

Inclusive Education in India: A Country in Transition



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**An Undergraduate Honors Thesis Presented to the Department of
International Studies at the University of Oregon**

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June 2012

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Abstract

10% of the world's population lives with a disability, and 80% of these people with disabilities live in developing countries.¹ The services available for people with disabilities differ widely between developed and developing countries. One of these services is education. The International Community, especially since the UN Convention on People with Disabilities, is becoming increasingly aware of the different models of special education. The three basic models, segregated, integrated and inclusive special education, have been differentiated between by international and governmental agencies, and overwhelming support is being shown by human rights activists, nonprofits, governmental organizations, governments and international agencies, all in favor of inclusive special education as the most beneficial type of education for people of all ability levels.

The Government of India has created numerous policies around special education since the country's independence in 1947. Although the Government of India has attempted to create policies that are inclusive for people with disabilities, their implementation efforts have not resulted in an inclusive system of education, nor have they reached their goal of "education for all" across the country. The Government of India needs to bridge the gaps in their education system to build a strong system of inclusive education in India.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all, moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.ⁱⁱ

-The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education

Understanding the Difference: Inclusive, Integrated and Segregated Education

Globally, children with disabilities count for one-third of all children out-of-school.ⁱⁱⁱ In developing countries, the numbers are even more staggering, with 90% of all children with disabilities out-of-school.^{iv} Although it is imperative that children with disabilities receive an education, it is also being recognized by bodies around the world that the type of education that children with disabilities receive is just as important. There are three basic types of Special Education, although many different models of classroom organization and teaching are available within each type.

Segregated education occurs when students with disabilities learn completely separate from their peers.^v Often, especially in “developing” countries, segregated education takes place in the form of special schools created specifically for the education of students with disabilities, or in completely separate classrooms for students with disabilities. Segregated education pinpoints the child as the problem in the system, the impediment to learning, and as a result, these students will often receive a completely different curriculum and different methods of testing, rather than being taught the same curriculum as their peers.^{vi} This separation in school often creates separation within other areas of life as well.

Integrated education is similar to inclusive education, but without any ideological commitment to equity. Integration places students in a mainstream classroom with “some adaptations and resources.”^{vii} However, students are expected to “fit in with pre-existing

structures, attitudes and an unaltered environment.”^{viii} Integration is often mistaken for inclusion because students are placed in a mainstream classroom, which is a step towards inclusion. However, if there has not been a paradigm shift within the school and these students are not perceived as equals, if curriculum is not taught for the understanding of all instead of some, then the students are integrated, but not included in the school.

Inclusive education “is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners.”^{ix} “It involves restructuring the culture, policies and practices in schools so that they can respond to the diversity of students in their locality.”^x For a school to be inclusive, the attitudes of everyone in the school, including administrators, teachers, and other students, are positive towards students with disabilities. Inclusive education means that all children, regardless of their ability level, are included in a mainstream classroom, or in the most appropriate or least restrictive environment (LRE), that students of all ability levels are taught as equals, and that teachers must adjust their curriculum and teaching methodologies so that all students benefit. This also avoids wasting resources, and “shattered hopes,” which often occurs in classrooms that are “one size fits all.”^{xi} Studies have shown that systems that are truly inclusive reduce drop-out rates and repetition of grades, and have higher average levels of achievement, compared to systems that are not inclusive.^{xii} People who believe in inclusive education believe that the education system is the impediment to learning for a child, and that every child is capable of learning!

It is important to note that within government documents and scholarly publications in India, the three different terms-segregation, integration and inclusion-are often used interchangeably, or with different definitions than those attached to the three words in the United

States. This could stem from a variety of reasons, although a lack of education on the original meanings connected to the words seems to be the most logical explanation.

Common Models of Disability

Dozens of models of disability have been defined and explored over the past couple of years. The two most common models that are being discussed in the International Development sector are the social model and the medical model.

The medical model of disability views people with a disability as having a deficiency or impairment that needs to be “fixed.” Therefore, the person with a disability is the problem, and not the (sometimes) inaccessible society in which that person lives. People who view disability through the medical model judge the quality of life of a person with a disability before they are born, often believing that people with disabilities will lead less fulfilling lives, solely on the basis that their lives will be different than people without a disability.^{xiii} As a result, “everything is done to help the person by trying to make them more ‘normal’, believing that this alone will lead to a better quality of life.”^{xiv} The ideologies that the medical model is built upon are integral to the segregated model of education. Both see the person and their disability as the problem, and both seek to “fix” the disability, bringing the person as close to “normal” as possible.

In contrast, the social model of disability doesn’t find the deficiency within the person. Rather, the deficiencies, through the lens of the social model, are the limitations brought on by an inaccessible society. There are three main areas cited as areas where barriers for people with disabilities usually occur. These are the physical environment that a person lives in, so building design, the structures and rules of the society, and the services available; the attitudes of the community towards people with disabilities; and the policies and procedures of organizations.^{xv}

The social model,

encourages the removal of these barriers within society, or the reduction of their effects, rather than trying to fix an individual's impairment or health condition.^{xvi}

Inclusive education is built around the goals and ideologies of the social model. Education is just one of the many sections of society to which the social model applies; and “inclusion” in education means removing the barriers in the classroom and school so that students of all ability levels are included in the same lesson. Equal access to education empowers people with disabilities to be independent and contributive, helpful members of an inclusive, barrier-free society.

Chapter 2: International Policies and Guidelines

Currently, the United Nations is the agency that best attempts to embody the goals and ideals of the majority of countries across the globe.

Due to its unique international character, and the powers vested in its founding Charter, the Organization can take action on a wide range of issues, and provide a forum for its 193 Member States to express their views, through the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies and committees^{xvii}.

For the past 40 years, the UN has a disjointed history of recommending inclusive education.

In 1970, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended “inclusive education as a cheap alternative” to other special education programs, specifically for developing countries.^{xviii} About ten years later, the UN made 1981 the UN year of the Disabled Person.^{xix} The discussion generated by the year of the disabled person resulted in UN Resolution 37/52, which was adopted by the general assembly on the 3rd of December, 1982. Paragraph 120 of the World Program of Action discusses inclusive education.

Paragraph 120 of the World Programme of Action stipulates that education should, as far as possible, be provided within the ordinary school system, without any discrimination against handicapped children or adults^{xx}.

Although the World Program of Action was written for all countries, much of what it says applies to India. Paragraph 120 continues by recognizing that recommendations of inclusive education are often not always acted upon because of societal prejudices, ranging from those of administrators and teachers, to those of parents and children.^{xxi} These prejudices manifest themselves into societal obstacles for people with disabilities. Some of these are physical barriers, like obstacles in transportation to and from school or building design, while others are present in the classroom, whether they be the attitudes of teachers or the material itself.^{xxii}

In order to provide a time frame during which Governments and organizations could implement the activities recommended in the World Programme of Action, the General Assembly proclaimed 1983-1992 the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons.^{xxiii}

Obviously this brought lots of attention to the disabled community; however, this decade was not just about special education, but all aspects of a person with a disability's life.

In terms of education-specific policies or changes that occurred in the UN decade of the disabled person, in 1989, the UN General Assembly adopted the Tallinn Guidelines for Action on Human Resources Development in the Field of Disability.^{xxiv} These guidelines detail the importance of early childhood intervention and of inclusive education at all levels (primary, secondary and higher levels of education, including vocational training). They speak to the importance of providing educational materials in various formats, whether this means bringing in a sign language interpreter, converting their books to tapes or braille, purchasing in a computer with specific programs for people with disabilities, or figuring out other creative or appropriate formats that will help people with disabilities learn the same material as the other kids in the classroom. The guidelines emphasize the importance of “cost effective alternatives” to segregated schooling, in the form of

special education teachers as consultants to regular education teachers, resource rooms with specialized personnel and materials, special classrooms in regular schools and interpreters for deaf students^{xxv}.

However, the guidelines also point out the importance of including courses for mainstream teachers about teaching people with disabilities and including them in the mainstream classroom.

The Tallinn Guidelines point out that education for people with disabilities will often extend beyond formal education and into skills for independent living, which is essential for both inclusion within the mainstream classroom, as well as life after school is over.^{xxvi}

1989 was also the year of The Convention on the Rights of the Child. This particular convention is not disability-specific, but rather points out disability as one of the many reasons that people discriminate against children.^{xxvii} While this convention was an extremely general way of “reaffirming the rights to education for children with disabilities” it is extremely important that the rights for children with disabilities are included in the convention at all!^{xxviii}

The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child produced the Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) at their 48th session on December 20th, 1993.^{xxix} However, there have been several revisions of the handbook since the original was produced. The Implementation Handbook is important to note because the writers specifically included a section called “Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.”^{xxx} Within this section, one of the “Target Areas for Equal Participation” is education. This section argues that the only adequate education for people with disabilities is mainstream education, and that general education authorities are completely responsible for the education of people with disabilities. To foster this, adequate support and accessibility services should be provided at all schools to children of all sexes, regardless of their gender. States should have a policy in place, allow for flexibility in

curriculum to include everybody, and provide materials in a variety of formats. Parents should be a part of their child's education at all levels, and special attention should be given to early intervention for young children, as well as adults with disabilities who may have not received the education they deserved at a younger age because of a lack of public services or for other reasons. In situations where inclusion is impossible, people with disabilities should be in special education programs with the goal of including these students in the mainstream education system as soon as possible. An exception to this is people who are deaf, who may benefit from special schools more than mainstream education.^{xxxii}

The Jomtien Conference on Education for All, held in 1990, was originally organized by the Interagency Commission, but after the Declaration and Framework for Action were written, UNESCO took responsibility for implementation and monitoring.^{xxxiii} Over 1,500 representatives from 155 governments met in Jomtien, Thailand to discuss the importance of education around the world.^{xxxiv}

The Jomtien Conference was clearly a major milestone in the international dialogue on the place of education in human development policy, and the consensus reached there has given renewed impetus to the worldwide drive to provide universal primary education and eliminate adult illiteracy.^{xxxv}

Despite the repeated use of the rhetoric "education for all," throughout the conference, people with disabilities were not mentioned in the Declaration and Framework for Action at all.^{xxxvi} This was extremely disappointing to activists for inclusion, considering this conference occurred within the Decade of the Disabled Person.

Four years after the Jomtien Education for All Conference, another conference on education was held by the UN in Spain. The Salamanca Conference on Special Needs Education was held in Spain from June 7-10th, 1994, by the United Nations and the Government of Spain, with participants from governmental and nongovernmental organizations spanning across the

globe, as well as various UN agencies.^{xxxvi} Unlike the Jomtien Conference on “Education for All,” this conference centered entirely on inclusion and the importance of inclusive education, rather than segregated special schools. Part of the introduction states,

we call upon all governments and urge them to...adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.^{xxxvii}

The Framework for Action discusses the needs to change education systems from systems of segregation and separation to systems of inclusion. Emphasis is placed on using existing infrastructure and knowledge, especially around already-existing special schools and resource centers, and using them to help create and maintain an inclusive system of education.^{xxxviii}

Special school teachers have the in-depth knowledge critical for early screening and identification of children with disabilities, can serve as training and resource centers for mainstream schools, and can become integrated into an inclusive school as a resource center for kids who need to be pulled out of the classroom for parts of the day because they need extra individualized instruction.^{xxxix} The Framework for Action lists several basic and important changes that are required to make an education system inclusive. They include changing curriculum, buildings, school buildings, pedagogy, assessment procedures, staffing, school ethos and extracurricular activities.^{xl} Other areas of priority identified were the education of girls with disabilities, who have been doubly marginalized in many countries, as well as early childhood intervention and the post-graduation transition from school to work.^{xli} India signed the Salamanca Statement at the conference in 1994.^{xlii}

Although the 1994 Conference in Salamanca was solely about inclusive education, surprisingly, the 2000 Education for All conference and declaration in Dakar did not touch on people with disabilities or inclusion.^{xliii} Despite the conference, the turn of a new millennium

brought positive changes for people with disabilities. On December 13th, 2006, The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its Optional Protocol was adopted at the UN headquarters in New York.^{xliv} The following March, the UNCRPD and Optional Protocol were open for signatures and ratifications, and this particular convention had “the highest number of signatories in history to a UN Convention on its opening day.”^{xlv} Article 24 of the UNCRPD addresses education.

Article 24, titled simply “Education,” is split up into five sections. Section one addresses why it is a right for people with disabilities to access the same mainstream education that people without disabilities receive. Inclusive education is imperative for people with and without disabilities because it allows people of all ability levels to develop skills and become effective members in a “free society.”^{xlvi} Section one points out that education of people with disabilities isn’t just a human right, but is imperative for the development of humans to their fullest potential. Education gives people of all ability levels dignity.^{xlvii}

Section two specifically discusses inclusion. This section mandates that people with disabilities “are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability.”^{xlviii} Specifically, people with disabilities should be able to access “free and compulsory” primary and secondary education in the community within which they live.^{xlix} According to section two of article 24, inclusion means including “reasonable accommodation” for children with disabilities, and providing “effective individualized supports” in “environments that maximize academic and social development.”¹

Section three delves deeper into communication and mobility tools that will ensure “full and equal participation” in both school and the community. It mandates that students with disabilities learn and have access to materials in braille, sign language, and alternative script, as

well as the proper mobility aids. Most importantly, section three specifies that education is delivered “in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual.”^{li}

The last two sections touch on teacher training and tertiary education or vocational training. Section four discusses employing teachers, “including teachers with disabilities,” that know braille, sign language, and other alternative forms of communication, and having these teachers spread their knowledge to mainstream teachers, including information regarding disability awareness.^{lii} The last section, five, discusses the importance of making tertiary education or vocational training available to all people with disabilities and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in the entry process and throughout these programs.^{liii}

Chapter 3: The Ideological Framework: Special Education in India

It is important to comprehend the framework in which special education policy was created and continuously emerges out of in India. Although you can never generalize the beliefs and sentiments of an entire country, there are critical structural, historical, and religious facts that are important to know shape the course of special education and inclusion in India.

India was colonized by Britain between 1857 and 1947, and their first constitution was created in 1950.^{liv} It is important to remember that India has only been a republic for 62 years, which is extremely young for a country. There is a history of colonialism, discussed further below, which affects it to this day.

Adding to the legacy of colonialism, 80% of India’s population lives on less than about R100, or two dollars a day.^{lv} Even when adjusting for purchasing power parity, this amount puts hundreds of millions of people below the global poverty line. Then, people with disabilities need

to account for the “conversion handicap,” a term coined by Amartya Sen. The conversion handicap is when

people with disabilities derive a lower level of welfare from a given level of income than the rest of the population, due to additional costs incurred in converting income into well-being.^{lvi}

The validity of this theory can be discussed at a different time, but for the purposes of this paper, it will serve to make the point that people with disabilities may have extra expenses. From the perspective of the medical model, their extra expenses would come from their disability. From the perspective of the social model, their extra expenses would come from society’s lack of accommodation of their disability.

The extreme levels of poverty that many people in India live in put India in the category of a “developing country.” The social structure of a “developed” country is very different than India’s, as a “developing” country. Developed countries tend to have an ideological commitment to equal opportunity, with the money to back their commitment. However, the complicated structure of Indian society seeped in years of religion and history is not as conducive to social change.^{lvii} Hinduism, which 80% of India’s population practices, creates a social structure in Indian society which is very different from that of every single country in the world. The caste system of the religion has been distorted, and as a result, India has multiple hierarchical concerns around caste built into society. Couple dalits, the “untouchable” caste, with other marginalized groups in India-females, the poor, children, the elderly, migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS-and the complicated hierarchical structure of Indian society emerges.

From the complicated history and social structure of Indian society emerges efforts towards special education and inclusive policy that are fairly remarkable for a 62 year old republic whose education system was (perhaps detrimentally) controlled by another country for

over a hundred years. However, decades of inclusive policy are not aligning with the realities on the ground. India is experiencing policy implementation problems, and as a result, policies which should produce an inclusive system of education for people of all ability levels are only resulting in fragments of inclusion scattered across the country.

Chapter 4: History of Special Education Policy and Inclusion in India

Pre-Independence

Documentation of efforts for or against special education in India remains sparse before India's independence from Britain. Archeologists discovered evidence of inclusion of people with disabilities in India from 2000 or more years ago in the form of adapted toys made accessible for children with disabilities.^{lviii} These small pieces of evidence are part of the “gurukul” system of education that existed in India for centuries before British rule. This system, was sensitive to the unique cultural, social, and economic needs of the students and their families and imparted life skills education recognizing the potential within each student.^{lix}

Although there is not much documentation about students with disabilities in this system, the structure is seemingly inclusive. India was colonized by Great Britain until 1947, and the gurukul system ended after India was colonized by the British.^{lx} As a result of British rule, much of the education system in India was, and still is, “British style”-very cut and dry, based on rote memorization, with few special education services due to its inflexible nature. Pre and post-independence, the Government of India on paper supported various version of inclusive special education in policy. During this time period, the majority of children with disabilities were not in school.^{lxi}

The earliest document regarding British-style education in India dates back to 1835. Written as the “Minute on Education, and later nicknamed the “Minute of Macaulay,” this

particular debate marked the change from traditional, “gurukul,” Indian education to British style education.^{lxii} It documents the British Government’s mission to create a “class of Indians... ‘English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.’”^{lxiii} Written by Thomas Macaulay, a British politician who later became a member of the governor-general’s council, the document blatantly belittles the Indian education system. The document quotes, “the entire native literature of India and Arabia” was not worth “a single shelf of a good European library.”^{lxiv} This document did not include information regarding people with disabilities. This is because people with disabilities often were not educated during this time period, but also, people with disabilities were not considered good enough to be modeled into British-style Indians.^{lxv}

Pre-Independence, the limited services for people with disabilities arose largely out of the private sector or from nongovernmental organizations, which were often religious. The first special school for people with disabilities in India was a school for the blind, which was opened in 1869 by Jane Leupot, with support of the Church Missionary Society.^{lxvi} Fourteen years later, in 1883, a school for the deaf was opened in Bombay.^{lxvii} 1887 marked the year Christian missionaries opened a school for the blind in Amritsar.^{lxviii} During the 1800s, all of the special schools for people with disabilities accommodated people with physical disabilities; it was not until 1918 that the first school for people with intellectual disabilities was established.^{lxix} All of these schools exemplify the type of special education services offered during the 1800s and 1900s: specialized and segregated. By 1900, special schools were springing up throughout the country.^{lxx} Until the 1970s, these schools were the primary method of service delivery for children with disabilities. Most were for children who were blind or visually impaired,^{lxxi} and the majority was funded by nongovernmental organizations or private funders.^{lxxii}

The first half of the 20th century in India was spent by the Indian people fighting for independence. The political figurehead and leader of the Satyagraha movement, Mohandas Gandhi attempted to reverse British influence over Indian education by introducing what he named “basic education.”^{lxxiii} Gandhi’s idea of education catered to marginalized populations because it focused on handicrafts, which favored the lower castes and people with disabilities, many of whom were used to working with their hands and hadn’t previously done much academic work.^{lxxiv} Gandhi introduced this plan in 1937. Although his plan influenced governmental policy for over 30 years, it ultimately failed.^{lxxv}

1909 marks the first piece of attempted legislation regarding inclusion and education in India. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, “professor of English literature, mathematics, and political economy, served, for example, on the Poona Municipal Council, the Bombay Legislative Council, and finally, the Imperial Legislative Council,”^{lxxvi} “introduced a bill under the Indian council act of 1909 to make primary education compulsory.”^{lxxvii} This bill, if it passed, would have provided funding for compulsory education for all. However, it was voted down.

The policies and actions by the government of India regarding inclusive special education in the 1940s contradicted each other entirely. The Sargent Report by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944 suggested children with disabilities should be entirely mainstreamed.^{lxxviii} Rather than debating the validity of inclusion, the Sargent Report stated that it was the only way to provide an education. Yet both the action and lack of action by the government of India in the 1940s completely contradicted this suggestion. Throughout the 1940s, the government of India began setting up segregated workshops and trade schools separate from those for students without disabilities to teach children with disabilities skills to enter the workforce.^{lxxix} In addition, this decade was marked by a large increase in the amount of money given to voluntary

organizations to establish special schools. Most of these segregated schools were expensive and located in urban areas, further marginalizing people with disabilities in rural areas.^{lxxx}

Post-Independence: Creating Policies for Education

India gained independence from Britain in the 1947, and inclusive education is written into India's constitution as a fundamental right for all citizens.^{lxxxi} It is important to differentiate between constitutional rights and state policies and their legal implications. Rights are listed in the constitution; they are absolute and completely enforceable. State policies are completely subjective on a state by state basis. Part IX, Article 45 of the Constitution states,

The state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.^{lxxxii}

The significance of Article 45 was reaffirmed in 1993 with the supreme court's Unnikrishnan judgment, also known as the case "Unnikrishnan vs. the state of Andhra Pradesh."^{lxxxiii} In this case, the court ruled that Article 45 must be read in conjunction with Article 21 of the constitution, which states that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."^{lxxxiv} By requiring these two articles to be read in conjunction, elementary education is now considered imperative for life and personal liberty in India. A clause was added to India's constitution to this affect; however, it was not added until December 2002.^{lxxxv} The 86th amendment to the constitution, section 21A reads, "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine."^{lxxxvi} Although many viewed this amendment as positive, others criticized the age restrictions. In addition, many thought that the type of education (inclusive, segregated, or other) should be specified within the law.

The 1960s marked an important change in how special education was organized and funded in India. The Ministry of Education split, and a new branch called the Ministry of Social Welfare was created. The Ministry of Social Welfare was given the responsibility for the “weak and vulnerable” sections of society.^{lxxxvii} They largely focused on rehabilitation, and not as much on education. Instead of supporting the current education system, the Ministry of Social Welfare began giving out grants to nonprofits that provided education for children with disabilities, inadvertently preventing inclusion of these children within the public or mainstream sector.^{lxxxviii} The split of these two ministries has never been reversed, and is still this way at present.

The Kothari Commission

The Government of India created the Kothari Commission in 1964, named after its chairman, P.S. Kothari.^{lxxxix} This commission was created because the Government of India wanted to create a plan of action to improve the education system. The plan of action created by the Kothari Commission included people with disabilities, but unfortunately, the Government of India never implemented it. It reads,

We now turn to the education of handicapped children. Their education has to be organized not merely on humanitarian grounds of utility. Proper education generally enables a handicapped child to overcome largely his or her handicap and make him into a useful citizen. Social justice also demands it...on an overall view of the problem, however, we feel that experimentation with integrated programmes is urgently required and every attempt should be made to bring in as many children in integrated programs.^{xc}

Scholar Mithu Alur cites a couple of major roadblocks that prevented the plan of action of the Kothari Commission from being implemented. The first is the previously mentioned split in 1964 within the Ministry of Education and the simultaneous creation of the Ministry of Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Social Welfare’s subsequent policy of assistance to voluntary organizations.^{xc} The shift in responsibility meant shifting the responsibility for the “education,

training and rehabilitation” of people with disabilities, and went directly against the Kothari Commission’s report and recommendations of inclusive, or at least integrated schooling.^{xcii} As a result, the majority of education related services for people with disabilities came out of the voluntary sector, via grants given out from the Ministry of Social Welfare. This “middle man” takes away any responsibility the state or central government would have to the child if they were providing the educational opportunity, removing accountability.^{xciii}

The second policy that Alur cites as preventing the plan of action of the Kothari Commission from being successfully implemented is The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) of 1974. Created by the Ministry of Human Research Development, the ICDS reaches out to “vulnerable populations” of the population to provide services such as pre-5 year old schooling & early intervention, including health care, nutrition and pre-school facilities. ICDS does not include people with disabilities under that category. Since nothing was specified regarding the need of anganwadi workers, the social workers who implement this scheme on the ground, to specifically reach out and children with disabilities, children with disabilities were not included in early intervention efforts, which would have then funneled them into mainstream schooling.^{xciv}

The Integrated Education of Disabled Children Scheme of 1974

The Ministry of Welfare created the Integrated Education of Disabled Children Scheme (IEDC), not to be confused with the Integrated Child Development Scheme (above), in 1974.^{xcv} The program provided children with disabilities “financial support for books, school uniforms, transportation, special equipment and aids,” with the intention of using these aids to include children in mainstream classrooms.^{xcvi} However, the government of India realized that providing structural changes to the classroom, such as adapted equipment, would not be enough to integrate

children with disabilities into the classroom. Although it was encouraged and partly funded by UNICEF,^{xcvii} fifty percent of the funding was supposed to go through the state governments. The responsibility was transferred to the Department of Education in 1992.^{xcviii} Despite the fact that this scheme was supposed to be nation-wide, it was implemented in only 10 out of 29 of the states in India.^{xcix}

Sharma, an Indian scholar, found three major problems with the IEDC. There was a lack of training and experience that the teachers had, a “lack of orientation among regular school staff about the problems of disabled children and their educational needs,” and the lack of availability of equipment and educational materials.^c “By 1979-80, only 1,881 children from 81 schools all over the country had benefited from this program.”^{ci} This program stressed that students with mild to moderate disabilities needed to be integrated, but not moderate to severe. Therefore, it was not fully inclusive, and created tensions between mainstream and segregated special education schools.^{cii}

The National Policy on Education of 1986 and its Plan of Action

The National Policy on Education (NPE) was created in 1986. Continuing in the spirit of the 1974 IEDC, the NPE states that children with “mild” disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms, whereas children with “moderate to severe” disabilities should be placed in segregated schools.^{ciii} Many were upset that this policy contradicted Article 45 of the constitution, which lists equality in education as a fundamental right for all, and not just those with “mild” disabilities (see above).^{civ} The policy also included a provision regarding teacher training for all mainstream education teachers, by “including a compulsory special education component in pre-service training of general teachers.”^{cv} Although this policy was created in 1986, it was not implemented until the Plan of Action was created in 1992.

The 1992 Program of Action (POA), created to implement the 1986 NPE,^{cv} broadens the 1986 definition of who should be included in mainstream schooling, that “a child with a disability who can be educated in the general school should not be in the special school.”^{cvii} It says that once children with disabilities acquire basic living skills, which would be learned in resource rooms or special schools, that they should be mainstreamed. The POA does not define what constitutes basic living skills.^{cviii} The POA envisioned and expected that schools across India would “accept responsibility by sharing their resources with other institutions.”^{cix} However, rather than including, or even integrating children with disabilities into their programs, these schools would open “resource centers for the underprivileged,” providing children with disabilities learning resources after typical school hours, but not during the normal school day, eliminating the possibility of inclusion for these students.^{cx}

The 1990s: The Rehabilitation Council of India Act and the People with Disabilities Act

The year 1992 was also the year of the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act. The RCI Act provided standards for rehabilitation professionals; one type of rehabilitation professional being special education teachers.^{cx} This act is important because it establishes consequences for teaching without a license. Teachers without a license could face imprisonment for up to one year, be fined R1000, or both.^{cxii}

Possibly one of the most important pieces of legislation to date in India regarding people with disabilities is the 1995 People with Disabilities Act (PDA). The PDA was likened to the United States’ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and covered a wide range of disability-related topics, from education to jobs to building design. Despite the wide range of topics covered, the PDA defines disability quite narrowly, listing only seven categories of disability: blindness, low vision, leprosy cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability and mental

illness.^{cxiii} Chapter five of the PDA focuses on the rights of people with disabilities and education.

The PDA strives to address all major aspects of the education sector that pertains to students with disabilities. It states that children with disabilities have the right to access education in a “free and appropriate environment”^{cxiv} until they are 18 years of age,^{cxv} “promoting integration into normal schools.”^{cxvi} The PDA is supposed to

provide transport facilities, remove architectural barriers, supply free books and other study materials, grant scholarships, restructure curriculum, and modify the examinations system for the benefit of children with special needs.^{cxvii}

The act also addresses teacher training, for special educators and mainstream educators, by requiring adequate teacher training programs to train teachers to work with students with disabilities.^{cxviii} Another extremely important part of this act was the clause that requires all parts of the country, urban and rural, to have facilities that accommodate students with disabilities and ensure that they are in school.^{cxix}

A prominent criticism of the Persons with Disabilities Act is that the government did not immediately translate their promises into action through funding. The initial lack of monetary support made the PDA virtually impossible to implement.^{cxx} But fiscal concerns were only the beginning; although most people interpret chapter five of the PDA as pointing towards inclusion, in actuality the act gives no instruction on what a “free and appropriate environment” is, allowing varying interpretations.^{cxxi} In addition, people who support inclusion point out that there are no repercussions included in the PDA for excluding students with disabilities from the mainstream education system.^{cxxii}

Although the logistical aspects of the People with Disabilities Act were initially, and are still somewhat unclear, this should not undermine the importance of this piece of legislation. The

People with Disabilities Act functioned as a catalyst for several other development projects around inclusion and disability.

In order to expand educational opportunities for children with disabilities, the Central Government, in its last Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), set aside 1,000 million rupees specifically for the provision of integrated education.^{cxxiii}

The government of India started collaborating with the UN and World Bank to put the People with Disabilities Act into action. One major initiative that was born out of the PDA was the District Primary Education Program (DPEP). A joint venture between the Indian Government’s Department of Education and the World Bank, the goal of the District Primary Education Program was “education for all” by the year 2000.^{cxxiv} As many of the initiatives in India regarding education and children with disabilities, the DPEP focused on inclusion of children with mild to moderate disabilities.^{cxxv} Following the People with Disabilities Act, important parts of the initiative included Teacher trainings through the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETS),^{cxxvi} curriculum modifications, resource room, teacher support and integration or inclusion.^{cxxvii} The effectiveness of this program is debatable. The World Bank states that by the year 2006, the DPEP was implemented in 23 districts in 3 states; Rajasthan, Orissa & West Bengal, and that 600,000 children with disabilities were enrolled & mainstreamed.^{cxxviii} Conversely, scholars such as Mithu Alur claim that the success of the DPEPs were not attributed to state or program initiatives, but success stemmed from the individuals in the 3 states who were passionate about special education and inclusion.^{cxxix}

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: “Education for All”

As discussed above,

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free and compulsory education to all children ages 6-14.)^{cxxx}

Resulting from this change, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the fairly new People with Disabilities Act, and the past 50 years of attempted legislation and projects, the Government of India, in conjunction with the World Bank, created the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), an initiative which translates to “Education for All.” SSA is not a disability-specific program, but rather a disability-inclusive program, with specific aspects that benefit people with disabilities.

The program seeks to open new schools in those habitations which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through provision of additional class rooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grant and school improvement grants.

Existing schools with inadequate teacher strength are provided with additional teachers, while the capacity of existing teachers is being strengthened by extensive training, grants for developing teaching-learning materials and strengthening of the academic support structure at a cluster, block and district level^{cxxxii}.

SSA was launched in 2000 with the goal of providing universal education to all children between the ages of 6-14 by 2010.

(The goal of SSA was to have Universal Education by 2010 for children between the ages of 6-14.)^{cxxxii} This goal was not reached, but the program still continues to run.

There are three major parts of this program that benefit people with disabilities. The first is a R1200 allocation per annum per child with a disability.^{cxxxiii} This money is supposed to go towards assistive devices, materials in alternative learning formats, and anything else that would assist children with a disability in being included in a mainstream classroom. However, the money is funneled through the district or school level, and it is therefore impossible to ensure that it will be spent on the child with a disability.^{cxxxiv} Under SSA, assistive devices are technically a “right” and can be obtained outside of the R1200 allocation. However, in reality, SSA often provides these devices through collaboration with outside programs, and many of

these outside programs have their own restrictions on how often a child with a disability can obtain assistive devices, making these devices a privilege, rather than a right.^{cxxxv} For example, one of the programs that SSA collaborate with, such as ADIP (a program run by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment), require that children with a disability have a doctor's note, be in a particular economic bracket, and after the age of twelve can only receive one every three years.^{cxxxvi} In addition, despite the stated importance of this population, less than 1% of the total money allocated for SSA is being used for purposes of inclusion.^{cxxxvii}

The second part of SSA that is designed to include students with a disability is the policy that each district will formulate its own plan for children with disabilities; and the final part is that key institutions will be encouraged to collaborate to further support these students with disabilities.^{cxxxviii} In addition, SSA has a “no rejection” policy, meaning that children between ages 6-14 cannot be turned away from schools for many reasons, including for having a disability.^{cxxxix} The “no rejection” policy is inclusive, but it directly contradicts the People with Disabilities Act, which calls for the most appropriate environment for the student.^{cxl}

One positive aspect of SSA is the Government of India and World Bank's attempts to accurately monitor the effectiveness and results stemming from the program. There are a wide variety of inclusive education indicators that are collected, from

quarterly national IE workshops, use of NCERT monitoring tools on attendance and learning achievement of CSN, joint review missions under SSA, and regular visits by the SSA technical support staff^{cxli}.

Although these attempts are seemingly thorough and good intentioned, there are still discrepancies between SSA data on inclusive education and data from other agencies, such as DISE, NSS and the Government of India census.^{cxlii}

The Right to Education Bill

The Government of India decided to make Amendment 21A of the constitution, giving children between the ages of 6-14 the right to a free, appropriate and compulsory education, into an act. In 2005, the Right to Education Act was drafted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.^{cxliii} This bill, framed through a “social justice and collective advocacy perspective”^{cxliv} rather than through a framework of individual rights, is not disability-specific, but is inclusive of children with disabilities, with specific sections that address the educational rights of students with disabilities. The International Labor Organization says that when students with disabilities are not pinpointed as a separate group with separate needs in policies such as the Right to Education Act, that their specific needs are not addressed and met.^{cxlv} Therefore, it is important for inclusion that students with disabilities have specific clauses within the bill that ensure their rights as students, and exciting that this particular bill is addressing this group.

There are several other important clauses that make up this act to ensure that students with and without disabilities are guaranteed an education. The act specifically prohibits schools from charging any type of fee that, if not paid, would prevent children from completing their elementary education.^{cxlvi} Second, if a child turns six and is not in school, the child will be admitted into an age-appropriate classroom, and will not be admitted into a classroom based on their perceived level of education.^{cxlvii} The exception to this rule is if children have an intellectual disability they may be placed according to their perceived level of education, which is definitely an anti-inclusive stance.^{cxlviii} Third, if there is an area where children live that does not have a school, the government will be responsible for creating a school within that area within three years of the enactment of the Right to Education Act,^{cxlix} or alternatively, to provide transportation or residential facilities to an adequate school out of the area.^{cl} Last, both the state and central governments hold joint responsibility for carrying out the responsibilities outlined in

the Right to Education Act.^{cli} In addition to these four important clauses, the act also states that teachers cannot be hired on a contractual, month to month basis, allowing for them to be unqualified, but states that teachers must be hired on as permanent staff, giving them full salary and benefits. The bill gave the government five years to implement this change, because of the staggering lack of qualified teachers in India.^{clii}

The Right to Education Bill was drafted in 2005.^{cliii} However, for three years, the bill was not discussed by the cabinet, was not brought up in budget sessions, and was passed around and generally avoided by different departments.^{cliv} The Right to Education Act was passed in 2009 and put into full effect in 2010.^{clv} The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the act on April 12, 2012.^{clvi}

One of the main reasons for this was section 12 (1) (C) which allocated 25% of all seats in private schools to children from dalit and marginalized sections of society.^{clvii}

The bill has been fiercely opposed by the private school lobby which feels that opening its doors to the dhobi's son and the driver's daughter will dilute its brand value and lower standards^{clviii}.

Another reason that the bill took so long to pass was the estimated cost of implementation, at up to Rs 1,500,000 crore.^{clix} Initially, the Central Government of India wanted the states to harbor 25% of the financial responsibility.^{clx} However, after months of debate after the bill was finally passed in 2009, a decision was made that funding for implementation will be split between the central and state governments at a 65:35 ratio, 65% coming through the central government. However, some of the monetary support will be funneled through programs that already exist, such as SSA.^{clxi}

The Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities

It was extremely important that India create a bill around section 45 and 21 (A) of the constitution, which became the Right to Education Act which was originally floated in 2005. However, the same year, the Ministry of Human Resource Development also drafted the Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD).^{clxii} This action plan envisions that all children with a disability will have access to mainstream education; in order to facilitate this, the government, specifically collaborating between the Rehabilitation Council and the National Council for Teacher's Education, will ensure that there are adequate numbers of teachers trained in inclusive education,^{clxiii} as well as the proper physical and ideological infrastructure to facilitate inclusion in schools.^{clxiv} The plan specifically looks to move from integration towards inclusion, stating,

whereas under the Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) as it stands at present, children with disabilities are placed in a regular school without making any changes in the school to accommodate and support diverse needs, the revised IECYD will, in contrast, modify the existing physical infrastructures and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of all children, including Children with Special Needs^{clxv}.

A unique aspect of this plan is that it steps outside the Indian constitution and includes students with disabilities outside of the 6-14 age range. Through Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), anganwadi workers will be trained to identify children with disabilities at an early age, so they can receive early intervention services.^{clxvi} While the crucial importance of early intervention cannot be overlooked, the IECYD also discusses accommodations for students with a disability in universities, including a mandatory "disability coordinator" who provides inclusion services for students with disabilities.^{clxvii}

One of the major oppositions to this policy is that IECYD allows children with severe intellectual disabilities will receive home-based training.^{clxviii} Alternatively, accommodation in

hostels (dorms) or distance learning will be made available for people with disabilities that will learn better with these accommodations. In addition, scholars who advocate for inclusion point out that while the bill requires special schools to be made into resource centers for people with disabilities and professionals, students will probably still rely on special schools to some extent for education.^{clxix}

Reforming past schemes: The Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage

In 2008, the government reformed the Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) and created the Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS). It went into effect on April 1st, 2009.^{clxx} IEDC was reformed to take into account the resources provided for students with disabilities ages 6-14 under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The objective of IEDSS is to enable the disabled children who have completed eight years of elementary education to continue their education at the secondary stage in an inclusive environment in regular schools.^{clxxi}

IEDSS provides students with disabilities ages 14-18, studying in public or government-funded schools, R3000 per school year from the central government to purchase the necessary materials to use to ensure inclusion of the student in the mainstream school system.^{clxxii} This is the first policy that specifically acknowledges the importance of secondary education for persons with disabilities.

The National Policy for People with Disabilities

The most recent policy specifically concerning education and people with disabilities is the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's National Policy for People with Disabilities.^{clxxiii} Although this policy was created in 2006, after the 2005 Action Plan, and the two policies were created under separate ministries, they are very similar in both the ideologies that they were founded on, as well as the actual changes they are trying to make to the

system.^{clxxiv} The National Policy for People with Disabilities utilizes Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (in English, Education for All), also created by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, as their main mode of implementation of the policy.^{clxxv} This policy echoes the 2005 plan of action and 2005 (made official in 2009) bill by changing special schools in resource centers for people with disabilities and teachers. In addition, the policy seeks to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas by creating more District Disability and Rehabilitation Centers (DDRCs), which

disseminate information in terms of availability of aids and appliances, ensure the mandated 3% coverage of persons with disabilities in poverty reduction programs and target girls with disabilities^{clxxvi}.

Summary of Policies

Policy in India has always leaned towards inclusion. From the constitution to the Kothari Commission in the early days of the republic, to the 2005 Action Plan for Children and Youth with Disabilities and the 2006 National Policy for People with Disabilities recently, the Indian government tends to write inclusive policies on education. However, these policies often are not perfectly inclusive. Many of them tend to discriminate against people with “severe” disabilities, or people with intellectual disabilities, especially in terms of mainstream versus special schooling. Still, at present, the policies governing the education system are inclusive. At present, the problem is with implementation.

Chapter 5: Realities on the ground

Special Education Facts and Figures in India

Statistics on disability in India vary widely, and accuracy of statistics is always questionable. However, almost all of the statistics available point to the gaps in the education system, the marginalization of children with disabilities, and the need of the Government of India to step up their efforts to reach their goal of “education for all.”

The Government of India (GoI) did its first and only national survey to date on the population of people with a disability, from July-December, 2002. In December 2003, one year later, Report No. 485, the 593 page *Disabled Persons in India* was published in conjunction by the National Sample Survey Organization, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, and the Government of India.^{clxxvii} Although statistics vary across the board, depending on the year, surveyors, methods used, and other extraneous factors, this survey is considered most legitimate and accurate by governments and organizations across the globe. The Ministry found that there were 18.49 million people with disabilities in India, or about 1.8% of the population.^{clxxviii}

One of the statistics that varies widely is the number of children with disabilities enrolled in school. Kalyanpur, drawing from the National Census data, found that up to 94% of children with disabilities “did not receive any educational services.”^{clxxix} Data from the World Bank differs in both the ages of the sample group and the statistics, but draws a dramatically different picture. According to the World Bank, 38% of children with disabilities ages 6-13 are not in school.^{clxxx} In addition, starkly contrasting with Kalyanpur’s interpretation of the National Census, the World Bank states that 70% of children with disabilities ages 5-20 have attended a school at some point in their life, and that 90% of these children have attended a mainstream school.^{clxxxi} This data is further supported by data from the National Census, which states that of the children with disabilities in school in 2002, 94.8% of these children attend a mainstream school, and only 5.2% of children with a disability attend a special school.^{clxxxii} It is important to emphasize that these statistics do not include all of the children with a disability out-of-school, but only those that were attending school in 2002. Therefore, a large percentage of the

population is still not receiving any type of schooling. Alarming, the World Bank states that almost all children with disabilities do not continue their education past primary school.^{clxxxiii}

Marginalized Groups and People with Disabilities

There are several areas across which people with disabilities receive unequal services in India. One of those is the difference between urban and rural areas and the services available in both. 75% of people with disabilities live in rural areas in India.^{clxxxiv} This is an overwhelming majority. The number becomes worrisome in comparison to where the majority of services are offered; which is in urban areas. Less than 15% of national services for people with disabilities are located in rural areas, and of those, most are expensive and/or private.^{clxxxv} The discrepancy in services is directly reflected in educational achievement and enrollment in schools. Kalyanpur, drawing data from The National Census, states,

In terms of educational levels, only 11% of children with disabilities between the ages of 5–18 years in urban areas (less than 1% in rural areas) were enrolled in special schools, while 55% of adults with disabilities were illiterate (59% in rural and 40% in urban areas), with only 7% in rural and 18% in urban areas having completed secondary education^{clxxxvi}

Most of the data available follows this trend, suggesting that services are significantly more available in urban areas and people and students with disabilities are more marginalized in rural areas. However, interestingly, in the National Census, the data is the opposite in regards to inclusive schooling, or at least attending a mainstream school. Per 1000 students with a disability between the ages of 5-18, enrollment years in mainstream schools were actually higher in rural areas versus urban areas; 475 out of 1000 students with disabilities attended a mainstream school in rural areas, versus 444 out of 1000 students with disabilities in urban areas.^{clxxxvii} This may be because there is a higher prevalence of special schools in urban areas, which would make sense considering that urban areas have significantly more resources.

Another area of inequity between persons with disabilities is gender. The Government of India National Census pointed out the extreme inequities between girls and boys with a disability. In number, there are fewer girls than boys with a disability.^{clxxxviii} The hierarchy of Indian society results in selective abortion, female infanticide and female feticide of female children with a disability.^{clxxxix} Females with a disability are not considered an educational investment because they marry into a husband's family, whereas boys stay with and provide for their extended families all of their life. As a result 68% of girls with a disability are not in school.^{cx} Girls with disabilities have a lower enrollment rate in school than boys with disabilities across many sectors; urban vs. rural, by type of schooling, by level of schooling, and in primary versus secondary schooling.^{cxci} According to the World Bank, the educational divide specially begins after grade school, although in general, school attendance is never more than 70% for boys and 66% for girls.^{cxcii} Families also worry about their girls with a disability being vulnerable in the community, if they don't go to school the family will be able to supervise them closely. Although these gender trends are also true for girls without disabilities,

Both sociocultural and political-economic factors have led to women and girls with disabilities becoming "one of the most marginalized groups in society."^{cxci}

People with disabilities in India are also discriminated against based on their type of disability. The National Census did not break down types of disability according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM IV) or a similar text, but rather, by the categories "locomotor, multiple, mental retardation (intellectual disability), mental illness, blindness, low vision, hearing and speech."^{cxci} Out of the 70-110 million people who are disabled in India, their disabilities break down as follows: 53% have a locomotor disability, 13% have a visual disability, 10% have an auditory disability, and 4% have an intellectual disability.^{cxv} Generally, people with an intellectual disability are discriminated against and

marginalized more so than people with physical disabilities.^{cxvii} In terms of disability, people with Intellectual Disabilities (Mental Retardation) had the lowest enrolment rates in schools—they are four times less likely to go to school than children with physical disabilities, were the least likely to be employed, and the least likely to get married.^{cxviii} There are several reasons why children with intellectual disabilities are so marginalized. There are less services available for children with intellectual disabilities, partly because educators have to make changes to the curriculum to accommodate these students, whereas students with physical or locomotor disabilities are often able to learn the same material as students without disabilities.^{cxviii} In addition, due to social stigma, parents and families are more likely to keep their children with intellectual disabilities at home, hiding these family members.^{cxix} As a result, almost three-fourths of people with “severe” disabilities are illiterate, whereas one-half of people with “moderate” or “mild” disabilities are illiterate.^{cc} The World Bank does not define what “severe” versus “moderate” and “mild” mean in this instance, but their data comes from the National Census.

Gender, urban vs. rural living, and type of disability are just three of the many categories that further marginalize children with disabilities. Statistics do vary; however, all of them point to the gaps in the education system that are preventing children with a disability from being in school.

Gaps in the Education System in India

We have seen progress in governmental policies that point toward efforts of inclusion in mainstream education in India. However, the current statistics and literature point to an entirely different situation on the ground. Well-intentioned policy makers are having issues with the implementation of their policies.^{cci}

A study was presented at a seminar called “Integrated Education for Children with Special Needs: a Matter of Social Justice and Human Rights” in Delhi in 1997. This study examined why students dropped out of mainstream schools in India before enrolling in a particular special school. There were many reasons identified. Students repeatedly failed their courses and were asked to leave by teachers or administrators, and many of these students were teased for their “failure.” Many students said that the teachers at their old school would erase lessons off of the board before students were finished copying them. Other students said they were never moved up beyond nursery level classes, and found it embarrassing to be in lower classes with children younger than them. Students were often isolated in class, or said they had no friends at school. Many were hyperactive or had behavior issues and were asked to leave.^{ccii}

All of these reasons point to deficiencies not in the students, but in the education system’s lack of accommodation and inclusion. Teachers and administrators are not trained in inclusive teaching, and it is directly reflected in the educational achievement of the students, especially those who are considered “marginalized.” A study done of private and governmental principals showed that merely 37% of them had heard of inclusive schooling; there was no follow-up inquiring about who was well-versed in the subject.^{cciii} But individual administrators and teachers are not to blame for larger faults in the system. There is also a knowledge gap within the government. Most “higher up” policy makers, planners and administrators have heard of inclusion, but they do not know about the specific, technicalities of provisions in their own country.^{cciv}

Responsibility for teacher training is split between the rehabilitation council of India, who is responsible for the training of special education teachers, and The Ministry of Human Resource Development, who is responsible for general education teacher training.^{ccv} A split

between the types of teacher training does not promote inclusion at all; just as there should be one ministry who is responsible for training all teachers in inclusive education.

Since the RCI Act of 1992, which set standards for teacher training (see above), there has been a shortage of trained teachers and personnel in schools.^{ccvi} Although recent studies have not been done regarding teacher training, pointing to yet another need in the system, one was done in the 1980s under the Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED). They researched what kind of teacher training was required to teach children with “mild,” “moderate” and “severe” disabilities. The differences between these disabilities were not defined in the texts cited. Researchers found that about 45% of children with disabilities can be taught in a mainstream classroom by teachers with one week of training about inclusion. These children are those with extremely “mild” disabilities. 30% of children with disabilities can be taught in a mainstream classroom with teachers trained in inclusion for 1-2 weeks, plus periodic counseling or outside services. These children have “mild to moderate” disabilities. 15% of children with disabilities can be taught in an inclusive setting with teachers who have about three months of training. These students will also need “resource assistance” including corrective aids and periodicals in different formats. This group of students has “moderate to severe” disabilities. The study ends with 10% of children with disabilities, who require special teachers or one-on-one aids. These are children with “severe” disabilities.^{ccvii} Although this study is from the 1980s, it shows that with very little training, that children with disabilities can be taught in mainstream classrooms by a mainstream education teacher.

Curriculum is another area that is segregated between people with and without disabilities. Inflexible syllabi in a fiercely competitive exam oriented system, with high pressure on both students and teachers to perform, results in less than ideal circumstances for

accommodating people with disabilities.^{ccviii} There are two main types of curriculum in India: plus curriculum, specifically designed for children with disabilities, to increase accessibility (e.g. braille, large print, reading aids, language/communication for deaf children, communication for children with cerebral palsy), and general curriculum.^{ccix} The general curriculum needs to be adapted to the different formats that the plus curriculum is available in to make it accessible for children with disabilities. Some suggest tweaking, substituting or completely getting rid of curriculum that is not accessible to everyone.^{ccx}

Another area that needs to be explored is testing. India has extremely rigid assessments and examinations, which stems from their dependence on a British-style education system (briefly discussed above). Although some alternative mediums of testing are available to accommodate students with disabilities, “adaptations of tools, medium and methodology of assessment are all grey areas.”^{ccxi}

But there are still other gaps in the system, basic issues of accessibility for children with disabilities that need to be changed if the education system is ever going to become inclusive. School buildings are predominantly not accessible to people with disabilities; only 18% of SSA schools were “barrier free,” and the numbers were even lower in some states, with 2% in Jammu and Kashmir, and 6% in Bihar.^{ccxii} In India, most of the school buildings are already built, and building modifications are expensive in a country that already has resource-starved programs.^{ccxiii}

Funding is another gap in the system, and a very important one, that is preventing inclusion in the education system. In 1979 there was a 50-50 funding split in funding for public education between the state and central government.^{ccxiv} Programs do not run as effectively when they parallel between states and the central government because of the multiple parties involved. Some sources say that money is not being properly allocated and is not trickling down into the

schools and places where it should be.^{ccxv} Others argue that special education and inclusion should receive more funding than in proportion to their population of students with disabilities, to compensate for the lack of funding and infrastructure in the past.^{ccxvi}

The dual administration is another gap that has been mentioned several times; the Department of Education within the Ministry of Human Resource Development is in charge of all mainstream schooling, while the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is in charge of special schools, which occurs mainly through grants to nonprofits and NGOs.^{ccxvii} In the past, the role of NGOs has been running special schools that were responsible for the education of children with disabilities. Now, with the recent push for inclusion, and the 2006 National Policy for People with Disabilities, this is shifting. NGOs and special schools for students with disabilities have begun to take on alternative responsibilities. Former special schools have become resource centers, used especially for the students who require resource room or special one-on-one services. They have also been made into demonstration and training centers to teach mainstream teachers about inclusion and working with students with disabilities. The teachers and staff from special schools are also helping to convert and improve curriculum for children with disabilities.^{ccxviii} At present, the number of NGOs that exist is very small in comparison to needs. NGOs could make a large impact on the transformation of the education system into one that is inclusive.

Out of all of these special gaps in the education system, the most important one to change is the negative paradigm around people with disabilities. A paradigm shift is beginning in India, at least among the policy makers, that “education for all” will not be achieved without a completely inclusive education system.^{ccxix} Hopefully, the rest of the country will follow in this direction.

Chapter 6: Concluding thoughts and Recommendations

In the late 1800s and the first half of the 1900s, India was colonized by the British, and the few educational services for people with disabilities were offered in the form of segregated, special schools. Although the constitution outlined a policy of inclusive education that the country could have built off of, instead, the Ministry of Welfare (now the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) was created, and the government started giving out grants to nonprofits to begin and maintain special schools for people with disabilities. Beginning in the 1970s, the Government of India started to lean towards more inclusive policies for students with disabilities, but they began with inclusion for some, those with “mild” disabilities, not all. The policies of the new millennium are the most inclusive of those to date. But, just as the policies of the past, will these policies remain words on paper? The Government of India has fallen short of their goal for all of the policies of the past 62 years. Yet in the past decade, there have been several promising pieces of legislation and schemes: 2005 Action Plan for Children and Youth with Disabilities, the 2006 National Policy for People with Disabilities, the 2008 Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) and the 2009 Right to Education Act-as well as continuing with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme. So is there a lack of political will that is preventing full implementation of policies, or lack of governmental resources and capacity? It seems to be a combination of both.

Consolidate the Dual Administration

To enable an inclusive system of education, the Government of India needs to consolidate the responsibility for education under the Ministry of Education, and abolish the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Although the 2006 National Policy for People with Disabilities mandated the change of special schools into various types of resource centers, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan states that people with disabilities should be educated in the least

restrictive environment, which could potentially be a special school. Therefore, this scheme and this policy actually contradict each other. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment could still support students with disabilities by continuing to provide grants for these resource centers, but ultimately, it is imperative for inclusion that students of all ability levels are receiving services under the same ministry. This directly relates to the definition of inclusion and the social model defined above, because the Ministry of Education will have to adjust to accommodate people of all ability levels, including everyone.

Hold the Government Accountable for their Policies

Accountability of the Government of India and its implementing partners is imperative for ensuring successful implementation of policy. One of the best ways to do this is to ensure that citizens are well informed about these policies and schemes. This includes all members of the community-teachers, administrators and students; but also shopkeepers, farmers, lawyers, engineers, stay at home mothers, and all of the other people, including people with disabilities! They can be the best advocates for themselves. World Bank data shows that attitudes of community members and families of children with disabilities are not changing in respect to inclusion.^{ccxx} It is important to disseminate information about the rights that people with disabilities have under these laws through public awareness campaigns that reach people across the country. The citizens of a country are the ones who will hold the government accountable for its promises.

Establish an Accurate System of Monitoring Policies

As exemplified above, it is difficult to know which information is true when looking at the varying statistics from different agencies within the country. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan monitors and reports the results of their program; however, as included above, their statistics are

often different from other major institutions (DISE, NSS and the Government of India census).^{ccxxi} In the most recent report, Status of Education in India: National Report,

“the current coverage of children with disabilities [identified under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan] is 21.86 lakh (71.99%), thus leaving about 30% of the identified children with disabilities out of the education ambit.”^{ccxxii}

These numbers are positive, and bring hope for the progress and success of the country.

However, a system of reliable monitoring is imperative for evaluating the success or failures of a policy or scheme.

Financially Commit to Inclusive Education for All, and Monitor the Money

1,000 million rupees reserved to implement the 1995 People with Disabilities Act. R1200 per year per student under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. R3000 per year per student under the 2008 Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS). R1,500,000 crore to implement the 2009 Right to Education Bill. All of these numbers sound fantastic, but none of them have resulted in a system of inclusive education. As stated above, less than 1% of all money allocated for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is used towards inclusion. In addition, there have been numerous accounts of money being misused, and not benefiting students with disabilities.^{ccxxiii} The Government of India needs to create a system of accountability for the money they allocate, to ensure it is being used for inclusion.

Train teachers in Inclusive Teaching Methods

Training teachers in teaching methods that include students of all ability levels, as well as spreading awareness to teachers about the importance and benefits of inclusion, is one of the most important parts of implementing a system of inclusive education, because the teachers are the people on-the-ground who are going to accommodate the students. Kalyanpur writes that there is inadequate policy dissemination around inclusion, and that many teachers know little

about policies regarding students with disabilities.^{ccxxiv} The World Bank claims that the attitudes of general educators or educators in a mainstream environment, towards students with disabilities are generally improving, probably as a result of the various policies and schemes of the 2000s.^{ccxxv} The Rehabilitation Council is in charge of teacher training courses.

The Rehabilitation Council of India current runs 56 long term and short term courses for 16 categories of professionals run by various universities/institutions. 1176 professionals and 1791 personnel have been registered in the Central Rehabilitation Register taking the total number of registered professionals and personnel to 30,935 (MSJE, 2007). These efforts need to be further supported.^{ccxxvi}

Teaching educators about the importance of inclusion and how to run an inclusive classroom is imperative for reaching the goal of education for all.

Physical and Intellectual Accessibility in Schools

The term “accessibility” typically conjures up images of buildings and discussion about universal design. Building accessibility is absolutely imperative for students with disabilities to be included as an equal member in their school. But what is typically more challenging for mainstream schools who are trying to become inclusive is converting their curriculum to fit students of all ability levels. While this may seem time consuming, complicated, and perhaps expensive, it is important to remember that having an accessible curriculum does not only benefit students with disabilities, but also all other children in the classroom, because it is taught with the intention of reaching all students equally. As discussed above, India has two separate curriculum, “plus” and “general.” A truly inclusive system of education would have just one type of curriculum that was accessible to all of the students.

Goals for Inclusion on a Realistic Timeline

The Government of India is trying to improve their education system and make it completely inclusive. However, it is important to be realistic about the time span in which this

change will occur. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, or the Education for All initiative, was created not only for people with disabilities, but because of discrepancies in the general education sector. In the country with the second largest population in the world, with 25% of the population living under the poverty line, with a government only 62 years old, with a complicated social hierarchy, implementation might take a bit longer in comparison to countries with less poverty and more infrastructure for change. The importance of intention and effort should be recognized in this situation, as well as the immense improvements that the country has already made toward inclusion. Jangira, an Indian scholar in education, writes,

I would like to see the distinctions between words like ‘special education,’ ‘regular education,’ and ‘inclusive education’ disappear. The practice in these movements will be absorbed into the world ‘education’ ^{ccxxvii}

The education system in India is changing. It is time for policies to start aligning with realities on the ground, and for students of all ability levels to receive the education they deserve.

Timeline

- 2000+ years ago: people with disabilities had “accessible” toys.
- Before British Colonization: the gurukul system of education is the primary system of education used in India.
- 1835: The Minute on Education is written by Thomas Macaulay, documenting the British Government’s mission to create a class of Indians with British values.
- 1869: The first special school is opened in India by Jane Leupot, with support from the Church Missionary Society. This school is for people who were blind.
- 1883: School for the deaf is opened in Bombay.
- 1887: School for people who are blind is opened in Amritsar by Christian Missionaries.
- 1909: First attempted piece of legislation regarding inclusion and education introduced by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, under the Indian Council Act of 1909. Bill was voted down.
- 1918: The first special school that will teach people with intellectual disabilities is established.
- 1937: Mohandas Gandhi introduces “basic education” to the Indian people. It influenced governmental policy on education for about 30 years but ultimately failed.
- 1944: The Sargent Report by the Central Advisory Board of Education suggests that children with disabilities should be entirely mainstreamed.
- 1947: India gains independence from British rule.
- 1950: India’s constitution is signed; includes part IX, article 45, which guarantees free and compulsory education for all children (regardless of ability level) between the ages of 6-14.
- 1960s: Ministry of Education splits, creating the Ministry of Social Welfare, which is given responsibility for the “weak and vulnerable” sections of society. Began awarding grants to nongovernmental organizations for the creation and upkeep of special schools.
- 1964: The Kothari Commission creates a plan of action for education of students of all ability levels. The government of India never implements the plan of action, which included people with disabilities in the mainstream school system.
- 1974: The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) which provided early childhood intervention for children “at risk,” but failed to do so for children with disabilities.
- 1974: The Integrated Education Childhood Scheme (IEDC) which provided financial support for children with disabilities to try and help them be included in mainstream classrooms.
- 1981: UN Year of the Disabled Person
- 1982: UN Resolution 37/52, the World Program of Action, adopted by the UN General Assembly as a result of the UN Year of the Disabled Person. Paragraph 120 states that education should be inclusive for people with disabilities.
- 1983-1992: The UN Decade of the Disabled Person.
- 1986: The National Policy on Education (NPE) stated that children with “mild” disabilities should be taught in mainstream classrooms, while students with “moderate to severe” disabilities should be taught in segregated schools. Also included a provision about mandatory teacher training about inclusion.
- 1989: The UN General Assembly adopted the Tallinn Guidelines for Action on Human Resource Development in the Field of Disability. They highlight the importance of early intervention and of inclusive education.

- 1989: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, included the “standard rules on the equalization opportunities for persons with disabilities” in the implementation handbook.
- 1990: The Jomtien Conference on Education for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand. People with disabilities were not mentioned in the Declaration and Framework.
- 1992: The National Policy on Education’s Program of Action broadens the definition of who should be included in mainstream schooling and created a scheme for implementing the 1986 NPE.
- 1992: The Rehabilitation Council of India Act provided standards for rehabilitation professionals, one of those being teachers of people with disabilities. This act established consequences for teaching without a license.
- 1993: The case of Unnikrishnan vs. the state of Andhra Pradesh, in which the court rules that Article 45 of the constitution must be read in conjunction with Article 21 of the constitution, which makes elementary education in India a fundamental right.
- 1994: The Salamanca Conference on Special Needs Education is held in Salamanca, Spain. The Framework for Action details the importance of inclusion.
- 1995: The People with Disabilities Act gives students with disabilities the right to education in a free and appropriate environment until they are 18 years of age, provides resources for people with disabilities, and puts further standards on teacher training. The District Primary Education Program (DPEP) was born out of the PDA, with the goal of “education for all” by the year 2000.
- 2001: The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, or Education for All Scheme, was created to help implement the PDA and the 86th amendment to the constitution.
- 2002: 86th amendment to the constitution is made, which official wrote the 1993 Unnikrishnan vs. the state of Andhra Pradesh results into the constitution.
- 2005: The Action Plan for Inclusion of Children and Youth with Disabilities was possibly the most important piece of legislation around inclusion to date. This action plan envisions that all children with a disability will have access to mainstream education, and does not confine the ages to students between 6-14.
- 2006: The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is adopted and ratified by India; however, they did not adopt or ratify the protocol. Article 24 of the Convention discusses the importance of inclusion.
- 2006: The National Policy for People with Disabilities changes special schools into resource centers for people with disabilities and teachers. It also attempts to bridge the service gap between rural and urban areas by creating more District Disability and Rehabilitation Centers.
- 2008: Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS) replacing the 1974 IEDC.
- 2009: The Right to Education Act, which was originally drafted in 2005, was not passed until 2009, and put into full effect in 2010. The supreme court upheld the constitutionality of the act in 2012. This act was not disability specific, but rather included people with disabilities.

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