

# Provisions of Inclusive education in New Education Policy 2020: Its limitations and Teacher perspectives

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**Abstract**—Including children with special needs under the same roof with others is a new approach in the field of education. In order to give a practical shape to this concept, various policies have been introduced by the higher authorities of India since independence. Despite continuous efforts made by the Government of India, only 61% disabled children in the age group 5-19 are attending educational institutions as reported by Census 2011. This implies major concern in the Indian Education system, indicating policy limitations. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the provisions of inclusion in different policies and schemes, policy limitations, and teachers' perspectives towards their implementation. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data analysis. Findings of the exploration revealed that NEP2020 has put strong effort into making an equal education system by involving all categories of students with or without disabilities.

**Index Terms**—Children with disabilities, Educational Policy, Inclusive Education, Teacher Perspectives.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a lifelong process. It starts in the mother's womb and continues till death. Education helps to nurture the inner potentialities of human beings. According to Dr. B.R Ambedkar, "Education is an effective instrument of social change" (Chandra et al., 2024, p. 16). The father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, says, "By Education, I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child, man, body, mind and spirit" (Borah, 2003, p. 5). By this definition, Gandhi wanted to say about a person's holistic development, which can only be achieved through education. It is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires skills to adjust in society. Considering the importance of education RTE Act, 2009 was passed to provide free and compulsory education to all irrespective of caste,

creed, religion, sex, gender, and disability. Moreover State is directed to grant compulsory education for all as written in Article 45 of the Indian Constitution.

The global movement for inclusive education was initiated with the Salamanca Conference (1994) and later confirmed at the World Conference on Education (2000), held in Dakar, Senegal (Sanjeev Kumar, 2007). Inclusive education implies accepting all children, regardless of their race, color, diversity, or ability, with support from school staff, parents, and community (Swain, 2022). According to UNESCO (2006), "Inclusive education is concerned with removing all barriers to learning, and with the participation of all learners vulnerable to exclusion and marginalization. It is a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all children. It addresses the common goals of decreasing and overcoming all exclusion from the human right to education, at least at the elementary level, and enhancing access, participation, and learning success in quality basic education for all". Inclusive education enhances the mutual respect and understanding among students when they engage together in various school activities. Whereas segregated education develops the feeling of discrimination against the differently able and marginalized population (Joshi et al, 2025). The concept of inclusion in India was initially highlighted in the Sargent report of 1944. This initiative gained further support from international declarations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (1975) (Gupta et al., 2024). These milestones have laid the foundation for global awareness about inclusion and have encouraged India to develop a more inclusive education system. To give this concept a practical shape, many fundamental programmes and policies have been

initiated by the Indian Government, such as NPE 1968, NPE 1986, The Programme of Action-1992, DPEP 1984, SSA 2001, RTE Act 2009, RMSA 2009, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, NEP 2020, etc. Despite significant efforts by India's Higher Authorities, stakeholders continue to face numerous challenges in implementing the program. Key problems include low enrollment rates, limited teacher competencies, large size classes, rigid curriculum, insufficient pre-service training and professional development, as well as negative attitudes from both parents and teachers (Joshi et al., 2025). These issues highlight significant policy limitations within the Indian education system. Therefore this study intended to find out the provisions of inclusive education in different policies and schemes, policy limitations and teachers' perspectives towards its implementation.

#### Need and Significance of the Study

The main attention of the educational policy and planning throughout the world is to bring children with diverse needs into common schools, ensuring education for all. To achieve this goal Indian Government has introduced multiple policies and programmes to foster inclusive education. In spite of various efforts made by the Government from time to time, the practical outcomes are not satisfactory. There is a significant gap between policy design and its actual implementation. So it is important to critically assess how the policy provisions align with inclusive principles as well as persisting limitations in the system. Moreover, teachers are the prime stakeholders in implementing inclusive education. Their attitudes, awareness, and preparedness remarkably influence how inclusive practices are carried out in a real classroom situation.

### II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To explore the provisions of inclusive education in NEP 2020 and the IEDSS scheme with respect to school education.
- To find the limitations of inclusive education in the light of the New Education Policy 2020.
- To study the barriers faced by teachers in implementing inclusive principles.

#### Delimitation of the Study

The study mainly focuses on the scope of inclusive education in the policies, acts, and schemes with

special reference to the National Education Policy 2020 and the IEDSS scheme, as well as their limitations in the successful implementation of it. This study also aims to examine teachers' perspectives on the barriers to implementing inclusive education policies. The investigation is delimited to 20 selected Provincial zed/ Government High Schools of Kamrup district of Assam and is not concerned with other important Government policies and acts such as NPE 1968, NPE 1986, The Programme of Action-1992, DPEP 1994, RPwD Act 2016, and other State Government resolutions on inclusive education.

### III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Joshi *et. al.* (2025) conducted a descriptive survey aimed at exploring the challenges, issues, and opportunities associated with implementing inclusive education in the 21st century. The researchers carried out a thorough review of related literature concerning international policies and concepts related to inclusive education. The study findings indicate that absence of awareness, commitment, and collaboration among stakeholders are significant barriers that inhibit the effective execution of inclusive education. Halder, M. (2024) made a document-based analysis to study the need and significance of Inclusive Education in India with various provisions as stated by NEP 2020. The study was also intended to analyze the problems and challenges as well as the role of teachers in its implementation. In the study, the author has mentioned that in spite of several educational policies and programs initiated by the Government of India, many children are deprived of formal education. Gupta *et.al.* (2024) conducted a historical review to examine the measures in promoting inclusion through different educational policies. The study utilized a chronological approach to evaluate previous policies established by the Indian Government. It concludes that following independence, India entered a new phase in education where all students were granted equal learning opportunities within a shared school environment. Paul, S. & Chatterjee, B. (2023) conducted a study examining the influence of inclusive education within the current framework of Indian education, as well as the media's role in fostering inclusive educational practices in India. The

study revealed that inclusive education integrates all students, regardless of ability or difficulty, into the overall school community. This approach forms the underlying philosophy of mainstream education, emphasizing principles based on human rights and social justice. Additionally, the findings on the second objective emphasized the positive impact of media in promoting inclusive values and practices in the Indian education system. Yadav, A. (2019) conducted a study with an attempt to find out the challenges in implementing the Right to Education Act, 2009, at the grassroots level in India. The Indian Constitution has included the right to education as a fundamental right to protect childhood from many inhuman practices. In spite of the tremendous effort made by the Government of India for universalization of primary education, it faces lots of limitations in policy implementation, such as financial hurdles, shortage of teachers, infrastructural gaps, etc.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Method of the study: The researcher used descriptive survey method for the present study.

Population of the Study:

The study focuses on detailed documents such as NEP2020 and IEDSS scheme, along with all teachers from Government/Provincial zed high schools in the Kamrup district of Assam.

Sample and Sampling Technique:

The sample consists of sections related to inclusive education from the aforementioned documents and 100 high school teachers involving 20 schools. The researcher carried purposive sampling to draw 100 school teachers from the total population.

Tools used:

For the first two objectives, secondary data sources were used. In contrast, a survey was conducted for the third objective, involving 100 secondary school teachers. This was done using an adapted questionnaire designed by Sharma, U., Loreman, T., & Forlin, C. (2012), K.K. Anima’s ATIES, the Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2002), and the guidelines from RPwD Act 2016 regarding inclusion. The scale reliability is 0.82.

Data Analysis Technique:

In this study document analysis was performed for the first two objectives, while descriptive statistics, including bar graph was applied for the third objective.

Findings of objective 1

Table 1: Provisions of inclusive education highlights by NEP2020 and IEDSS Scheme with respect to school education

Key inclusive provisions	Descriptions
Equal Opportunities	The policy emphasizes the importance of inclusive education for achieving an equitable society.
Education for minorities	NEP 2020 grants the initiations of providing education to all children of minor communities
Education for special need children	NEP2020 recognizes the essentiality of setting up supportive system to ensure quality education for SEN.
Inclusive Education for SEDGs	The policy recommends educational programs for all deprive category students specially for girls to reduce the gender and social gaps in schools, particularly at the high school level.
Individualized support system	NEP 2020 recommends many individual support services like one-on –one teacher, peer tutoring, proper infrastructure, use of technological tools to help children with disabilities.
Fund for girls and transgender students	The NEP recommends for ‘Gender-Inclusion Fund’ for all girls as well as transgender students.
Establishment of Resource Centres	The Policy aims to establish resource centre in schools, especially for children with severe or multiple disabilities
Cost free boarding facilities	The NEP suggests free boarding facilities for students residing far away from schools especially for marginalized groups.
Recognizes commitment of	The policy recognizes the commitment of RPwD Act 2016 by including children

RPwD Act 2016	with benchmark disabilities in regular schools.
Special attention on educational development of Schedule casts and schedule Tribes	The policy recommends for educational development of schedule casts and schedule tribes to reduce all kinds of disparities within SEDGs.
Curriculum and Examination	The policy recommends flexible curriculum and examination system.
Awareness to the principles of inclusion by all stakeholders	The policy suggests all stakeholders of school education system to be sensitized for inclusion.
Implementing pathways	Samagra Shiksha: This scheme focuses on inclusive education for SC,ST,OBC, minorities, girls and CwSN. SARTHAQ: It is a roadmap to implement NEP2020 recommendations with emphasis on inclusive curriculum and teacher training, equitable learning outcomes and encourages community participation to support inclusive practices. Vidya prakash This module is designed as a universal and inclusive programme to ensure smoother transition to formal schooling
Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage	This scheme includes an inclusive education approach with individualized support services like therapy or counseling, Infrastructure facilities, trained teachers etc.

Figure 1: Provisions of inclusive education in NEP2020

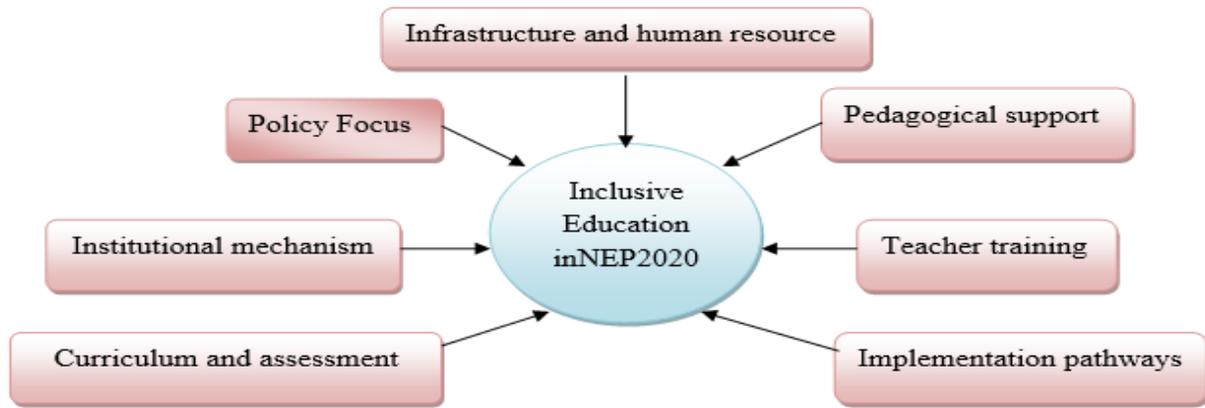


Figure2: Provision of inclusive education in IEDSS



Findings and Discussion of Objective 2

To build an equitable society in India, the New Education Policy (NEP) has introduced certain provisions aimed at promoting inclusive education. Despite the Indian Government's tremendous efforts, there are certain limitations that hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education. Some of them are pointed out below:

- Insufficient teacher preparation programme is one of the key issues in policy implementation. Most teacher education programmes do not have sufficient inclusive education component.
- In the policy, curriculum modifications for inclusive classrooms are not clearly defined. Another important limitation reflected in the policy is assessment and evaluation.
- Although NEP recommends reforms in assessment (NCFSE and board exams) but does not provide any definite assessment accommodations for CwSN.
- Inadequate infrastructure is one of the major problems which caused a large gap between policy and practice. Many schools lacks accessible facilities like ramps, toilet, teaching learning materials with assistive technologies, needed for diverse need students.
- The NEP is a policy, not a law and does not clearly define the role of legal enforcement mechanisms to ensure inclusivity.
- New Education policy 2020 lacks detailed implementation guidelines for school level inclusion
- NEP 2020 addresses inclusion of children with disabilities through provision of special

education that implies segregated model instead of inclusive education model.

Although NEP 2020 make various provisions regarding inclusive education in order to make an equitable society there are certain limitations which hinders its implementation. Among them insufficient teacher preparation, infrastructure facilities, and absence of legal enforcement are some of the major obstacles. Without solving these problems, the policy's goal of equity and inclusion may remain in hypothetical stage rather than achievable.

Findings and Discussion of objective 3

With respect to attitudinal barriers, 54% of teachers disagreed that including differently able children in regular classrooms slows the learning of other students. In contrast, 29% agreed with this statement and 17% remained neutral. For knowledge and skill barriers, 81% of teachers agreed that they lack adequate awareness to teach children with special needs, while 12% disagreed and 7% were neutral. Regarding resource and infrastructure barriers, 75% of teachers agreed that classrooms are not physically accessible to children with disabilities, 17% disagreed, and 8% were neutral. In addition, in terms of administrative and policy barriers, 39% of teachers believed there is no clear policy or guidelines for implementing inclusive education, whereas 38% disagreed and 23% were neutral. Finally, for student-related barriers, 62% of teachers agreed that students without disabilities may not easily accept peers with disabilities, while 20% disagreed and 18% were neutral.

Table: 2 Teachers' responses in different barriers in terms of percentage

Barriers	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Attitudinal Barrier	29.00%	17.00%	54.00%
Knowledge And Skill Barrier	81.00%	7.00%	12.00%
Resource and Infrastructure Barrier	75.00%	8.00%	17.00%
Administrative Barrier	39.00%	23.00%	38.00%
Student Related Barrier	62.00%	18.00%	20.00%

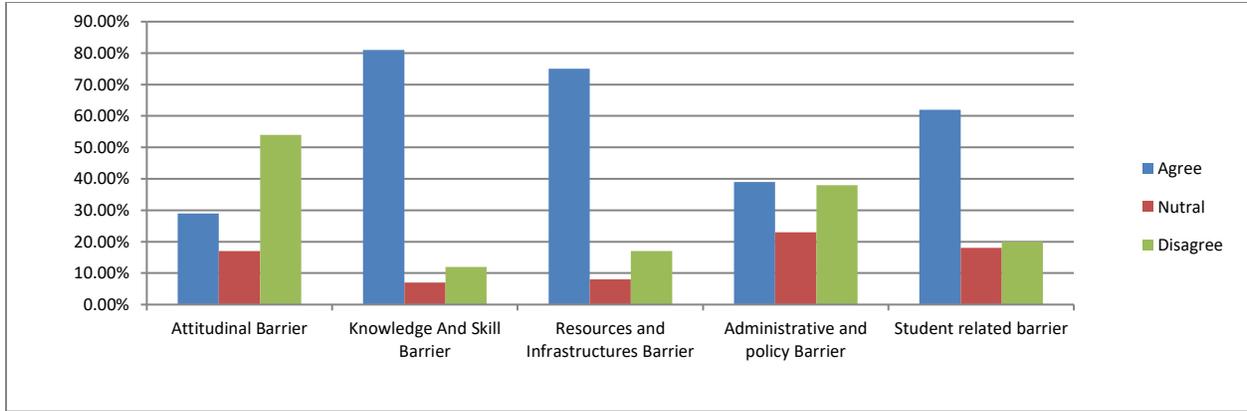


Fig: Bar graph depicting various barriers faced by teachers

The data reveal certain perceived barriers encountered by teachers in implementing inclusive education. Notably, (54%) of teachers disagree with the notion that bringing children with special needs into a normal school slows the learning of other students. Regarding knowledge and skill barriers, 81% teachers admit that they lack adequate training to teach differently able children. It indicates that teacher preparedness is the key issue to successful inclusion. Additionally, 75% teachers pointed out that accessible physical facilities like ramps, modified toilets, and assistive technologies are primary requirements for inclusion. Another prominent barrier identified by teachers is the lack of proper policy guidelines for inclusive education. Regarding student-related barriers, 62% teachers agree with the fact that students without disabilities do not easily accept peers with disabilities. It depicts the challenge of social integration in inclusive education.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to examine the various provisions of inclusive education in different policies since independence, with special reference to NEP2020 and the IEDSS scheme, pointing out their limitations as well as surveying the perceived barriers faced by teachers during their implementation. Analyzing the policy documents, it was found that NEP 2020 put strong emphasis on establishing an equitable education system where every child can access education irrespective of caste, creed, religion, physical and mental challenges, socio-economic status, etc. Provisions such as equal opportunities, Education for socially and economically

disadvantaged groups, individualized support, special education zones, commitment to early childhood care education, integration of inclusive education into teacher education programmes, etc., reflect the policy’s progressive initiation. Similarly IEDSS scheme has extended its scope by recognizing 21 categories of disabilities under the RPwD Act, 2016, ensuring access to secondary education. In spite of these progressive measures, certain limitations have been identified between policy and practice. Further, a survey of teachers strengthens these gaps. Although the majority of the teachers possess good perception towards inclusion, they reported challenges regarding a lack of proper teacher training, inaccessible classrooms, unclear policy guidelines, and problems with peer acceptance among students etc. These findings indicate an urgent need for teacher preparedness, resource allocation, and awareness programmes in order to bring inclusive education into a classroom reality.

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