Sub: Inviting comments for framing the Draft State Policy on Inclusive Education in Karnataka.

Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Janashala Project (UNDP) and now Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) are all time bound projects of Government of India to implement the activities under Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs.

At the national level, the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and the Programme of Action (1992) gives the basic policy framework for education, emphasizing the need to correct prevailing inequalities. It stresses on reducing dropout rates, improving learning achievements and expanding access to students who have not had an easy opportunity to be a part of the mainstream system.

Therefore Karnataka needs to develop a cogent policy, strategy or an action plan on Inclusive Education of children with special needs that can address the state specific needs and realities with a long-term vision. Thus, there is a need to put together a state policy, strategy and action plan for the education of children with special needs, define the roles and functions of various departments/ functionaries pertaining to this issue and also identify areas where state capacities need to be strengthened in order to meet the challenges of education for children with special needs.

In this context, a draft State Policy on Inclusive Education for the benefit of Children With Special Needs has been developed under the Chairmanship of Commissioner for Public Instruction as per the guidelines given by the Secretary for Primary & Secondary, Govt. of Karnataka. So we invite comments or suggestions from interested government and non-government NGOs, parents of CWSN, educationists, researchers, social workers who have concern for CWSN before 5.12.2006, to the given below address.

Website : http://schooleducation.kar.nic.in/SSA
Email : ssainclusive@yahoo.co.in / iedkar@yahoo.com
Postal Address : O/o the State Project Director, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, New Public Offices Annex Building, Nrupatunga Road, Bangalore – 560 001

With Regards,

Yours Faithfully
Sd/-
Director (Programmes)
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (Disabilities /impairments) IN KARNATAKA

1. Introduction

Disability is not caused by the child’s particular impairment but by the physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers, which exist in education system and in society as a whole. It is removing these barriers, while welcoming valuing and celebrating all learners, which will lead to inclusive education. Inclusive education is good education because it leads to improve social development and academic outcomes for children with disabilities and disaffected children, while the mainstream peer group adopts more positive attitudes and actions towards disabled students where they have been educated together.

There is a growing recognition among both policy-makers and researchers for a systemic transformation that can address concerns of universalisation, equity, quality, sustainability and issues, which have come to occupy center stage in all discussions pertaining to elementary education in India.

The inclusion of children with special needs /impairments (CWSN) in ordinary schools and classrooms is presently a part of providing equity issues in the overall internalization of primary education (SSA). With the constitutional amendment education is the fundamental right which includes all children including children with special needs. This concept of inclusive education is incorporated into the policy documents of numerous international organizations, notably the United Nations (UN). Standards of UN policies such as those embodied in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the 1994, UNESCO Report on the Education of Children with Disabilities (Salamanca Statement) all affirm the rights of all children to equal education without discrimination within the mainstream education system.

Inclusive education (IE) in Indian context is for children with disabilities. At the national level, the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and the Programme of Action (1992) gives the basic policy framework for education, emphasizing the need to correct prevailing inequalities. It stresses on reducing dropout rates, improving learning achievements and expanding access to students who have not had an easy opportunity to be a part of the mainstream system. The NPE, 1986 envisaged measures for integrating the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence (MHRD, 2005).

The 86th amendment of the Constitution of India has made education a fundamental right for children in the 6-14 years age group thereby making it mandatory for the State to ensure that all children are brought under the fold of education. This includes children with disability.

The Government of India has enacted the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act) to achieve amongst other things, the goal of providing access to free education in an appropriate environment to all learners with disabilities till s/he attains the age of eighteen years. The Act endeavors to promote the integration of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools.
2. Existing provisions for Inclusive Education in Karnataka

- **Under IEDC:**

  **Norms for Facilities under IED at Government of India**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Facilities under IEDC Scheme</th>
<th>Amount in Rupees per Annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Books &amp; Stationery</td>
<td>400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uniform allowances</td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reader allowance for Visual Impairment (Children studying in 6th and above)</td>
<td>500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Transport allowance</td>
<td>500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Escort allowance (for severe locomotor disability not able to move without escort)</td>
<td>750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Equipment allowance once in five years</td>
<td>2000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Hostel Allowance for hostilities</td>
<td>2000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Medical Assessment allowance only once</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Resource Teacher’s Salary</td>
<td>As per state scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Establishment of Resource Room once in 5 years</td>
<td>30000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GoI

- **Under SSA:**

1. **Survey:** A survey is made every year to identify children with special needs.

2. **Formal assessment:** Medical camps are conducted in all the blocks to ascertain the type and degree of disability in the CWSN.

3. **Aids & Appliances:** Aids and appliances are provided for successful integration of children with special needs.

4. **Teacher training:** In order to empower the teachers to handle CWSN long terms training of 90 days or 45 days is given. All regular teachers are being trained for 3 days on Inclusive Education.

5. **Community Mobilisation:** Inclusive Education means all children being able to learn together in schools and community settings, with appropriate networks of support. Disability is not cost by the individual but by the physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers, which exist in the education systems and in society as a whole. Community awareness programmes are conducted to educate the community regarding IE.

6. **Pre-integration training:** Every child with special need has difficulty in learning and doing activities of daily life including eating, dressing, walking and other survival skills. They also need to be trained on interpersonal skills. This specific training required by children with special needs depends on the nature and the extent of impairment and could be imparted with the help of resource teachers / special schools or competent NGOs. This can be done in the ECCE centers, already functional in SSA.
7. **Barrier free environment**: Schools are made the barrier free by the building of ramps. Medically designed toilets are constructed for the CWSN in schools.

8. **Research / Impact Study**: Provision is made to study the impact and usefulness of the various activities conducted under SSA for CWSN.

9. **Effective monitoring**: The success, problems, issues and concerns of the disabled children at the grassroots level should be regularly monitored. This can be done by the SRG formed especially for IED, which should also include personnel from SPO / DPO or monitoring could also be undertaken with the assistance of NGOs or experts working in this area.

- **Provisions made under Disabled Welfare Department**

  Scholarships are made available to CWSN students and they are also running special schools. Grants are also given to NGOs to run the special schools. Training is given to Anganwadi workers to enable them to identify the CWSN and to provide assistance.

3. **Need for Inclusive Education Policy in Karnataka**

Karnataka has a long history of mainstreaming children with disabilities through IEDC scheme (centrally sponsored scheme) and a number of projects of GOI and UN agencies have been pilot tested here, there have been opportunities for major learning in this area. Despite these projects, there has not been adequate measures for comprehensive planning or to upscale the projects or to apply some of the learning’s. Appointment of Inclusive Education Resource Teachers (IERT) in SSA is partially based on Janashala experience but there is a need to look into the issues of education of children with disabilities in the larger context of education in the state specially in terms of their retention and quality of education.

Though Karnataka has been at the forefront in the implementation of centrally sponsored scheme on Integrated Education of Disabled Children since 1981 and it has lead several trainings on Inclusive Education during the DPEP and the Janashala period. The entire work in this area in Karnataka has taken place under central government schemes and programmes from time to time (starting from the Integrated Education of Disabled Children –1981 to the more recent District Primary Education Programme in 1994, the Janashala programme- 1998 and now the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-2001) and these have had limited impact due to their diverse, time-bound and somewhat duplicating character. Though Karnataka has been a lead state in training but still all the teaching staff have yet to be covered under any type of training or orientation therefore the education system is not adequately equipped to be responsive to the needs of children with disabilities which is vital for achieving the objective of equity and quality in education.

During the survey conducted in 2005, the number of children identified, as CWSN was 81900. Training was imparted to the teachers as to how to identify various impairments and as a result the number of CWSN identify in 2006 was 129461. Therefore Karnataka needs to develop a cogent policy, strategy or an action plan on Inclusive Education of children with special needs that can address the state specific needs and realities with a long-term vision. Thus, there is a need to put together a state policy, strategy and action plan for the education of children with special needs, define the roles and functions of various departments/ functionaries pertaining to this issue and also identify areas where state
capacities need to be strengthened in order to meet the challenges of education for all children with special needs.

This policy document is drawn from NPE, International Declaration on IE, PWD Act, National Trust Act, POA for Inclusive Education GOI 2005, Vision Document of IE developed by DPEP Karnataka 2000, 11 five plan and the forth coming Disability Convention of UN 2006.

4. POLICY FRAME WORK


We believe that,

1. Education for **All children as a fundamental right, and** this is equally applicable for children with special needs/children with disabilities.

2. Providing education in an inclusive learning friendly environment in mainstream educational setting is the best available strategy for our country to address the educational needs of children with special needs/children with disabilities.

3. Inclusive learning friendly environment means that that educational service is available, accessible, affordable and appropriate to help develop the learning and abilities of ALL children which includes children with special needs/children with disabilities.

4. All children have a right, irrespective of their particular needs and disability, to participate as fully as possible within their local community and to be valued for the contribution they make.

5. Children’s special needs will vary over time and from one situation to another. Provision should therefore be as flexible as possible, taking into account changing circumstances and needs.

6. A commitment to inclusion involves valuing diversity, understanding difficulties and respecting individual differences. Educating children with special needs and disabilities alongside other children brings benefits to the whole community.
Disability Convention 2006

Recognising that children with disabilities should have full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children - Disability Conv 2006

State shall ensure an inclusive, education system at all levels, and life-long learning, directed to:

(a) The full development of the human potential and sense of dignity and self worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;

(b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;

(c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

2. In realizing this right, States shall ensure:

(a) That persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary and secondary education on the basis of disability;

(b) That persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality, free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;

(c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual’s requirements;

(d) That persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;

4.2 POLICY OBJECTIVES

1. Enrolment and retention of all children with disabilities in the mainstream education system. [Free and compulsory education from 6 to 14 under draft Bill / free education 6 to18 yrs under PWD Act].

2. Adoption of zero rejection policy through developing Innovative/Alternative (Home Based Education/ Prevocational etc) program for out of school CWSN

3. Developing Inclusive Learning Friendly Environment for CWSN by providing need based educational and other support in mainstream schools to develop their learning abilities, through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, such as suitable modification in the examination system, creation of a barrier-free inclusive school environment, teaching strategies, resource use and partnership with their communities.

4. Equipping the existing system through trainings in terms of pre-service and in-service besides meeting the needs of CWSN through developing IERTS /CRCs /BRC for support services. .
5. Developing a coordinated multidisciplinary arrangement with Dept of Health, Dept disabled welfare & PRI for meeting the additional support needs as medical rehabilitation, early identification, intervention and other support services.

6. Recognising that girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home therefore special focus to include girl child with special needs in an environment that is sensitive to their needs.

6. To develop Inclusive Education Cell at state level with adequate resources and technical persons for effective planning management & monitoring.

7. Developing a wider role for special schools / NGOS working for CWSN in the provision of advice and support to mainstream schools.

8. Developing institutional arrangements for monitoring the effective use of resources.

9. Undertaking research studies for development of IE based on the local conditions.

10. To raise levels of achievements.

4.3 Target Group

Special Needs would refer to sensory, physical and intellectual impairments, communication, emotional and behavioral disorders, mental health difficulties and multiple disabilities. It would cover the disabilities as defined under the Persons with Disability Act (1995) and the National Trust Act (1999):

To include children with learning disabilities who are potential dropouts

- Blindness
- Low vision
- Leprosy cured
- Hearing impairments
- Locomotor disabilities
- Mental retardation
- Mental Illness
- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- Multiple disabilities
- Learning Disabilities

5. Non negotiable principles

1. Not providing admission to children with disabilities in regular school is a violation of human right, which includes aided & unaided schools.

2. Government to promote inclusion / integration of students with disabilities and develop adequate facilities for inclusion in regular schools and provide free education for CWSN.

3. Zero Rejection Policy should be followed in Hostels also.

4. Provision of adequate facilities for resource support in terms of teaching / aids & appliances or allowance (transport/ scribe /learning materials etc)
5. All Pre Service / In-service teachers trainings program should have modules of Inclusive Education with adequate weight age.

6. Every school & educational authorities should have accessible and barrier free environment.

7. Provision of Scholarships should be made for CWSN.

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

6.1 Twin track approach

A twin-track approach to IE shall be adopted while making necessary changes in education systems individual needs of children shall also be taken care through appropriate measures.

6.2 Composite area approach

Decentralized planning approaches are already in operation for education sector in general. In a given block, or even a district and requirement for services and the provision for services need to be matched in such a manner that duplication of efforts is avoided and maximum number of disabled persons get the benefit.

6.3 Partnership with parents and community & PRI

Promoting parental and community involvement is essential to remove barriers in the field of Inclusive Education and develops stronger links with communities. In such situations for overcoming these barriers school authorities need to develop the parents confidence and various provisions of community involvement. Building partnerships, therefore, depends on an acceptance that parents and the community have a real contribution to make. As PRI are now responsible for education also their roles and responsibilities need to be emphasized for inclusion of CWSN also.

6.4 Development of appropriate mechanisms for convergence

Disability is a multi-pronged multi-sectoral approach. Therefore convergence is an essential factor for accelerating the process of empowering and providing appropriate support services. Therefore mechanisms for multidisciplinary coordination has to be developed with Department of disabled Welfare/ health besides PRI. Convergence with existing infrastructure to upscale services is the only solution to holistic development.

6.5 Early identification and needs assessment

All schools should provide adequate provisions for scientific way of identification in order to avoid unnecessary labeling of the child. Adequate provision has to be developed at CRC / BRC level for consultations and reference for any assessment which is based on the educational /medical needs. Early identification & intervention is a important component for inclusion therefore provisions for this needs to be developed with convergence with the Department of Women and Child Development. It is important to conduct health check up camps to identify CWSN at the Anganwadi Centres and also trained teachers to work in these centres. The health dept shall monitor corrective surgery and encourage Orthopedic Surgeon to under take the same matter at the district hospitals. The government should ensure that some budgetary provisions are made to provide the necessary drugs at subsidized rates for the needs.
6.6 Training and professional development

In the areas where IE training has been received, enrolment, retention and attendance have improved among children with special needs and there has been a decrease in repetition. This has happened as a result of the setting up of systems to identify children and train teachers to work productively with them.

A trained and motivated teacher is at the heart of effective inclusion therefore translating policy into practice will depend on the continued development of the skills and confidence of teachers and support staff in meeting a diverse range of pupils needs. The state will support the professional development of teachers and non-teaching staff in the following ways.

The state should evolve a training strategy for the state that needs to be rolled out in short, medium and long terms. This training strategy should include development of a database on the training needs of each teacher on IE, developing and strengthening training institutions and faculty, developing a training curriculum, introducing a mandatory IE module in the pre-service trainings, and providing follow-up resource support for trained teachers once they begin practicing inclusion in their respective classrooms. Orientation for non-teaching staff /HM /CRC/BRC/ IERTs to be planned for better support services & effective implementation of IE. Extending the training and career development opportunities for teachers.

6.7 Social Inclusion

Poverty & disability go hand in hand therefore there fore reducing poverty and social exclusion is a priority. To develop effective arrangements to address the needs of those children who are most at risk to be excluded or underachievement. This includes children who acquire disability (malnourished & other form of problems) resulting from poverty besides severe /profound disabilities who tend to be neglected.

6.8 Monitoring and evaluation /social audit

The success, problems, issues and concerned of the CWSN at the grass root level should be regularly monitored. Monitoring & evaluation system shall be established based on regular consulting with schools, parents and other stakeholders on the impact of the policy in effectively meeting children’s special educational needs. An annual report will be published providing information on progress made. Mechanisms for social auditing to be established also.

6.9 Resourcing policy

Funding provisions should be based on the educational needs of the child and provision for supporting the school. There are also some circumstances where joint funding arrangements need to be considered between education, social services and health authority in order to effectively meet the holistic educational, social and health needs of CWSN.

7. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Operationalizing of IE requires identification and strengthening of the existing infrastructure, schemes and programmes. Networking and convergence are other important areas. All this can be attained if thrust is laid upon the administrative issues underlying
Inclusive Education. The following aspects need to be considered for implementing Inclusive Education.

7.1 State level Steering Committee – SLSC

The SLSC will be headed by the Additional Chief Secretary. The state level steering committee will comprise of representatives from various ministries experts in the area of disability from various national and state level institutes. If the state feels a need, the SLRC can also comprise of medical experts like ophthalmologist, psychologist, neurologist, speech therapist, and representative from the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

Functions of SLSC:

- Establishment of linkages between various institutions and NGOs working in the area of disability
- Co-ordination with medical, government departments like Welfare, Health, DWCD
- Preparation of Annual Work Plan and Budget
- Co-ordination with other on-going schemes in the state on IE if any
- Preparation, standardisation and finalisation of curriculum modules for training at various levels
- Support on planning and implementation
- Assistance to planning team at the district level

7.2 District Level Steering Committee – DLSC:

A DLSC will also be constituted on similar grounds like the SLRC. This will be headed by the District Co-ordinator. It will comprise of members and provide academic support as a supervising body for the IE programme. The members can preferably be one from each area of disability, from Dept. of Disabled Welfare, DIET, DSERT and NGOs

District level interventions:

Functions of the DLSC for IE:

- Preparation of district plan on IE
- Assistance in conducting survey of the children with disabilities in all blocks of the district
- Planning and organising of training programme for primary school teachers, parents etc.
- Assistance in incorporating IE in the on-going awareness programmes for community mobilisation etc.
- Consultation with district level NGOs
- Co-ordination of the work of special resource teachers
- Monitoring the supply of required aids and appliances and their maintenance
- Monitoring the supply of aids and appliances to children with special needs.

7.3 Multi-disciplinary team of professionals at the district level

Supportive aids and appliances and medical assessment is the most significant component in IE. To provide meaningful education to all children with special needs, we should start with needs assessment and supportive assistive devices. In order to carry out this fundamental work it is proposed to constitute multi disciplinary team to render the services at block and district level. The said step would go a long way in ameliorating the problems of children with special needs in a congenial environment. Asst. Director, Women
and Child Welfare Department and District Disabled Welfare officer shall co-ordinate with education and health department to form the committee consisting of experts, besides planning to initiate mobile medical rehabilitation unit so that required services can be extended at the door-steps of the children with special needs. The head master of the respective school shall be under obligation to submit the proposal (applications) required aids and appliances to Asst. Director, Women and Child Development or District Disabled Welfare Officers directly. In turn, the District Disabled Welfare Officer should provide necessary assistive devices within 15 days from the date of receipt of proposal.

7.4 BRC/CRC level activities:

A taluka level steering committee will also be formed. This will be chaired by the BEO.

- The block resource centre will be in block headquarters school
- Identification of a person at block level to keep track of activities at cluster and village level regarding education of the disabled children
- Placement of resource teachers at block level based on number of children & schools
- Documentation / Evaluation of the activities undertaken by VEC under IE
- Strengthening of the CRC
- In the monthly CRC meetings, resource and regular teachers should participate to discuss & strengthen education plans for IE at the school level

7.5 School Development Committee:

Parents in the existing SDMC shall be responsible for

- Planning & Monitor at school level
- Service delivery to children with special needs
- Identification of volunteers from the locality for the purpose of conducting surveys, community awareness and home based education.

7.6 Village level activities:

The gram sabha can comprise of a parent of a disabled child as its member. This sabha will take care of the following activities:

- Monitor implementation of plan at the local level
- Service delivery to children with special needs
- Provision for providing escort to the disabled if needed
- Identification of volunteers from the locality for the purpose of conducting surveys, community awareness and teacher support in the classroom

8. Government orders

For effective implementation of the IE programme, the Govt. orders on the following issues should be issued:

- State policy on IE
- Zero exclusion policy
- Enrolment and retention of children with special needs
- To enable flexibility in the curriculum
- Evaluation of children with special needs in the exams
9. Accountability

Accountability should be perceived as the most important aspect of the organisation of the whole policy. The aim should be to develop parameters and mechanism for social audit. This will help in measuring the impact and outcome of the programme. This will provide the basis for POA for IE and annual Development Plan, which will detail the action required to translate policy into practice. There will be an annual report, evaluating the success of the policy and identifying priorities for future work.

In conclusion

This policy document is a draft and shall be placed for approval to the state committee, there shall be wide consultation with stakeholders /government Dept / GOI representatives and researchers professional & NGOs in the field of disability and Inclusive education through workshop press and Internet).

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