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## Achieving Inclusion through NEP 2020

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#### Introduction

The country's education system is currently beset by rising inequality and injustice, which the National Educational Policy (NEP), 2020 aims to remedy. The NEP 2020 acknowledges significant dropout rates among vulnerable minorities and socioeconomic strata, among other things. More crucially, obstacles like tiny school campuses and factors contributing to lower participation rates among girls in rural regions are acknowledged as contributing to wasteful resource allocation. It also acknowledges the unfulfilled educational demands of kids who reside in challenging geographic areas. The analysis article briefly reviews some of the most important suggestions for inclusive education and lists some of the major obstacles that the NEP must overcome. The NEP 2020 has done a good job of vocalizing the difficulties that children with special needs, minorities, and gendered categories confront. It has also performed admirably in putting out a number of commendable measures, such as education SEZs, to solve the systemic problems with education in remote areas. However, there are some errors in the new policy. It may have created a new category by combining a number of socioeconomic groups in order to improve resource allocation and administrative efficiency, but it does these historical groups—like the Dalits and Adivasis—no justice. In doing so, it ignores the distinct difficulties that these communities confront. Similar to this, when affirmative action for particular categories is implemented, it may provide a number of difficulties. In this research paper researchers have made an attempt to analyse what all has been said about equitable and inclusive education in the new education policy 2020 this paper is a critical analysis of what has been highlighted about disability and inclusion and explained in brief let's understand in the given points-

#### Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for All: Analysis

The most effective means of attaining social justice and equality is education. While building an inclusive and equitable society where every person has the chance to dream, grow, and contribute to the country is undoubtedly important in and of itself, inclusive and equitable education is also fundamental to that aim. The goal of India's educational system must be to help all students, regardless of their background or place of birth, so that no kid is denied the chance to study and achieve. This Policy states that one of the main objectives of all education sector development programs will continue to be closing the socioeconomic category disparities in school attendance, engagement, and learning outcomes. You can study this chapter in combination with

Chapter 14, which addresses related topics of inclusion and equity in higher education.

Despite the fact that the Indian educational system and subsequent government policies have steadily aided in closing the gender and social category gaps in education across all grade levels, there are still significant gaps, particularly in secondary education and especially for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups who have historically been underrepresented in the field of education. Gender identities (especially those of women and transgender people), socio-cultural identities (like those of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (like those of students from small towns, villages, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socioeconomic conditions (like those of migrant communities, low-income households, children in vulnerable situations, individuals or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor) can all be used to classify socio-economically disadvantaged groups, or groupings, and disabilities. The general trend in school enrollment drops from Grade 1 to Grade 12, but for several of these goals the loss is noticeably more severe. For example, female students' enrollment declines are much bigger within each of these goals and are frequently more steeper in higher education. The subsections that follow provide a quick status update on the SEDGs related to socio-cultural identities.

Based on statistics from U-DISE 2016-17, around 19.6% of elementary school pupils are members of Scheduled Castes; however, at the upper secondary level, this percentage drops to 17.3%. The enrollment losses are more pronounced for kids from Scheduled Tribes (10.6% to 6.8%) and children with disabilities (1.1% to 0.25%), with even more significant drops observed for female pupils in each of these groups. Even more sharply is the enrollment fall in higher education.

A number of issues like as poverty, societal mores and customs, language barriers, and limited access to high-quality education, have negatively impacted the enrollment and retention rates of the Scheduled Castes. One of the main objectives would remain to reduce these inequalities in children from Scheduled Castes' access, participation, and learning outcomes. Additionally, particular attention is required for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), who have been classified as historically being behind in both social and educational advancement.

Due to a variety of historical and geographical conditions, tribal groups and children from Scheduled Tribes also experience difficulties on several levels. Tribal children may perceive their schooling as intellectually and culturally alien and unrelated to their daily life. While there are a number of programmatic initiatives in place and will be pursued in the future to uplift children from tribal communities, specific measures must be taken to guarantee that children who are part of these communities benefit from these interventions. Minorities are comparatively underrepresented in both higher education and the classroom. The Policy recognizes the value of initiatives to support minority children's education, especially for those populations who are underrepresented in the educational system.

The Policy acknowledges the need of establishing supportive frameworks to guarantee Children With Special Needs (CWSN), also known as Divyang, the same chances to receive high-quality education as any other kid. The suggested measures for eliminating the socioeconomic category disparities in school instruction will be developed separately.

For marginalized and disadvantaged populations in particular, the fundamental issues and suggestions covered in Chapters 1-3 addressing ECCE, basic literacy and numeracy, access, enrollment, and attendance are pertinent and crucial. As a result, the actions in Chapters 1-3 will be focused on the SEDGs in a coordinated manner.

In addition, a number of effective policies and programs, like providing bicycles for transportation, conditional cash transfers to encourage parents to send their kids to school, and targeted scholarships, have greatly increased the participation of SEDGs in the educational system in some areas. The nation as a whole needs to greatly reinforce these effective programs and



policies.

Research determining which actions are especially successful for a certain set of SEDGs must also be considered. For instance, because they offer comfort to parents and safety benefits, giving bicycles and setting up walking and cycling groups to enable access to school have been demonstrated to be particularly effective strategies in boosting female student participation, even at shorter distances. For certain students with impairments, one-on-one instruction and tutoring, peer tutoring, open schools, proper infrastructure, and appropriate technology interventions to provide access can be very beneficial. Schools that offer high-quality early childhood education benefit most from having children from low-income households.

In the meanwhile, it has been shown that professional social workers and/or counselors who engage and collaborate with parents, teachers, schools, and students to enhance attendance and academic results are particularly beneficial for kids living in impoverished metropolitan areas.

The data indicates that the proportion of SEDGs in some geographic locations is noticeably higher. Additionally, several regions have been designated as Aspirational Districts, meaning that in order to support their educational growth, certain measures are needed. Therefore, in order to significantly alter their educational landscape, it is advised that areas of the nation with sizable populations from SEDGs that are educationally disadvantaged be designated Special Education Zones (SEZs), where all programs and policies are fully implemented through additional concerted efforts.

It should be highlighted that women comprise over half of all SEDGs, across all underrepresented groups. Regrettably, women in these SEDGs are disproportionately affected by the exclusion and injustice that these goals encounter. The strategy also acknowledges the unique and important role that women play in society and in forming social norms; for this reason, giving girls a top-notch education is the greatest approach to raise educational attainment for these SEDGs for both the current and next generations. Therefore, the policy suggests that policies and programs intended to involve students from the SEDGs should provide special attention to females in these SEDGs.

The Government of India will also establish a "Gender-Inclusion Fund" in order to increase the country's ability to offer all females and transgender pupils an equal and high-quality education. Funds will also allow States to support and scale up successful community-based interventions that address local context-specific barriers to female and transgender children's participation in and access to education. The fund will be made available to States to implement priorities set by the Central government that are essential for helping female and transgender children gain access to education (such as the provision of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, conditional cash transfers, etc.). For additional SEDGs, comparable "Inclusion Fund" programs will also be created to address related access concerns. This Policy basically seeks to remove any residual gaps in children from any gender or other socioeconomically disadvantaged group's access to education (including vocational education).

Free boarding facilities, with appropriate arrangements for the safety of all children, especially girls, will be built in school locations where students may have to travel a considerable distance. These facilities will be built to the same standard as Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. The goal of strengthening and expanding Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas is to improve the number of girls from socioeconomically disadvantaged households enrolling in high-quality schools (up to Grade 12). To expand access to high-quality education, more Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas would be constructed around the nation, particularly in aspirational districts, Special Education Zones, and other underprivileged regions. Preschool sections would be added to Kendriya Vidyalayas and other elementary schools around the country, especially in underprivileged regions, to provide at least one year of early childhood care and education.

The highest attention will also be given to ensuring that children with disabilities are included and participate equally in ECCE and the educational system. From the Foundational Stage



through higher education, children with disabilities will be able to fully participate in the usual educational process. "System of education wherein students with and without challenges learn together and the system of instruction and assessment is suitably adapted to suit the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities" is how the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016 defines inclusive education. This Policy supports all of the suggestions made by the RPWD Act 2016 regarding school education and is fully compliant with its requirements. NCERT is going to make sure that professional entities like the National Institutes of DEP-wD are consulted throughout the preparation of the National Curriculum Framework.

In order to achieve this, resources will be made available to schools and school complexes for the integration of students with disabilities, the hiring of special educators who have received training in working with students with a variety of disabilities, and the creation of resource centers, where necessary, particularly for students who have multiple or severe disabilities. The RPWD Act provides barrier-free access for all children with disabilities. The requirements of various groups of children with impairments vary. In order to guarantee the full participation and inclusion of all students with disabilities in the classroom, schools and school complexes will collaborate and receive help in offering accommodations and support mechanisms that are customized to meet their requirements.

Children with baseline impairments are entitled to choose between normal and special schooling, according the RPWD Act of 2016. Resource centers will work with special educators to meet the educational and rehabilitative requirements of kids who have numerous or severe impairments. They will also help parents and guardians provide their children with high-quality home schooling and skill development, as required. For children who are unable to attend school due to severe and profound impairments, home-based education will remain an option. Children receiving home-based instruction must be given the same consideration as other students in the regular school system. Using the concepts of equity and equality of opportunity, a review of the efficacy and efficiency of home-based education will be conducted. Based on the results of this audit, standards and guidelines for home-based education will be created in accordance with the RPWD Act of 2016. Even though it is obvious that the State is responsible for providing for the education of all disabled children, technology-based solutions will be prioritized for parent and caregiver orientation and for the widespread distribution of educational resources to empower them to actively support their children's learning needs.

Children with particular learning difficulties require ongoing help in the majority of courses. It is evident from research that the earlier this kind of help is provided, the more likely it is to succeed. Early detection and targeted planning for the reduction of learning difficulties are crucial tasks for educators. The implementation of suitable technology that enables children to work at their own speed, adaptable curriculum that capitalize on each child's abilities, and the establishment of an ecosystem for suitable certification and evaluation are some of the specific activities that will be taken. In order to ensure fair access and opportunities for all students with learning disabilities, assessment and certification agencies, such as the proposed new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH, develop guidelines and suggest suitable instruments for conducting such assessments, from foundational stage to higher education (including entrance exams).

In order to reverse the underrepresentation of all underrepresented groups, gender sensitization and knowledge of how to teach children that have particular disabilities (including learning disabilities) will be an essential component of all teacher education programs.

Alternative educational models will be urged to maintain their customs or unique teaching approaches. They will also get assistance in incorporating the NCFSE-mandated subjects and learning areas into their curricula, with the ultimate goal of eradicating the underrepresentation of students from these institutions in higher education. Specifically, as requested by these institutions, funding support will be given to incorporate science, math, social studies, Hindi, English, State languages, and other pertinent disciplines into the curriculum. Children enrolled



in these schools would be able to meet the learning objectives specified for Grades 1 through 12. Additionally, pupils in these schools would be urged to take the State or other Board exams and evaluations administered by the NTA in order to get admission to universities. Teachers' scientific, math, language, and social studies teaching competencies will be enhanced, along with their introduction to innovative pedagogical approaches. Enough reading materials, such as books, journals, etc., and other teaching-learning resources will be made available, and libraries and labs will be reinforced.

In line with the SEDGs and all of the aforementioned policy recommendations, particular focus will be placed on minimizing the differences in the educational advancement of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In an attempt to increase school attendance, talented and deserving students from all SEDGs will receive financial aid in the form of scholarships and fee waivers, special hostels in designated areas, and bridge courses. This financial aid will be extended to a larger number of students, particularly those in the secondary school years, to ease their transition into higher education.

State governments may promote the creation of NCC wings in their secondary and upper secondary schools, including those situated in areas where tribes predominate, under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence. This will make it possible to develop each student's special ability and potential, assisting them in realizing their goal of a prosperous career in the armed forces.

A single organization and website will organize and publicize all scholarships as well as other opportunities and programs open to students from SEDGs. This will guarantee that all students are informed about these chances and may apply for them easily through a "single window system," depending on their eligibility.

While all of the aforementioned policies and actions are necessary to achieve full inclusion and equity for all SEDGs, they are insufficient. A shift in school culture is also necessary. Everybody involved in the school education system—teachers, principals, administrators, counselors, and students—will get training on the needs of every student, inclusion and equity, and respect, dignity, and privacy of every individual. A culture of education of this kind will offer the finest means of assisting students in becoming self-sufficient persons, who will then enable society to change into one that is accountable to its most vulnerable members.

Teachers, licensed social workers, counselors, and the corresponding modifications to implement an inclusive school curriculum will all endeavor to raise awareness among the students about this new school culture. Early on in the school day, lessons will include human values including empathy, tolerance, respect for all people, gender equality, nonviolence, global citizenship, inclusiveness, and equity. In order to increase awareness of and foster tolerance for diversity, it would also entail a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, faiths, languages, gender identities, etc. The curriculum in schools will no longer contain any prejudices or preconceptions, and more content that is pertinent to and relatable to all populations will be added.



Other than the discussion made above there are few points in which inclusion of various groups has been identified which are defined as follows-



## Acknowledgment of people with unique needs

The policy supports integrating students with exceptional needs into regular education systems and acknowledges their requirements. In general, it is consistent with the goals of the 2016 Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act. The strategy moreover endeavors to hire special educators in every school complex to ensure that instruction is more inclusive and child-centered. Children who meet the standards for disability will be able to choose to homeschool and will have professional homeschooling teachers in order to continue learning and receiving the greatest educational resources. Teachers will also receive training on how to spot learning problems in kids at a young age, support them in their academic endeavors, and look out for their emotional health. In order to develop fair evaluation procedures for kids with learning difficulties, the National evaluation Center, PARAKH, will be established. Different approaches to education are put out in order to achieve this goal.

## Acknowledgment of identities based on gender

NEP 2020 acknowledges that those who identify as feminine or transgender, regardless of their social class or other affiliation, are the most negatively impacted. In order to include the community and provide safety nets for these vulnerable pupils, efforts are being made to distribute bicycles to encourage the formation of cycling clubs and to establish walking groups within schools. Furthermore, the new policy suggests creating a "Gender-Inclusion Fund" in order to improve educational opportunities for women and transgender people, acknowledging the fundamental demands of education for female children.

States will be able to use the grant to develop programs that will facilitate the participation of these kids. The fund will start programs for bicycle distribution, conditional cash transfers, and sanitation, among other things. Funds will also allow governments to promote and expand community-based programs that effectively address context-specific local barriers that prevent transgender and female youngsters from participating in and accessing school. In order to address geographic impediments to education, the strategy suggests that Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas be established in order to give students better boarding facilities.

## Establishing Special Education Zones

Establishing Special Educational Zones (SEZs) in areas with a substantial population that belongs to Socio Economically Excluded Groups and in those desirable areas is one of the NEP's most notable recommendations. The main goal is to make education available in India's most rural and distant locations. To change these underdeveloped areas, the Center and the states will synchronize various plans and programs and allocate additional resources. Although this concept is new and has the potential to change educational access in places that are currently inaccessible in the nation (like urban ghettos with sizable minority populations), the policy has not yet stated what the criteria for these zones would be or how they will be identified in both urban and rural settings. There is no explicit indication in the policy as to what would be the deciding elements.



## Conclusion

An inclusive and systemic overhaul of the educational system is called for under the National Education Policy 2020. Its central theme, "Equitable and Inclusive Education," echoes the notion that no kid should be denied access to an education because of their sociocultural identity or origin. The concerns of the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), which encompass women and transgender persons, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes (OBCs), minorities, and other groups, have been considered. The goal of this strategy is to address the disparities in access, participation, and learning outcomes in schooling caused by socioeconomic categories. Hence NEP 2020 has successfully highlighted the need of inclusion and powerfully addressed it we can say by NEP2020 we can surely find out a way to know how we can overcome the difficulties in the path of achieving inclusion for everyone.

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