

EDUCATION FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Guide

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Abstract :

The area of exception is universal. It can be found among people of any class, caste, religion, community or nation. sometimes this exceptionality is hereditary, sometimes environmental and sometimes it is the interactive effect of both. We find examples of exceptional personalities in history. The sister of American President, John F. Kennedy was mentally retarded, the famous writer and traveller Helen Keller was blind and deaf. The most famous Indian poet, Surdas, was blind by birth. Albert Einstein's vocabulary was developed very late. American President Roosevelt was himself handicapped by polio. All these examples prove that compensation of any disability is possible and any disabled child can be made useful for himself and the nation by giving him the appropriate training and learning, like a normal child. This has brought about a change in the attitude of people towards exceptional children of the world in developed and developing countries. Special schools have been opened for them developing countries. Special schools have been opened for them where they can be imparted a special type of learning and training in accordance with their needs and requirements as well as deficiencies and defects.

Keyword : Education for the Handicapped

Development of Education for Handicapped

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) observes that the covered goal of universalisation of elementary education depends upon the extent of success in bringing special groups of children within the education network. Unless educational services are extended to this group of children on mass scale, the universalisation of elementary enrolment of the handicapped children in relation to total children at the elementary stage is 0.07 percent. This figure of enrolment has gone up to one percent as per review of NPE (1992) This low percentage of enrolment speaks volumes for the serious neglect and denial of educational opportunity for millions of disabled children in the country even though the constitution of the country prescribes compulsory education for all children upto primary level. Most of the special groups of children are either not enrolled at all or drop out due to one reason or the other after stagnation. The slow progress towards bringing the disabled within the education network has been due to liner provision in special schools despite the fact that about 90 percent of the can be catered to in regular schools.

Inclusions

Integration of the handicapped into the regular school programme enunciated by the Kothari Commission leads to (i) reduction of costs of education and (ii) promotion of mutual understanding between the handicapped and non handicapped. However, many handicapped children find it difficult to cope with normal ones as they tend to be neglected. It is increasingly felt that every attempt should be made to bring in as many children into integrated programmes as possible.

This has been reinforced in the National Policy on Education, (NPE) 1986 stipulates that wherever possible education of children with locomotor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common with that of others. The children with severe handicaps are proposed to be enrolled in special schools with hostels at district headquarters.

The ideal scenario for education of the handicapped is universalisation of primary education along with other children by 1995.

The Programme of Action (POA), 1986 and 1992 suggest pragmatic placement principles. It postulates that a child with disability who can be educated in a general school should be educated in general school only and not in a special school. Even those children who are initially admitted to special for training in plus-curriculum skills (that are required in addition to their regular school curriculum) should be transferred to general schools once they acquire daily living skills, communication skills and basic academic skills.

For achieving equalization of educational opportunities, POA (1992) also envisages that children with disability should have access to quality education comparable to other children. It postulates-

- (1) For children who can be educated in general primary schools-
 - (a) Universal enrolment by the end of 9th five year plan.
 - (b) Ensuring achievement of minimum level of learning (MLL) through adjustment and adaptation of curriculum and teaching to special needs.
- (2) For children who require to be educated in special schools or special classes in general schools-
 - (a) Universal enrolment by the end of 9th five year plan.
 - (b) Ensuring achievement of level of learning commensurate with their potential.
- (3) Reduction of drop out rates at par with other children.
- (4) Providing access to disabled children of secondary and senior secondary school with resource support and making special provision for vocational training of these children.
- (5) Reorienting pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes to need special needs in the classroom.
- (6) Reorienting adult and non-formal education programmes to meet educational and vocational training needs of persons with disability.

Legal Provision for Special Education

The persons with disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights and full Participation) Act, 1995

The Gazette of India : Extra ordinary, Part-II, Section-I No. 1 of 1996, 1st January, 1996, Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, New Delhi : Chapter-V of Education p. 12-13.

1. The appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall-
 - (a) Ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years :
 - (b) Endeavour to promote the integration of students with disabilities in the normal schools ;
 - (c) Promote setting up of special schools in government and private sector for those in need of special education, in such a manner that children with disabilities living in any part of the country have access to such school :
 - (d) Endeavour to equip the special schools for children with disabilities with

vocational training facilities.

2. The appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall by notification make schemes for-
 - (a) Conducting part-time classes in respect of children with disabilities who having completed education upto class fifth and could not continue their studies on a whole time basis ;
 - (b) Conducting special part-time classes for providing functional literacy for children in the age-group of sixteen and above ;
 - (c) Imparting non-formal education by utilizing the available manpower in rural areas after giving them appropriate orientation ;
 - (d) Imparting education through open schools or open universities,
 - (e) Conducting class and discussions through interactive electronic or other media ;
 - (f) Providing every child with disability free of cost special books and equipments needed for his education.
3. The appropriate Governments shall initiate or cause to be initiated research be official and non-governmental agencies for the purpose of designing and developing new assistive devices, teaching aids, special teaching materials or such other items as are necessary to give a child with disability equal opportunities in education.
4. The appropriate Governments shall set up adequate member of teacher's training institutions and assist the national institutes and other voluntary organizations to develop teachers' training programmes specializing in disabilities so that requisite trained manpower is available for special schools and integrated schools for children with disabilities.
5. Without prejudice to the foregoing provisions, the appropriate Governments shall by notification prepare a comprehensive education scheme which shall make provisions for handicapped.
 - (a) Transport facilities to the children with disabilities or in the alternative financial incentives to parents or guardians to enable their children with disabilities to attend schools ;
 - (b) The removal of architectural barriers form schools, colleges or other institutions imparting vocational and professional training ;
 - (c) The supply of books, uniforms and other materials to children with disabilities attending school ;

- (d) The grant of scholarship to students with disabilities ;
 - (e) Setting up of appropriate for the redressal of grievances of parents regarding the placement their children with disabilities.
 - (f) Suitable modification in the examination system to eliminate purely mathematical questions for the benefit of blind students and students with low vision ;
 - (g) Restructuring of curriculum for the benefit of children with disabilities ;
 - (h) Restructuring the curriculum for the benefit of students with hearing impairment to facilitate them to take only one language as part of their curriculum.
6. All educational institutions shall provide or cause to be provided amanuensis to blind students and students with low vision.

School Education for Handicapped

The first attempt at education handicapped children was made in the last two decades of the nineteenth century with the establishment of the first school for the hearing impaired at Bombay in 1885. Followed by the first school for the visually impaired at Amritsar in 1887. Growth of schools for the handicapped in the sixty years until the advent of independence was extremely slow and sporadic. By 1947 India had just 32 school for the blind. The number rose to 170 in 1980. Now there are 243 schools for the visually impaired in the country. Prior to independence there were only eight codes available in the country but Bharati Braille has replaced all other codes now. Thirteen Braille presses are available in the country.

Conclusion

The number of schools for the hearing impaired was only 35 in 1947 but had risen to 180 by 1980. The present figure of schools for the hearing impaired is about 478 as per the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) directory of which 97 are secondary schools. The largest number are in the state of Maharashtra (139 schools).

Schools for the mentally retarded were just three in 1947, but rose to 200 by 1980 and at present there are 600 schools for mentally retarded children. The first school for the cerebral palsied was started in 1973. There are 12 schools run for the cerebral palsied at present, but no facility is yet available for autistic children. As regards the orthopaedically handicapped most of them go to ordinary schools.

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