interpreters to facilitate communication in the mother tongue;

- Ensuring provision of reasonable accommodation in the physical environment, modification in instructional materials, alteration in the means and modes of presentation and communication, provision of textbooks, reading materials, LTMs and equipment etc. in accessible formats, contextualizing of contents, harnessing of the socio-cultural capital of students during classroom process, integration of assessment in curriculum, reasonable accommodation and need based modification in assessment strategies[12] based on UDL, and package programmes (integrating learning, therapeutic, medical & other needs) to enhance learning outcomes and to mitigate learning loss among chronic absentees due to long-term medical treatment, frequent hospitalization and for other reasons.

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[12] Guidelines for conducting written examination for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities available at https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Guidelines-29_08_2018.pdf

- Providing required support to students in the school, monitoring the nature, frequency and extent of support required and further strengthening as and when required;

- Encouraging visits of volunteers such as parents, NGOs, retired teachers, local craft-persons/vocational instructors, other community members etc., to provide support to students;

Working together………

"We collaborate with each other as teachers; instead of giving two assignments for separate subjects (Math and Science), we prepare homework that combines both the subjects and reduces the burden on students". – Teachers in a School in Chandigarh.

A Government School situated in a city in North India admits children from diverse backgrounds, including children with disabilities. The primary school teachers of the school appeared to be dedicated and hard working. Two primary teachers of this school have worked out an innovative collaborative strategy to reduce the burden on children. One of them teaches Maths and the other teaches Environmental Sciences. They meet every day after school hours briefly and collaborate on ways to combine their subject matter in order to make a single homework for both subjects. They explain that it helps children in connecting and relating topics and subjects, to have better understanding, and also reduces not just the teacher's workload but also the stress that students undergo when they are overloaded with homework. They also believe that it helps the student in refining critical and innovative thinking skills, and learn subjects holistically. The teachers also give team work activities as part of holiday projects to develop leadership skills among students. They also gave examples of using concrete experiences for understanding Maths for example, through movement of the door, the Math teacher explains the topic of angles and degrees.

Source: NCERT (2021) Index for Inclusive schools, NCERT, New Delhi

- State should ensure facilities available and accessible in schools for vocational exposure and skill training to students belong to SEDGs. Quality skill training to students opting subjects based on different vocations, trades or skills must be provided.

- Setting up criteria for transition of CwDs from one stage to another stage of school education and also for parallel transition from alternative form of schooling to regular schooling system and designing transition plan along with required transition support.

- Taking measures to provide adequate transport facilities to all children who require it including children with disabilities and girls.

- Ensuring timely distribution of proper aids & appliances, repair and maintenance, reissuing appliances in case of damage or lost through resource centres/school complexes/district disability rehabilitation centre.

- Availability of counselling and guidance services at the school complexes/resource centres and extending counselling services to the students as well as for parents also;

- Ensuring accessibility infrastructure of schools as per the accessible code for educational institutions, with:

  o separate toilets or boys and girls, built at a distance from each other and an adapted toilet for CwDs;

  o toilets having constant running water and sanitation facilities;

  o ramps and railings for children who may have difficulty in moving;

  o tactile pathways and signage in approaching road, entrance, corridors, classrooms, labs, activity rooms, library, dining room etc.

  o library, laboratory, activity rooms/spaces etc. equipped with good storage space and books, LTMs, equipment and other devices in accessible formats and ICT enabled library, smart classrooms and ample provisions for usage of assistive technology;

  o resource room, separate room or rooms for vocational activities for optional/additional teaching if required;

  o playground with adequate equipment for outdoor games and physical activities for all including CwDs;

- Ensuring proper safety and security[13] arrangements in schools, circulating information for transportation safety to students and staff and school safety audit on regular basis (say, half yearly/annually) by SMC/third party;

- Display of emergency numbers, helpline numbers prominently in accessible formats and school should clearly specifies procedures for reporting emergencies to the government and the relevant education authorities;

- Making necessary efforts to collaborate with the government and other relevant offices to develop speed breakers, signals (with alarms) for crossing, and removes obstacles /barriers on way to school like ditches, bad roads.

- Appraisal for school inclusiveness[14] for facilitating an accessible school environment including curriculum, teaching-learning, LTM, assessment etc. for improving quality of teaching and learning in inclusive schools.

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[13] Guidelines on School Safety and Security, 2021 by Ministry of Education, Government of India available at https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/guidelines/guidelines_sss.pdf
[14] Index for Inclusive schools, 2021, NCERT, New Delhi available at https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/IndexforInclusiveSchools.pdf

School Safety and Security Plan

'Safety' is understood as a protection against undesirable unintentional threats or dangers, while 'Security' is understood as protection from undesirable intentional human behaviours or actions. A safe school environment is, therefore, one that protects against all dangers and creates an environment of harmony promoting the physical, socio-emotional and psychological well-being of all. Every school should prepare and display School Safety and Security Plan. The School Safety and Security Plan should be prepared by involving not only SMC/PTA, but also children of all grades, by making it an age-appropriate exercise in developing the competency of understanding the idea of personal safety, school community safety and security, and the roles and responsibilities of teachers, school management, peer groups and their own roles and responsibilities in ensuring the same. The school Plan can also have a sub-component of a classroom safety and security plan. The display in accessible formats of the overall plan should be done creatively in a common area of the school, along with info-graphics and photo-graphics etc. so that children of all grades, management, teaching and non-teaching staff and parents understand it and act upon.

Source: DoSEL (2021). Guidelines on School Safety and Security. Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, available at
https:// dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/guidelines/guidelines_sss.pdf

3.2 Guidelines for Home Based Education

Home-based education (HBE) will continue to be a choice available for children with severe and profound disabilities who are unable to go to schools. The children under home-based education must be treated as equal to any other child in the general system (NEP,2020).

The following recommendations are :

- Home-based education is comparatively less structured than the teaching learning process existing in a classroom of a general school education system. In HBE, teaching learning is carried out through parents/siblings/caregivers under the supervision of visiting teachers/ special education teachers in a flexible manner. It is more experiential in nature. Therefore, planning for HBE at block and cluster level with record of students opting for HBE is required for implementation. Consent of parents/caregivers may be made mandatory along with justifications.

- A written educational planning on quarterly basis may be maintained along with the nature and frequency of services the student will receive. A record of follow-up of the

special education and therapeutic services should be kept in the nearby school where the student may be enrolled as a learner receiving HBE.

Sunita was going to a government school and resource room (RR) which was situated a few kms away for approximately 2 years. All the time the mother used to sit with her in the RR. She was then smaller in size so the mother could easily carry her. However, when Sunita was older she couldn't be carried and there was no appropriate transport and escort/ caretaker available. Sunita, on the other hand wants to go to school as she is intelligent and wants to socialize. In spite of having a sharp brain, ability to speak, Sunita is unable to develop to the best of her potential because of inability to move. Although Parents do not convey anything directly to Sunita but their interactions amongst themselves and with neighbours affect Sunita in a very negative way and she thinks that she is a burden on them. If Sunita had better resource support like modified wheel chair and an escort facility, access to neighbourhood school (as all schools do not still admit CWD), transport facility and not transport allowance and high expectations from her, by the parents and teachers in spite of physical disability condition, she would have become much more independent.

Source: MoE(2021). Inclusion in Education: A Manual for School Management Committee

- The subject areas of study, corresponding learning outcomes, LTMs, and supportive measures for each student on the home-based education program for the coming school year may be planned prior to commencement of the academic year. The home based educational activities, the parents/caregiver mediated teaching-learning strategies, and the learning resource materials at least on quarterly-basis, which the parents are expected to utilize in order to achieve the learning outcomes for each student during the coming school year may be planned out, arranged and provided to parents.

- The means and formats of assessing and recording the educational progress of each student on the program should also be planned since assessment would be done during the teaching-learning. Parents may be asked to keep the record of evidence of the participation and performances of the students and the visiting teachers will have the responsibility of collecting this multiple evidence on weekly-basis through online/offline mode. Parents shall not be required to make any written educational plan for example, concept, topic, or practices etc. rather they may be provided with

the activity log/checklist to carry out the activities on daily-basis and marking with (√ for attempted)/(X-for not attempted) (sample format in Annexure-II).

- Parents may discuss and make curricular and instructional adjustments with support of visiting teachers to their home-based educational program during a school year in accordance with the educational needs and progress of each student on the program, as long as these adjustments are consistent with their educational plan. Parents may make amendments to the written educational plan developed by the teachers during a school year.

- Improving health by extending a full range of immunizations to children with disabilities. If deprived, they are at risk of developmental delays, avoidable secondary conditions & preventable death;

- Planning of community-based rehabilitation centres in each cluster for improving access to education, rehabilitation and health services including mental health, particularly in rural and remote areas;

- Capacity building of regular teachers, special education teachers and other stakeholders to meet the special needs of children under HBE and for organizing part time participation in classrooms.

- Orientation/training to parents/siblings/caregivers on quarterly-basis in flexible manner (eg. contents and timings etc. as per their needs and convenience) may also be provided for smooth implementation of HBE programme.

- Plan barrier free accessible infrastructure requirements for mobility and access of CwD especially with movement problems in the wider context. The teaching-learning place/space identified at home should be equipped with adaptable furniture and materials for meeting the access and learning needs of students with disabilities;

- Resource Support near the child's residence, provision of adequate aids and appliances and their repair/maintenance, an escort to and from resource centre/room and bringing them back, transportation and financial help for medical interventions are some of the issues that are to be prioritised.

- Application of technological will be helpful in better and direct connection with children under HBE and their parents. Direct linkage may be provided connecting the child, his/her parents, school, resource centre and school complex through which the child is receiving HBE. Harnessing of technology will be beneficial in improving the standard of HBE.

- Carry out audits through mentoring and monitoring the programme for maximizing the quality of HBE to avoid their segregation from society;

- Parents of children under the HBE programme are likely to face challenges to their mental health. Mothers are often overburdened with the child with disability and household work. Parental counselling is very relevant for improving mental health.

- All efforts should be made to bring the children to regular schools after building the basic skills at home. To facilitate social interaction with other children and to provide learning opportunities in group activities, they may be placed intermittently, say, once in a week or fortnightly in the classrooms of nearby schools where they are enrolled.

- Children receiving HBE or their parents should also be informed about open and distance schooling, online schooling and other alternative schooling system.

Implementation mechanisms

- State Education Department has the responsibility to execute and monitor the Home Based Education Programmes through District and Block Level Education Officers across the State. State level planning for implementation of HBE is required that should be coordinated by the District and block education offices. State education Department must collaborate with SCERT, DIETs, District and block education officers, Inclusive Education Coordinators of the state and districts, parents of children who require HBE, Therapists etc. for planning of quality HBE programmes and designing of state/local specific implementation strategies. Technology-based intervention mechanism may be planned and implemented for direct connection with children and family members and to improve standard of HBE.

- For educational planning and supportive services, at the block education office, quarterly written planning documents must be prepared and follow-up interventions on weekly basis including therapeutic interventions, if needed, must be reported. The planning document should include the details about the child, family, responsible family member, location and mode, frequency, duration of home visits, name (s) of special education teachers, name of nearby school, where the child is enrolled etc.

- Implementation of immunization and other health related measures should be taken through involvement of State Health Departments and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, other local level government bodies and organizations like Primary Health

Centres, non-government organizations working at community level in health, sanitization and allied areas.

- Rehabilitation services like services of therapists, aids and appliances, assistive technological devices, LTM and audio-visual resources, counselling services (parents/children), surgery etc. should be made available to the children receiving HBE through joint collaboration with Ministry/Department of Education Department, Ministry/Department of Social Welfare, Ministry/Department of Health and family welfare, Ministry/ Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Panchayati Raj etc. This joint coordination will be helpful for children and their family in identification, assessment, diagnosis, certification, availing of incentives (if any), aids and appliances and other support services. Wherever support is required from the NIs on Disabilities, CRCs, DDRCs, ALIMCO, DEICs, local level NGOs, institutions working in the specialized areas, special schools or from other local bodies, may also be obtained.

- Capacity building of teachers (general teachers, special education teachers and other stakeholders) on Home Based and Open Schooling System should be provided through regional or local educational institutes including SCERTs, DIETs, etc. Components on Home Based Education and Open Schooling should also be included in the course curricula of all pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes through NCTE and RCI.

- Short Orientation/Training Programmes (SOTPs) should be conducted on regular basis on different issues eg. communication, activities of daily living, rights of children, gender-concerns, teaching and learning at home, no-cost-low-cost and tech-based LTMs/equipment or any other immediate needs of the child and families in the nearby school or at community centre or at any appropriate location in the village. All SOTPs should be planned, implemented and monitored by the Block Education Offices. A record of such SOTPs should be kept at the Block Education Office.

- All the incentive schemes must be provided to eligible children receiving HBE in a timely manner through a single window system of Inclusion Funds channelized by the Department of Education/Social welfare.

3.3 Guidelines for Teacher Education

In inclusive classrooms, teachers play a facilitative role so that all children learn at their own pace as per their capabilities. Students from different socio-cultural, lingual-religious and economic backgrounds require support from teachers with respect to the contextualization of subject matter according to their culture, language, living standard, traditions, customs etc. with illustrations from their immediate environment to understand the particular concept. Therefore, it is necessary to build the capacity of teachers to design teaching-learning activities in such a way that every student in the classroom can participate, interact, enjoy and learn with each other. A teacher may require additional support in terms of accessible materials, modifications in infrastructure, and technological interventions, therapeutic support, maintaining linearity between home and school and planning need-based assessment activities.

The teacher education programmes and curricula at all levels must consider the following so that the teachers are better equipped for teaching in inclusive classrooms.

- Conceptual understanding of inclusion, philosophy of inclusion, the learning style of students, understanding diversity and factors leading to exclusion, positive attitude towards inclusion in the classroom, leadership skills related to the creation of an inclusive learning environment, analysing barriers to learning and participation, teaching in the inclusive classroom, make teaching learning and assessment activities accessible to all the students in different schooling system including Open and Distant Learning System and reflective competencies which promote reflection and addressing issues such as impact of gender, disability, regional identity on learning.

- Identify the learning needs of students arising due to disabilities, gender, social, cultural and economic disadvantages, understanding the significance of screening of children with respect to disabilities/disadvantaged, and sensitizing teachers for conducting the screening procedures.

- Peer sensitization and creating conscious opportunities for enhancing interaction, collaborative work and group projects related to curriculum.

- Skill to adapt the curriculum based on identified needs, for example, designing differentiated curriculum, multilevel instructional plan, modifications in teaching-learning activities based on the identified learning needs of students.

- Building synergy between the content teachers, special education teachers, therapists, social workers, counsellors, parents and physical education teachers and working in collaboration with them

- Pre-service and in-service capacity building of teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms must be carried out at all level i.e. teacher education programme for foundational, preparatory, middle and secondary or equivalent stages of school education and also for teacher education with mandatory teaching practices in classrooms having children belonging to SEDGs.

- The focus of education of special education teachers should be on preparing teachers who can work in multi-category inclusive classrooms or in different schooling systems. They must also be equipped for addressing issues like slow speed of writing, short attention span, language of comprehension, style of learning, means and mode of learning, first-generation learners etc.

- Specializations like Education of CwDs, education of children with specific disability, pedagogy practices in inclusive classrooms, adaptive physical education (in PG Course of Physical education) etc. may be offered at the postgraduate level.

If a child can't **LEARN** the way WE teach, maybe we should *teach* the way they learn.

-Ignacio Estrada

How do you differentiate to meet the needs of your students?
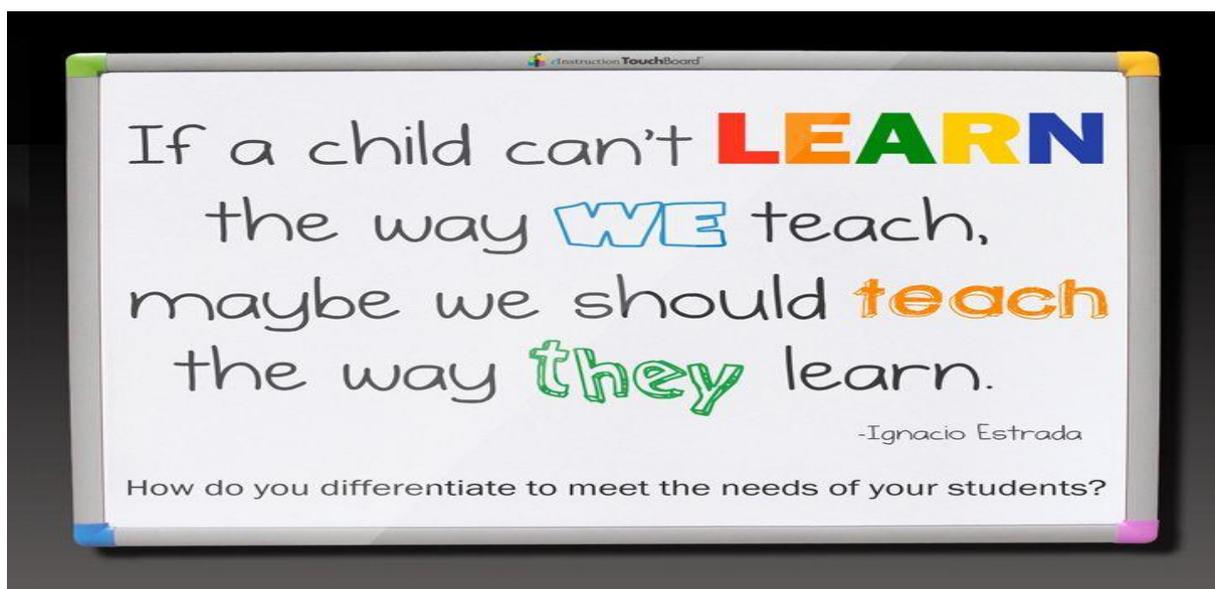
Implementation Mechanism

Implementation mechanism must be established through collaborative approach of NCTE and RCI and teacher training institutes for their respective teacher education course curricula. At state level pre-service and in-service teacher education courses regulated by the NCTE and RCI should be implemented through SCERTs, DIETs, government and non-government teacher education institutions, universities in collaboration with State Education Departments.

As per the nature and needs of the teacher education programmes, different modalities like face-to-face, online, blended and distance mode etc. may be opted. Pre-service courses at diploma, graduate and PG level should be conducted through face-to-face mode and in-service short-term capacity-building programmes for working teachers, special education teachers and allied personnel may be organized on/off line and blended mode through DIKSHA, MOOC, NDEAR or some other platforms at least for six hours on equitable and inclusive education out of 50 hours of CPD[15] every year.

RCI's Continuous Rehabilitation Education programmes for special education teachers must be continued with the latest development in the field on the line of the recommendations of the NPE, 2020 on a regular basis to update their knowledge, skills and attitude towards education of children with disabilities. RCI should also formulate course curricula and training modules for short term programmes for teachers on education of CwDs in inclusive classrooms and conduct such training programmes through different modes. This will be helpful in filling up gaps of shortage of trained teachers for CwDs for the time being. NISHTHA programme is for continuous professional development of teachers and school heads. Teachers and headmasters of the school should be encouraged to enrol and complete such CPD programmes. CRE/CPD programmes should be made mandatory for working teachers for their career advancement through NCTE and RCI.

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[15] Guidelines for 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers, head teaches and teacher educators (Equitable and Inclusive Education-Learning for All is one of the themes related to cross-cutting issues and concerns) available at https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/Guidelines50HoursCpd.pdf

3.4 Guidelines for Collaboration with different organizations

Schools along with the community can collaborate with NGOs and organizations working in the area of health, education, social welfare and gender for educational, medical, therapeutic and psychosocial interventions required by CwDs and SEDGs.

- At the school level there is a visible gender, disability and social category gaps among children in terms of enrolment, retention, completion of the educational process. These gaps are reflective of the inequality in relationships that are prevailing in the society which eventually permeate within the school system. Children belonging to SEDGs across regions and social groups have difficulties in accessing educational facilities for multiple reasons. To address discrimination and unequal access to education, different organizations working in this area can be engaged to work in the community and activities for mass awareness like organization of cultural programmes, sports, arts competitions, quizzes, occasional fair etc. may be encouraged through collaborative approach of education department of the state and community based organizations.

- Door to door survey/screening camps of all children in the neighbourhood can be conducted yearly for screening of out of school children especially belonging to SEDG and awareness camps can be organized periodically for mainstreaming them with the collaboration with local bodies, NGOS, ICDS and health, women and child and disability welfare departments.

- The data of drop outs at elementary level should be flashed on the monitoring application of the CRCs for taking action. NIOS and other open school options should be made available to children whenever and wherever required. Collaborations on planning, implementation and monitoring of progress of activities to be done with WCD, social justice and welfare departments, health, rural development department, SCPCR for decreasing child marriage, foeticide and other gender concerns.

- Inclusive pre-school education lays a firm foundation for inclusive education at the elementary level. This needs active partnership with families, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, NGOs support to schools. NGO network at district level can be established on inclusive education support services after sign MoU with the state education department. They work with Anganwadi, RBSK, preschools to provide early identification and intervention services to all children with disabilities and at risk children, establish assistive devices fitment, repair and training services at district

level and provide supportive services at the school complexes based on the needs of children with disabilities and other children from SEDGs.

- Effective participation of children in learning activities, individualized support, provisions and entitlements of children in consonance with the RPwD Act, 2016 and other policies and schemes for different groups of SED can be ensured with the help of active participation of the family, self-help groups and community.

- The SEDGs and CwDs can be referred to places where services and support is available like school complexes, block/cluster resource centre, District Disability Rehabilitation Centre, Primary Health Centre, Civil Hospital, NGOs working with children with disabilities, girl's education and other SEDGs. These organizations can provide guidance to parents and other family members to make them understand the importance of education for their child and in removing stereotype and misconceptions related to gender, castes, tribes and minorities. Language related issues and context specific challenges can be resolved effectively through efficient resourcing, support and participation of community in and across schools.

A step forward by School Management Committee

Tusu is studying in class-VII of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV). Four years back, she got admission in her village school. Teacher was unaware that how she will read and write since she cannot see. The SMC was constituted in the school first time during the same year. One of the SMC members shared information about a district school where she can learn to read and write Braille. They made arrangement for her learning Braille in the district school. Tusu learned Braille, and after her fifth class got admission in KGBV. Her teachers do not know Braille. She takes class notes in Braille as any other classmates taking notes in Devnagari or Roman. She reads her note book for teachers to get it checked.

Source: NCERT (2020). Inclusion in Education: A Manual for School Management Committee

- NEP, 2020 also mentions that efforts will be made to involve community and alumni in volunteer efforts for enhancing learning by providing at schools: one-to-one tutoring, the teaching of literacy and holding of extra-help sessions, teaching support and guidance for educators, career guidance and mentoring to students, etc. The local organizations can be entrusted with the role identifying and recruiting individuals to be classroom facilitators who would bring out-of-school children, especially girls, transgender children and CwDs, back to school. For addressing the learning losses due to pandemics, long-term medical treatment, frequent hospitalization etc., social workers/special education teachers/volunteers/volunteer parents can be attached to school/learning centre or hospital based intervention centre (if required and feasible) - to help in remediation, designing package pragrammes and enhancing learning outcomes. A list of local volunteers, retired teachers/government servants/youth may be prepared at community level and they may be engaged for activity-based learning at village/habitation level.

- Role models can be identified amongst persons with disabilities, women and transgender from within the community, district or state. They may be encouraged to form their advocacy group or self-help group to address the diverse needs of children belonging to SEDGs. Students can interact with them and learn from their experiences.

- For children belonging to migrant families, schools can, in consultation with the community, evolve a system of flexible time tables which would enable them to continue their education along with supporting their parents.

- Collaboration can be done with skill based organizations for empowerment of girls, CwDs and other SEDGs for providing vocational skills training.

- Local communities and organizations can fill the gap wherever immediate resources and services are required at local level. For example, for developing infrastructural facilities as per the local needs and resources like monitoring of building proper classroom and toilets, providing furniture, textbooks and blackboard, establishing new schools, constructing approach roads to school thus providing easy access to schools for beneficiaries of marginalized groups. Collaboration can be done with media organizations for local awareness on inclusive education to steer public attitude towards inclusion.

- Interdepartmental/ Inter-sectoral Thematic groups/expert committee can be formed at different levels like state, district, block that deliberate on the issues related to CwDs, SEDGs and gender. The frequency of meetings, processes for agenda setting and the process of documentation should be laid before or in the beginning of setting up of the committees.

Implementation mechanisms

- Local organizations and community members can play a significant role in early screening and identification of CwDs in and around schools and their community; who are still out of school or not regular for continuing their education or not receiving necessary services and support. For curtailing drop outs, which is higher among children belonging to SEDGs, enrolment, retention and regular attendance of children may be monitored jointly by the school and community.

- NGOs and local organizations can help in creating awareness on the schemes, undertake baseline studies, perform need assessment of SEDGs, and report gaps that need to be addressed. These organizations can assist in formation of advocacy groups with members of SEDGs (eg. SHG) and in their capacity building programmes, empower and encourage them to participate in school education related activities.

- Block/cluster or school complex level tech-based collaboration groups of teachers, special educators, local resource persons, functionaries of government and non-government organizations, parents and other stakeholders can be formed to support children, family and teachers; to generate and mobilize resources for schools and students; and to advocate for fulfilling the needs of children.

COLLABORATION WITH ORGANIZATIONS FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION OF SEDGs IN

INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL/STATE/DISTRICT/BLOCK ORGANIZATIONS

UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, MoE, MWC, MSJE,MSDE, NCERT, SCERT, CHILD DISABILITY WELFARE DEPARTMENTS, SOCIAL WELFARE, HEALTH, CRC, BRC, REHABILITATION and VOCATIONAL CENTRES

- Allocating Funds for Inclusion and equity
- Capacity Building of Educational Staff, Principals, Inspectors
- Technology and Infrastructure
- Driving Innovations
- Teacher's Preparation
- Reorienting Teacher's Education
- Collaboration for Development of Curriculum Sensitive to Gender, cultural identity and language development
- Strengthening inclusive ECCE Provisions
- Flexible Curriculum for Local and contextual provisions
- Equitable and Inclusive Pre-Service and In-service teacher education
- Develop bridge courses for dropout children.

COMMUNITY/PARENTS

SMC, VEC , MTA,WMG, PTA,PANCHAYAT, EDUCATION COMMITTIEE, BLOCK EDUCATION COMMITTEE, SHGs,

- Early Screening and Identification
- Providing resources
- Providing Safe and healthy learning environment.
- Involvement of community in teaching local language.
- Implementation of Mid-Day Meal and other schemes
- Help in Addressing Adolescence problems, abuse, sexual exploitation, early marriage and menstrual hygiene in school.
- Addressing dropout and retention of girls and transgender children

NGOs/CSR

PLAN India, CARE, SMILE FOUNDATION, ROOM TO READ, SWATALEEM, AKSHAPATRA, SIGHTSAVERS, Special schools for Assessment,

- Skill Development
- Early Identification
- Teacher's Preparation
- ICT Support
- Material for the needs of all learners with learning difficulties
- Remedial teaching centres
- Residential camps
- Door To door screening of children
- Help in generating resources
- For addressing the learning losses due to pandemics volunteers/volunteer parents can be attached to each school

OTHERS

UNIVERSITY, COLLEGES, YOUTH VOLUNTEERS, COMMITTEES, CARE GIVERS

- Capacity building of teachers, teacher educators and other stakeholders.
- Conduct awareness programs through activities like debates, quizzes, painting and essay competition and TED TALKS.
- Providing support to students belonging to SEDGs.
- Forming Student organization for addressing the need of the students
- Building reading habit which can help to interact with each other in schools.
- Anti-Bullying Committee can help

Mata Samiti: Formation of Mata Samitis (mother's group), an all-women's group, is a significant achievement of Janshala towards the empowerment of women by involving them actively in the programme interventions. These groups have been entrusted with the responsibility of managing and running the Community Based Schools and have proved to be effective in addressing the problem of gender discrimination.

Paheli's Eco- Friendly Sanitary Pads: Seeing the lack of hygienic and biodegradable sanitary pads in Goa's villages, Jayshree Parwar and three other women started Paheli, an SHG in Goa's Bicholim taluka, two years ago. The SHG manufactures and sells eco-friendly sanitary pads. Today, about 50 packets a day are manufactured at Jayshree's home and sold at a cost of Rs 40 per packet. Till date, 1,000 pads have been sold. Seeing the SHG's commitment, many organisations have come forward to help market the product. One such organization is the Goa Institute of Management (GIM), Sakhali, which under its initiative, Abhigyan Give Goa, will help Paheli brand, promote and market these cost-effective and biodegradable pads.

Source:
https://www1.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/UNV/State_of_Youth_Volunteering_in_India/2017_State_of_Youth _Volunteering_in_India_UNV.pdf

- Various organizations can support States in the implementation of various schemes of GOI for promoting equity and inclusion like- up-gradation of KGBVs from Class 6-8 to Class 6-12, self-defence training for girls from middle to secondary stages, stipend for GwDs girls, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, provision of energized textbooks, Sabko Shiksha Achhi Shiksha, distribution of stipend to CwDs.

- Organizations like SCERTs and NCERT can help in developing bridge courses for 'Out of school' and 'dropout' children. Organizations like PLAN India, CARE, Smile Foundation, Room to Read, SwaTaleem and many more can help in Remedial teaching centres, residential camps, drop-in centres at the school level to enhance the participation of girls and SEDGs in learning.

- Institutionalization of local groups (VEC, SMC, MTA, WMG, PTA, Panchayat Education Committee, Block education Committee, Self-help groups etc.) and communities has increased efficiency, accountability and responsiveness of the community. Representation of women, PwDs and other disadvantaged groups in these local bodies and involvement in decision making will help in bridging the gap of SEDGs (gender, disability and disadvantaged) in enrolment and also address issues pertaining to SEDGs students.

- Convergence to be made with the Institutions, organisations, agencies, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, government departments working for the disabilities at *panchayat,* block, district, state & national level like: health department, NHM, RBSK, social welfare department, hospitals, medical colleges, rehabilitation centres, vocational centres, special schools for assessment, aids & appliances, surgical correction, therapy services, training etc. for successful implementation of Inclusive Education. Organisation, institutions, NGOs working in the field of disability like: SSEPD, health department, NHM, UNICEF, Sight Savers, SVNIRTAR etc. can also be collaborated with. District portal of NITI Aayog can be visited to get contact details of NGOs in the State.

- Community can ensure regularity of mid-day meals in schools and can also check students' attendance for the same. Organizations like Aksha Patra can help in providing healthy mid-day meals to students. Women self-help/Mother association groups from the community can be trained to work in solidarity and address adolescence problems, abuse, sexual exploitation, early marriage, menstrual hygiene in school, escorting children in need, mediating the HBE and online schooling, availing of support services from resource centres and school complexes and other incentives.

- Coordination between various departments (Health, Education, Social Welfare, Women and Child, Labour, Department of Disabilities, etc.) need to be strengthened for drawing guidelines, conducting health camps, and awareness campaigns and utilization of funds. For funds for Inclusive education local bodies like Zilla Panchayat / Municipal corporations can be approached to allocate development budget for inclusive education support services as per the RPwD Act 2016 (refer chapter-VI, section 37). CSR funds or community funds can be created by Women and Child Development, Social welfare, SC/ST, Minority welfare departments.

4.0   Expected Outcomes

The National Guidelines and Implementation Framework will be helpful in providing the roadmap for implementation of recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 through Samagra Shiksha Scheme. This will provide a prototype map to the states for developing their annual work plan in their respective areas of intervention to realize equitable and inclusive at ground level in school. It will also help in policy decision at central level as well as state level to meet out the objective of the equitable and inclusive education. Students, teachers, parents, administrators, social worker, counsellor, volunteers, school/school complex management committee will benefit with collaborative approach of implementation of inclusive education approach from the foundational stage to secondary stage of school education. The administrative agencies involved in school education and allied areas at block, district, state and national level along with institutes running teacher education programme will work in unison sharing the same/similar platform for implementation of their respective schemes towards education and support to students. The key performance indicators (KPIs) will be helpful in monitoring and analysing the progress in implementation of the guidelines (Annexure-IV).

4.1 All schools are expected to adopt the policy of equity and inclusion. Schools will become more supportive towards facilitating an accessible environment, providing classrooms for participative learning, providing free spaces to all students for being assessed in a flexible manner, incorporating usage of the latest assistive technologies in the teaching-learning and assessment process.

4.2 Schools and school complexes will become the hub for creating awareness in the society and among different stakeholders on equity and inclusive education through developing themselves as resource centres for sharing knowledge, information, materials and other resources.

4.3 The guideline would help teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders to understand the needs of students belonging to SEDGs, their background, competencies, required support materials and services, technological assistance etc.

4.4 The identification of students with disabilities at an early stage of learning and development would help the stakeholders to prepare for facilitating their right of education, therapy and all other supportive interventions for reducing their complications and inclusion in education in more assertive ways.

4.5 These guidelines will help in streamlining the issues related to identification, diagnosis, treatment, certification, unique disability identity card (UDID), specifically to children with disabilities and provision of incentives, scholarships etc. to all eligible students belonging to SEDGs.

4.6 All students will have opportunities for equal participation in different school and classroom activities of learning through provision of an accessible environment, and teaching-learning and assessment based on UDL. This will bring balance between needs and interventions towards inclusion during the teaching-learning process.

4.7 This guidelitie will facilitate scope for smooth transition of students from a stage to next stage (eg. preparatory stage to middle stage and so on) of school education and from parallel transition from alternative form of schooling (eg. Special schooling, Home based Education, Madrasas, Gurukul, open schooling etc.) to regular schooling system. This will help students to be in the school education system. This will also help in tracking of student's mobility from school education system to alternative schooling and vice versa and in tracing 'Out of the school children', since drop-out rates are high among students from SEDGs.

4.8 The potentials and talents of the students from SEDGs often remain untapped. Once their learning needs will be identified, they can get opportunities to participate in variety of activities including competitions/Olympiads and their talents may get nurtured at the right time and right stage of learning and development.

4.9 It is expected that teachers will develop the skills of understanding, respecting and accepting the diversity among learners. They will learn to relate the qualities and conditions of others to accommodate all students in the classroom. They will become more competent to plan out child-centred teaching learning activities to provide equal learning opportunities to each and every student of the class. They will have competency to assess the learning of every student by modifying assessment procedures and adopting differentiated assessment strategies based on the participation of students in different activities and multiple evidence of learning. Teachers will start involving students and parents more actively in different school activities as per their interest, preferences, skills and aptitude.

4.10 Community participation is expected to be more in school activities for making school BFEe, equity based and inclusive in nature. The community members will assist teachers and schools in activities like community awareness programmes, identifying and mobilizing resources, tracing out 'drop-outs' and 'OoS children' and their re-enrolment

in schools, identifying the hidden talents in students, enriching teaching learning with local flavour and language, sharing of expertise and skills of community members and assisting in governance of inclusive schools.

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Important website links

http://cbseacademic.nic.in/web_material/Manuals/handbook-inclusive-education.pdf
https://ciet.nic.in/pages.php?id=accesstoedu&ln=en&ln=en
https://ciet.nic.in/pages.php?id=booklet-on-cyber-safetysecurity&ln=en&ln=en
https://ciet.nic.in/tlclassroom.php?&ln=en
https://diksha.gov.in/ncert/
https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/guidelines.php
https://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Guidelines-29_08_2018.pdf
https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-06/CWSN_E-Content_guidelines.pdf
https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/guidelines/guidelines_sss.pdf
https://epathshala.nic.in/
https://ictcurriculum.gov.in/
https://itpd.ncert.gov.in//
https://ncert.nic.in/accessibility.php
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/NCERTBarkhaseries/Start.html
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/Book_enhancement_QE.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/FAQ-E.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/handbook_PAB.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/handbook_ups.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/IndexforInclusiveSchools.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/sms.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/degsn/pdf/Training_Module_for_Quality_Education.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/ict-initiatives.php
https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/announcement/Inclusion_in_Eduction.pdf
https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/Guidelines50HoursCpd.pdf
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https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXBn5q8Zv4Bz-LZXWWD7Jxw
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUgLcpnvl YidgxeXsFZH045t8584x4Asx

Institution based websites links
http://ayjnihh.nic.in/
http://cipranchi.nic.in/
http://mhrd.gov.in/inclusive_education
http://mhrd.gov.in/rashtriya_madhyamik_shiksha_abhiyan
http://minorityaffairs.gov.in
http://nhfdc.nic.in/
http://nichcy.org/families-community/help/parentgroupshttp://socialjustice.nic.in/
http://niepmd.tn.nic.in/
http://nivh.gov.in/
http://socialjustice.nic.in
http://ssa.nic.in/
http://thenationaltrust.gov.in/
http://www.adaptssi.org
http://www.aiipmr.gov.in/
http://www.aiishmysore.in/
http://www.alimco.in/
http://www.autism-india.org/
http://www.ccdisabilities.nic.in/
http://www.daa.org.uk/
http://www.disabilityrightsfund.org/
http://www.eenet.org.uk
http://www.inclusive-education-in-action.org/iea/
http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/
http://www.iphnewdelhi.in/
http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/degsn/index_degsn.html
http://www.nimhans.kar.nic.in/
http://www.nimhindia.org/
http://www.niohkol.nic.in/
http://www.nirtar.nic.in/
http://www.rehabcouncil.nic.in/
http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150
http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/inclusive- education/
http://www.worldofinclusion.com
http;//education.gov.in
https://nimhr.ac.in
https://tribal.nic.in

Equity and Inclusion related Awareness Events

S.No.	Equity and Inclusion related Awareness Events	Day/Week/Month
1.	World Braille Day, as it is the birthday of Louis Braille	4th January
2.	International Day of Education	24th January
3.	World Leprosy Day	Last Sunday in January
4.	International Ear & Hearing Care Day	3rd March 2014
5.	International Women's Day	8th March
6.	World Down Syndrome Day	21st March
7.	International Transgender Day of Visibility	31st March
8.	World Autism Awareness Day	2nd April
9.	World Health Day	7 April
10.	World Haemophilia Day	17th April,
11.	International Thalassemia Day	8th May
12.	National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day	24th May
13.	World Multiple Sclerosis Day 2014	28th May
14.	Speech and Hearing Awareness Month	May
15.	World Sickle Cell Day	19th June
16.	Learning Disability Week	16-22 June
17.	Helen Keller day	27th June
18.	Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week	Last week of June
19.	The International Day of the World's Indigenous People	9th August
20.	Women's Equality Day (US)	26th August
21.	World Physiotherapy Day	8th September
22.	The Muscular Dystrophy Awareness: Show of Strength	1st weekends in September (Labour day weekends)
23.	World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD)	10th September every year
24.	International Sign language day	4th week of September, 23rd September
25.	International Week of the Deaf (IWD)	Last full week of September
26.	Sickle Cell Awareness Month	September
27.	World Cerebral Palsy Day	1st October
28.	World Mental Health Day	10th October)
29.	International Day of the Girl Child	11th October
30.	Learning Disabilities Awareness Day	25th October
31.	Learning Disabilities Awareness Month	October
32.	World Sight Day (WSD)	2nd Thursday of October
33.	Transgender Awareness Week Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR)	13th November to 19th November
34.	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	3rd December
35.	Human Rights Day	10th December
36.	National Minorities Rights Day	18th December

Sample Format for Schedule of Activities for Home Based Education

Name of the student:………………………………………… Age…... Gender…………..

Enrolment No………… . ……………Nature and Severity of Disability …………………..

Name and address of the nearby school/resource centre………………………………………

Name of Parents…………………………………………………………………………………..

Address……………………………………………….. Mobile number……………..

Name of visiting teacher(s)………………………………… Mobile Number……………

Instructions: Please mark (√) for activity attempted or (×) for not attempted.

Sl. No.	Statement/description of activities planned as per the needs of students	Date …/…/….	Date …/…/….	Date …/…/….	Date …/…/….	Date …/…/….	Date …/…/….
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							

Observation/review remarks…..…………………………………………………………...........

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..…………………………………………………………………………………………………

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(Signature of the visiting teacher with date)

Annexure-III

	Members of Committee, MoE	
1.	Shri Santosh Kumar Yadav, JS (SS-1)	Chairman
2.	Ms. Ritu Sain, Director (RS)	Member Secretary
3.	Dr. Anupam Ahuja, NCERT	Member
4.	Dr. Joseph Emmanuel, Director (Acad.), CBSE	Member
5.	Dr. Sandeep Kumar Jain, JS (Training), CBSE	Member
6.	Smt. Piya Thakur, Joint Commissioner (Acad.), KVS	Member
7.	Shri Gireesh Kumar Asst. Commissioner, NVS	Member
8.	Dr. Sukanta Kumar Mahapatra, Asst Director (Acad.), NIOS	Member
9.	Dr. Bharti Kaushik, CIET, NCERT	Member
10.	Shri Saurabh Chopra, Centre Square Foundation (CSF)	Member
11.	Ms. Deepika Mogilishetty, Ek Step	Member

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

1. Percentage of schools completely made accessible & safe infrastructure for CwDs and others in the states/UTs, districts, blocks
2. Ratio of diagnosed/certified and enrolled students with disabilities (category-wise) in schools of the states/UTs
3. Percentage of enrolled students belonging to other SEDGs (category-wise) in schools of the states/UTs
4. Percentage of Out-of school students belonging to SEDGs (category-wise) residing in the school vicinity of the states/UTs
5. Percentage of students belonging to SEDGs (category-wise) completed schooling in the states/UTs
6. Percentage of students belonging to SEDGs (category-wise) missing attendance for more than 60 days in a year
7. Percentage of students belonging to SEDGs (category-wise) succeeds vertical transition from one stage to another stage of schooling
8. Percentage of students belonging to SEDGs (category-wise) succeeds horizontal transition across all stages of schooling from different alternative learning centres (eg. HBE, Special Schools etc.)
9. Number of resource centres in the states/UTs, districts, blocks.
10. Number (min-max) schools in a block covered by the resource centres.
11. Percentage of resource centres completely accessible and equipped to provide special education and therapeutic services
12. Percentage of students receiving special education and therapeutic services from resource centres.
13. Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in terms of pupils with disabilities and special education teachers (SET) in a block.
14. Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in terms of pupils and general teachers in a school.
15. Ratio of SwDs received aids & appliances and SwDs required aids & appliances
16. Ratio of SwDs received special LTMs and SwDs required special LTMs (eg. Braille kits, DAISY, ISL books, large print, books in local language, digital books etc.)
17. Ratio of students (SEDGs) received incentives/scholarships and students (SEDGs) eligible to receive incentives/scholarships.
18. Number of schools adopted UDL-based teaching and learning in the classrooms.
19. Number of schools adopted UDL-based flexible assessment procedures for students.
20. Percentage of students with disabilities receiving home based education (HBE) in the states/UTs
21. Percentage of students with disabilities receiving HBE with documented plan of interventions
22. Average distance (min-max) from school/home (in case of HBE) to the resource centres
23. Average frequency of visit of special education teacher per month at the home of the students receiving HBE.
24. Number of students under HBE connected directly with the blocks through tech-based portal.
25. Percentage of teachers/SET completed minimum 6 hours of CPD/CRE on Equitable and Inclusive Education in a year across all stages of schooling.
26. Nature of services/resources received from the collaborative organizations/departments/agencies.
27. Number of research studies conducted by the teacher educators/teachers on development/practices in the area of equitable and inclusive education in the states/UTs.