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Equitable & Inclusive Education

1. Research Abstract

1. Theme/Subject:	Equitable & Inclusive Education
2. Stage of Education:	Secondary Stage
3. Topic of Research:	Evaluation of the Implementation of the Scheme IEDSS in India
4. Name and Address of the Investigators(s) with email:	Dr.Anita Julka,Retd. Professor, Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN), NCERT, Sri Aurobindo Marg,New Delhi Email:headdegsn@gmail.com
5. Name of the Institution where the Research was conducted	Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs(DEGSN), NCERT, Sri Aurobindo Marg,New Delhi
6. Category: (Research study/ Action research/ Other)	Research project
7. Language of Research Report:	English
8. Year of Completion:	2013
9. Published/Unpublished:	Published in 2014
10. Introduction:	<p>The 'Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage' (IEDSS)' was launched in the year 2009 as a revised form of the earlier scheme 'Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) which was introduced in 1970's. The IEDSS scheme provided an opportunity to all students with disabilities who have completed eight years of elementary schooling to complete four years of secondary schooling (classes IX to XII) in an inclusive and enabling environment. The Scheme had been implemented in a number of States since 2009 on the basis of 100% Central Assistance. An attempt has been made to evaluate the implementation of the Scheme-IEDSS in different States and Union Territories of India</p>
11. Objectives:	<p>The major objectives of the study were to assess the current impact of the scheme on enrolment, access, retention of students with disabilities at the secondary and higher secondary stage, accessibility of resource support, to identify good practices and to assess the role of State Governments in planning, implementation and monitoring of the scheme.</p>

12. Methodology:

The data for the study was collected from 27 States/UTs where the IEDSS scheme was being implemented after the approval of the proposals by the MHRD. Explorative and descriptive research design was used to explore the status of implementation of IEDSS-Scheme in different states and to analyze the issues and challenges faced by the states in proper implementation of this scheme. In order to meet study objectives, multi-stage simple random sampling design was followed for selection of districts from respective states, schools, teachers and students. Data was collected from 203 teachers and 278 students selected through simple random sampling technique. The study team made visits to the concerned States/UTs and interacted with the IEDSS coordinators/administrators, principals/heads of the schools, teachers, students with disabilities and their parents. Tools were prepared by the research team with the help of experts and on the basis of the feedback from the visits of various states. The self-designed tools, namely, a) State Information Blank b) Teacher Interaction Schedule; c) Students Interaction Schedule and d) Classroom Observation Schedule were the research tools used in this study. Items in the tools were mainly related to enrolment, access, retention of students with disabilities, accessibility of resource support, TLMs and teachers, students, items related to infrastructure, number of teachers and their specialization, teaching-learning process, assessment, training of teachers, learning of students etc. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data was carried out. Descriptive procedure was followed for quantitative analysis of data, presented in percentage.

13. Findings:

Major findings revealed that out of 35 States/UTs, Only 16 States/UTs started implementation of IEDSS in 2009-10, while 7 States/UTs started it in 2010-11 and 4 States/UTs started it in 2011-12. Eight States/UTs, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand and Lakshadweep had still not implemented IEDSS. Enrolment has increased in 11 States from 2009-10 to 2011-12. The enrolment of girl students with disabilities is 43.57% in 2009-10, 43.07% in 2010-11, 41.51% in 2011-12, and 40.21% in 2012-13. The major reasons stated for dropping out were shortage of special teachers in the States, disturbances in Maoist affected and tribal areas, poverty and social stigmas attached to disability, lack of modified/adapted curriculum, lack of awareness and sensitization, absence of secondary schools in the neighborhood especially for girls; absence of basic infrastructural and other facilities in school; and absence of linkage between different inclusive schemes/interventions, between different departments and between school and vocational education. There was a

need to address the gap between the students passing out of elementary classes and enrolling in secondary schools. Low enrolment of girl students was a serious concern at this level of education.

14. Implications:

The implications of this study on the respective states were to address the wide gap between policy provisions and actual utilization of these provisions through interventions at ground level. States could initiate or adopt strategies for taking different measures like sensitization of stakeholders on better understanding of Inclusion and bring out positive attitudes towards inclusion, inter and intra departments collaborations for providing better administrative, infrastructural, human resource, therapeutic and other support services as per IEDSS Scheme and training of teachers.

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16. Keywords: Inclusive Education, Secondary stage, training, schemes and policies

2. Research Abstract

1. Theme/Subject:	Equitable & Inclusive Education
2. Stage of Education:	Up to Middle stage
3. Topic of Research:	Research-Cum-Documentation of Sign Language For Teaching English, Maths and Social Science in the North-East Region- PAC-26.08
4. Name and Address of the Investigator(s) with email:	Dr. Melissa G. Wallang Email: melissancert@gmail.com
5. Name of the Institution where the Research was conducted	NERIE-NCERT
6. Category: (Research study/ Action research/ Other)	Research Study
7. Language of Research Report:	English
8. Year of Completion:	2022-2024
9. Published/Unpublished:	Published
<p>10. Introduction:</p> <p>Language is a fundamental requirement for human communication and learning. In the context of deafness, many individuals face significant barriers in accessing education through their natural language—sign language. Despite decades of linguistic research showing that sign languages have the same grammatical complexity as spoken languages, deaf students continue to be marginalized in educational settings. Sign language is a manual and visual form of communication, an inherent characteristic of any deaf community. For many years, it has been excluded from mainstream education, forcing deaf children to learn through speech-based instruction that they cannot fully understand. This linguistic deprivation has serious consequences for their academic and social development, perpetuating educational inequalities.</p> <p>The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges Indian Sign Language (ISL) as a natural language and recognizes local varieties that should be used as a medium of instruction in mainstream schools.</p> <p>However, implementation remains inadequate. This research investigates the challenges faced by deaf and hard-of-hearing children and documents the use of sign language across different subject areas, including English, Social Science, and Mathematics, within inclusive settings. The goal is to find practical and technological solutions for educators and teachers to optimize and support classroom situations by</p>	

providing appropriate linguistic accommodations in ISL, the varieties of sign language used by deaf communities in North East India.

11. Objectives:

- To document relevant linguistic information to aid teachers in the teaching and learning process, hence accessibility to ISL in classroom situations.
- To document sign language in digital format as e-resources to be utilized in the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in the learning of English, Maths, and Social Science
- To collaborate with linguists, sign language experts, and members of the deaf community to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the documented sign language data.
- To design and develop a user-friendly web-based application for accessing sign language resources tailored to NE India. The documented sign language can be integrated into the DDISLER Sign Bank, a web-based app that was developed.

12. Methodology:

Following the PAC, NERIE (2016-17) research that documented North East Sign Languages (NESL) varieties within ISL, this research study addresses the critical need for educational materials in sign language. While the NESL Sign Bank established a foundation for resource dissemination, there remains an urgent requirement to develop computer-based programs for teaching English, Mathematics, and Science at the secondary level. This research focuses on documenting sign languages used by smaller deaf communities in the NER and developing integrated sign language e-resources for the Digital Database of ISL and Educational Resources (DDISLER). The study emphasizes linguistic components essential for classroom instruction, providing terminologies that enable teachers to bridge communication gaps through sign language in actual educational settings. A survey method was adopted to conduct this study. The primary data was collected through the interview schedule. The following are the procedures for data collection.

- i. An interview schedule was utilized in this research to assess the current challenges faced by the deaf community in the region.
- ii. Language documentation involves multipurpose records, including audio-video recordings of signers, with annotations and translations collected from Individuals with profound hearing loss since birth who use sign language for communication (WHO, 2014). These records are sourced from selected educational institutions that exclusively serve deaf students, which are considered birthplaces of deaf communities and primary sources for sign language documentation.

13. Findings:

The main aim of this research is to provide support to teachers and teacher educators with technological solutions to provide access to material in sign language. The DDISLER (Digital Database of Indian Sign Language and Educational Resources) is a product of this research. It is a digital web-based application that includes data on sign language varieties from the North East region of India, establishing the first comprehensive digital platform specifically designed for regional deaf communities. This study successfully documented more than 7,000 lexical items and sentence-level data across the eight states in North East India, preserving unique linguistic features and cultural nuances of local deaf communities. Key findings include the identification of significant regional variations in sign language usage, with local communities maintaining distinct signs that differ from standardized ISL dictionaries. The study found many unique lexical items that carry the social and cultural elements specific to the local deaf communities.

The interview schedule of 60 teachers demonstrated high utilization of YouTube as the primary digital resource, with DDISLER emerging as a valuable supplementary tool. Teachers reported improvements in student engagement, peer interaction in inclusive schools, enhanced confidence among deaf students, and positive feedback from parents. The platform's unique feature of including multiple sign variations for identical meanings was particularly valued by educators. The study successfully created bimodal bilingual e-content, translating NCERT textbooks and regional folktales into ISL, addressing the critical shortage of educational materials in sign language for the NE region. Link: <https://nesignlanguage.in/>

14. Implications:

The study carries important implications for inclusive practices in the region. By documenting regional varieties of sign languages, it questions the prevailing emphasis on standardisation. It highlights the importance of safeguarding linguistic diversity and promoting ISL extensively, particularly in terms of vocabulary items, which could make ISL a richer and more powerful tool for use in school education. Such an approach resonates with the NEP 2020 vision for multilingual education. The study also implies a need for policy frameworks that recognize and support local sign language varieties in educational settings, ensuring deaf children can access education in their mother tongue. Practically, the platform addresses critical gaps in teacher training and classroom resources. Teachers lacking sign language training can now access region-specific educational content, potentially improving learning outcomes for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The positive impact on student confidence and peer interaction suggests broader social inclusion benefits. The success of this study lies in the creation of digital educational resources, which have

implications for scaling similar initiatives across the country. This model could inform similar projects on a bigger scale, particularly in multilingual contexts where local sign language communities require specialized educational resources.

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16. Keywords: Indian Sign Language, Language Documentation, Digital Database of Indian Sign Language and Educational Resources, Inclusive education and Multilingual

3. Research Abstract

1. Theme/Subject:	Equitable & Inclusive Education
2. Stage of Education:	Elementary stage
3. Topic of Research:	A Study on Implementation of Inclusive Education at Elementary Level in the North-Eastern Region
4. Name and Address of the Investigator(s) (with E-mail):	Dr Basansy Kharlukhi NERIE, Umiam basansykharlukhi@yahoo.com
5. Institution where the Research was Conducted:	NERIE, NCERT
6. Category:	Research project
7. Language of Research Report:	English
8. Year of Completion:	2016
9. Published/Unpublished:	Published
10. Introduction:	
<p>The country has launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to ensure entry, retention and education of children between 6-14 years of age and inclusive education is an integral component of SSA which promised to make 'education for all' by 2010. Many policies and Acts have been legislated to make inclusive education a reality. New policies have been launched to overcome limitations of previous efforts such as the <i>Action Plan for Inclusion in Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD)</i> and the <i>National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in 2006</i> which stressed on modifying the existing infrastructure facilities, teaching procedures in order to make it more child-friendly. Moreover, in Chapter II of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 it is recommended that children suffering from disability should be provided the right to free and compulsory elementary education in accordance with the provision of Chapter V of the said Act. Research specifically in the areas of inclusive education in its totality is still very limited. Hence the significance or importance of this project is to bridge that gap of not only finding out how far inclusive education in its truest form has been implemented in the schools of the different states in NER but whether necessary support system has been provided and whether children with disability are really benefitting from the education provided or not.</p>	

11. Objectives:

- To identify and study the different components available in the schools for providing quality education for CWSN such as teachers training, curricular/instructional adaptations, teaching learning process, teaching learning materials, evaluation system.
- To find out the quality of implementing IE and if children with disabilities are really benefitting from it or not.

12. Methodology:

The population for the present study was all the Inclusive Elementary Schools from the three North Eastern States: Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.

A sample of 30 Elementary Schools including government, aided and SSA schools which provide inclusive education was selected. 10 schools from each state of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura were selected. The sample also includes State Authority, teachers and parents.

The tools includes;

- **Questionnaire:** The first Questionnaire was designed for teachers. The items of the questionnaire were focused on the different components for providing quality education for CWSN such as curriculum adaptation, teaching learning process, TLM used and evaluation system. The second questionnaire was for the head of the institution which focused on the physical or material aspect such as infrastructure, architectural barriers, aids and appliances as well as human resources such as teachers, resource teachers, students etc. The third questionnaire was the State Proforma for the Education Departments of the three states Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura.
 - **Observation Schedule:** Used for classroom observation which focuses on the teaching-learning process, interactions, behaviours during the classroom hours.
 - **Interview Schedule:** For the parents and the students to highlight the social aspects such as community awareness, support and involvement.
- The data collected was analyzed by using qualitative techniques.

13. Findings:

The study highlights the challenges faced by children with special needs (CWSNs) in mainstream schools, focusing on the lack of adequate infrastructure and resources. While many schools have ramps and handrails, other facilities such as separate toilets for wheelchair users or special seating arrangements are scarce. Playgrounds are not designed to be accessible for children with

disabilities, and most schools lack proper aids and appliances. Teachers believe that with training in inclusive education and improved classroom conditions, CWSNs could benefit more. However, there is a lack of cooperation and interest from parents, which hinders the teaching-learning process.

The study also indicates that school principals show positive attitudes towards inclusion but are concerned about the success due to the lack of resources and training. State authorities have made efforts towards inclusion, but without sufficient support, inclusion efforts may not be effective. Teachers face challenges in adapting the curriculum and instructional strategies to meet the needs of CWSNs, and there is limited use of modified teaching-learning materials (TLM). CWSNs report difficulties in learning, particularly in understanding lessons, and are hesitant to ask questions. Despite these challenges, they express happiness in attending school and interacting with peers.

14. Implications:

The study concentrates on those schools which are inclusive schools, hence the study is of vital importance for the States, principals, teachers, students and parents as well of all inclusive schools.

From the studies it can be implied that schools must be empowered with all the infrastructures and facilities required for making schools disability friendly. Teachers should be provided continuous support such as training, orientations and other related programmes so as to enhance them with the skills required to handle CWSNs. All children should be respected and provide with all the support systems demanded for making schools free and safe for their learning and development.

Further the study may be beneficial for the State authorities who are concerned with the education of CWSNs and who aim at effectively implementing inclusive education in its truest sense. Hence, the findings may be used by the educational planners, administrators, officials to assess the status and level of implementation and achievement of inclusive education and further develop mechanisms and strategies for assessing and monitoring the various aspects implemented at the school level.

The authorities should also encourage parents to attend Parent Teacher Meeting as this serves as a platform for discussions of the problems and providing suggestions and solutions to the problems and also a platform for bringing positive change in the total school environment.

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16. Keywords: Implementation, Inclusive education, Elementary School, Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

4. Research Abstract

1.Theme/Subject:	Equitable & Inclusive Education
2.Stage of Education:	Elementary level
3.Topic of Research:	A Study of Educational Status and Issues of Buddhists/ Neo-Buddhists of students at elementary level
4.Name and Address of the Investigators(s) with email:	Mr. Sanjay Pandagale
5.Name of the Institution where the Research was conducted	RIE Bhopal
6.Category: (Research study/ Action research/Other)	Research study
7.Language of Research Report:	English
8.Year of Completion:	2015-16
9.Published/Unpublished:	Unpublished
10.Introduction:	
<p>The Indian education system continues to face challenges in achieving true inclusivity, with various forms of exclusion persisting despite policy efforts. One such marginalized group includes religious and linguistic minorities, among whom the Buddhists and Neo-Buddhists of Maharashtra hold a unique position. Originally belonging to the Scheduled Castes within Hindu society, many individuals embraced Buddhism in 1956, inspired by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's historic conversion. These converts are referred to as Neo-Buddhists, while those who followed Buddhism prior to this movement are identified as Buddhists.</p> <p>A critical issue arises when Neo-Buddhists, particularly from the Mahar caste in Maharashtra, continue to be listed under the Scheduled Castes category for availing reservation benefits, while also being eligible for minority status as followers of Buddhism. This dual categorization raises questions of identity, policy clarity, and access to educational resources. Despite practicing Buddhism, many may not officially declare their religious affiliation due to systemic or social hurdles.</p> <p>This complexity highlights the need for a focused investigation into the educational status, challenges, and inclusion of Buddhists and Neo-Buddhists in Maharashtra. Understanding their specific barriers and needs is crucial for ensuring that educational policies effectively reach this marginalized group and uphold the constitutional promise of equality and inclusion.</p>	

11.Objectives:

- i) To study the enrollment status of Buddhists/Neo-Buddhists students.
- ii) To study the achievement levels among Buddhists/Neo-Buddhists students.
- iii) To study the retention rate among Buddhists/Neo-Buddhists students.
- iv) To study the issues in their educational mobility.

12.Methodology:

The present study adopts a survey-based research design to investigate the educational status of Buddhist and Neo-Buddhist students. The study was conducted in the Buldhana district of Maharashtra, which comprises thirteen tehsils. All thirteen tehsils was included in the study to ensure comprehensive regional coverage. From each tehsil, ten schools was selected, resulting in a total sample of 130 schools.

Data collection was focus on key educational indicators such as enrollment, retention, and academic achievement of Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist students. For comparative analysis, similar data was also gathered for students from other social and religious backgrounds within the same schools. This helped in identifying disparities, if any, in educational outcomes between Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist students and their peers.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, two workshops were organised. The first workshop, lasting five days, focuses on developing the tools, while the second, of three days, was dedicated to finalising and refining them. Given the wide geographical spread and number of schools involved, data collection from the field is expected to take a minimum of six months. The methodology aims to provide a thorough and comparative understanding of the educational challenges faced by this community.

13.Findings:

The study revealed significant educational disparities faced by Buddhist and Neo-Buddhist students in Buldhana district. Despite constitutional safeguards and access to reservations under the Scheduled Castes category, many students from these communities continue to face social, economic, and institutional barriers. Enrollment rates in several tehsils were comparatively lower for Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist students, especially in secondary and higher secondary levels. Retention emerged as a major concern, with a noticeable dropout trend after the primary stage, particularly among girls.

Academic achievement levels were also found to be below the district average in many schools, highlighting systemic issues such as lack of parental education, inadequate support structures, and subtle forms of discrimination.

The survey of 130 schools across all thirteen tehsils provided a comprehensive overview, and comparative data indicated that Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist students lag behind their peers from other communities in key educational indicators. One major insight was the confusion around identity – while many practice Buddhism, official records often list them under Hindu Scheduled Castes, preventing them from availing minority-specific educational schemes.

Overall, the findings underscore the urgent need for targeted educational interventions, greater awareness of identity rights, and more inclusive school environments to support the holistic development of Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist students.

14.Implications:

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational policy, social justice, and community development. First, the dual identity of Neo-Buddhists—as Scheduled Castes and religious minorities—requires urgent policy clarification. Many students are unable to fully access the benefits available under minority welfare schemes due to confusion or lack of proper documentation of their religious identity. Therefore, government bodies must streamline processes to help individuals officially update their religion and become aware of their rights.

Second, the lower enrollment, retention, and achievement levels among Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist students call for targeted educational interventions. These may include remedial teaching, mentorship programs, scholarships, and awareness campaigns aimed specifically at these communities. Teachers and school administrators also need sensitization training to ensure an inclusive and discrimination-free learning environment.

Furthermore, community-based awareness programs should be initiated to inform families about the importance of continued education and the support available to them. NGOs and local leaders can play a vital role in bridging the gap between policy and practice.

At a broader level, this study highlights the need for more nuanced data collection that reflects the intersection of caste and religion. Without such data, policies may fail to address the real challenges faced by marginalized communities like the Buddhists and Neo-Buddhists of Maharashtra.

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16.Keywords: Buddhists, Neo-Buddhists, education, exclusion, Maharashtra, identity