

## **A history of national education policies and education for disabled in India**

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While thinking about the Indian education system, two factors are mainly to be considered, one is the traditional Indian Gurukul system and another is Thomas Macaulay's views on education that existed at the beginning of the British rule, but in both these systems there is no simple consideration of disabled education. Although some archaeologists have claimed that the remains of toys suitable for children with disabilities have been found around 2000 years ago, there is no solid evidence for this. Alternatively, it is inevitable to assume that Indian education for the disabled began with the efforts of Christian missions at the end of the 19th century. It is true that the process of emergence of disability education in India is started mainly outside of India in the western world. Historical, structural, religious, social, cultural, political and regional factors have influenced Indian education for the disabled. After a long struggle, India break out of colonial rule in 1947. After the independence constitution of our country came into existence in the year 1950, attention was paid to the integrated education of the disabled like general education. It is significant that the attention towards disabled education started when the entire process of Indian democracy was in its infancy. Angela Kohma says, "The education system of this country developed under the control of imperialists for hundreds of years, it is certainly commendable that in just 62 years after independence, such spectacular progress has been made in the formulation of policies regarding integrated education for the disabled, but the reality of the flaws in their implementation is quite the opposite. ."<sup>1</sup>

If we look at the history of disabled education, it seems that there have been some basic changes in the education system according to the chronological order; this education was given mainly in three ways. In the first phase, education was imparted through special schools. "Students with special needs are taught according to their disabilities through specific teaching methods, in a controlled environment, with the help of trained teachers, using specific techniques, that education plan is called special education system. Under this system special school are established like special schools for the blind, special schools for the deaf, special schools for the mentally retarded etc. are provided to the disabled students. For example at present there are about 550 special schools in Maharashtra."<sup>2</sup> This education system is more suitable for disabled people with severe disabilities. It has two types of schools namely residential and non-residential. Disability education has started through this education system and it continues till now.

The second phase is integrated education for the disabled. "In this education system, children with disabilities are educated by starting a special unit in a school for normal children. For them there is a special teaching techniques, provision and plan as per the need of students by

specially trained teachers. A unit is for eight to ten students with disabilities of one or more types. Thus there are a total of 193 such units in schools in Maharashtra.”<sup>3</sup> This scheme was started from the year 1974 and it was operational till the year 2010.

The third and currently prevalent phase is disability inclusive education. “In this education system all disabled children with mild to moderate disabilities includes in regular schools near their homes. Keeping in mind the special needs of children, guidance is sought from experts when necessary. To make this system successful, By training general teachers, parents, public representatives and other elements of the society with their cooperation, this system envisages providing education to the disabled along with the normal children.”<sup>4</sup> Inclusive Education has been an integral part of the Government of India's ‘Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan’ and has been prioritized since 2002. This education system is considered as modern and progressive. Education through special schools, disability integrated education and disability inclusive education are three education systems that are embedded in the history of disability education in Maharashtra. It is elaborated further.

The first attempts at education of the disabled in India began in the last two decades of the 19th century. It was generally initiated by Western missionary institutions. “The first school for the deaf in the country and in Maharashtra was started in the year 1885 in Mumbai under the name ‘Bombay Institution for the Deaf and Mute, Majgaon, Mumbai’. This was the beginning of disability education in India. Another school for the deaf was started in Calcutta in 1893 named ‘Calcutta school for Deaf and Dumb. ‘Over the next sixty years, the progress in expansion of disability education remained very slow. By 1947, the number of schools for deaf children was only 35 in country. The number of school reached up to 52 in 1960. In the year 1960, a total of 3000 students were studying in these schools. In these school handicrafts and general elementary education should be imparted to the children only orally. Most of these schools were run by NGOs. In 1953, the Government of India appointed a special committee to study the problems of the deaf. As per the recommendation of this committee, the Central Government established the National Advisory Board for Education of the Handicapped in the same year.

The main objective of this board was to provide guidance and advice on education, training to the non-governmental organization for the welfare of four types of disabilities namely blind, deaf, physically handicapped and mentally retarded. In 1948, there were only two Deaf Education Training Centres in the country at Calcutta and Lucknow. In the year 1935, some teachers came together with the aim of encouraging the education of deaf children. The All India Teachers Association of the Deaf and dumb was formed there, this thing is worth mentioning.”<sup>5</sup>

As compared to western countries blind education in India started 100 years late like general education, The reason for this is found in things like blind outlook of the Indian society like orthodoxy, backwardness, superstition, religious naivety, caste system, joint family system, influence of Karmaphal theory etc. At the end of the 19th century, this situation gradually began to change. Due to industrial development and social reform movements, the caste system was

broken down, making it imperative for the blind to become self-reliant for their livelihood. As in other areas, Christian missionaries began to pay attention to the plight of the blind. "Miss Annie Sharp', a Christian missionary woman Started India's first blind school in Amritsar, Punjab in A.D. 1887."<sup>6</sup> In the year 1903, this school was shifted to Deharadun. In gratitude to the founder, this school was named as 'Sharp Memorial Blind School'. Today 100 girls are taking education and training in this school. "Another school was started by a missionary woman, Ms. Annie Alsquith. In 1888 at Palamkota near Kanyakumari. It is known as the largest blind school in India. In the year 1895 in Ahmadabad, Dr. Neelkanthroy Dayabhai Chhatrapati, a blind missionary, has started a school. In the year 1897, Lal Bihari Shah has started a school for the blind in Calcutta. SPG mission started a school in Ranchi Bihar in 1898. In the year 1900, the American Marathi Mission started a school in Mumbai."<sup>7</sup> This is the first school for the blind in Mumbai region. Thus, at the end of the 19th century, 5 schools for the blind were started in India. "In the 20th century, the development of blind education, like general education, gained momentum. At the time of independence in the year 1947, the number of blind schools in India was 34."<sup>8</sup> As Norman Cousins says, "In India around 1925 there were not many educational institutions for the blind and the number of teachers was also limited. Blind people of different ages and diverse social backgrounds were congregated in these educational institutions to form semi-hospitals."<sup>9</sup> So it can be said that blind education only started in the pre-independence era. This is because India was under slavery and the British government did not pay any attention to the problems of the blind. Whatever little was done; it was done by charitable and voluntary institutions. After independence, the government started to pay attention to the issues of the disabled as a whole. "In 1960, the number of educational institutions increased up to 90. About 3000 students and adults started receiving education and training there."<sup>10</sup>

Compared to other disabilities, there was very little work done for mentally retarded children in the pre-independence period. By 1947, only three schools for mentally retarded children had been established. This thing can be called more regrettable. "Jai Vakil Foundation, the first institution of its kind, was started in Mumbai in the year 1944. This organization is committed to providing training and rehabilitation to mentally retarded and self-absorbed children (Autism). The institution has therapy centre for children aged one to six years and a special school for children aged six to eighteen years. Children above the age of eighteen years are trained in Vocational Training Centres. Pandit Nehru has also visited this school. 'Dina Vakil', a daughter of Mrs. Jai Vakil, was affected by Down syndrome. She started India's first institution for to mentally retarded and self-absorbed children (Autism), Along with her daughter five more boys and girls were admitted there. At that time there were also no trained teachers available to teach such special children. Then this institute started 'Mind College of Special Education' and provided trainers. Tehmish Shroff worked hard for this institution from the beginning. At present, the CEO of this organization."<sup>11</sup>

Before the year 1914, the problem of orthopaedic handicapped was completely ignored in India. The severity of this issue and the need to work on it was expressed for the first time during

the First World War. Dr. Kini is considered the father of rehabilitation of orthopaedic handicapped in India. Till the year 1947, no institution or organization came into existence which paid scientific attention to the aspects of medical treatment, education and rehabilitation of people with physical disabilities. The concept of rehabilitation of physically handicapped came to India in real sense during the Second World War. A rehabilitation department was started during this period to rehabilitate the war displaced people. Army started Occupational Therapy Center and Limb Making Center at Khadki, Pune. For that some physiotherapists were imported from England. Within two years of the end of the war, the army closed the hospital and the special facility. Society for the Rehabilitation of Crippled Children, Bombay was established in the year 1947. Later some big hospitals in India started independent physiotherapy departments. For example K.E.M. Hospital Bombay started the 'School of Physiotherapy' and 'School of Occupational Therapy' departments.”<sup>12</sup>

After the introduction of various services for blind and deaf persons in India, the problem of orthopedics started to be addressed somewhat late. At that time, people with paralysis and diseases related to the nervous system and muscles were included in the concept of osteopathy. However, people suffering from epidemics were not included in this concept. Later, people suffering from epidemic diseases were considered as a separate disabled category.

### **The status of disability welfare at the time of creation of Maharashtra state:-**

The status of disability welfare at the time of creation of Maharashtra state is as follows “There were 07 government special schools and 32 private special schools for the disabled in the old Bombay state. In the year 1958-59, about 1129 students were studying in these schools. In the year 1959-60, the same number increased up to 2082. Out of these total 39 schools, 18 were for the blind, 15 for the deaf, 3 for the mentally retarded and 3 for the physically handicapped. Out of the 7 government schools, 4 were blind schools and 3 were deaf and dumb schools. All remaining schools in the state were run by private institutions.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Nature of education:-**

Most of the above mentioned schools generally provide up to primary school education. Few children were had the same opportunities for secondary and higher education as other children. Apart from studies, these schools also had arrangements for teaching some arts, crafts, vocational and industry education. The main reason for this arrangement is the perception of the general public and the school authorities was that after school education these children are not able to survive without any of these skills. Therefore, as an integral part of school education, vocational and industry education was arranged through these schools. Children's inclination or interest was not so important part of the education. After creation of state of Maharashtra, lot of progress has been made. Instead of relying only on music and orchestra, blind schools are also starting experiments like chalk making, weaving, book binding, agriculture etc.

## **Sergeant's Report.1944:-**

In 1944, the Central Advisory Board on Education, under the chairmanship of John Sergeant, the then Chief Adviser on Education to the Government of India, submitted a report to the Government. This report is known as 'Sergeant's Report'. The report made important recommendations for overall educational development of India. He reviewed the ongoing development work for the disabled in India and made his observations. According to him, "Government of India does not seem to have made any special efforts for the education of the disabled. Whatever positive has happened in the education of the disabled so far, the credit goes to private and voluntary organizations. Advanced countries have made great progress in the education of the handicapped, and we have much to do by utilizing their experience."<sup>14</sup> The Central Advisory Board on Education in 1936 suggested that the provincial governments should not neglect the education of the handicapped. He reminds us of this.

This report became a milestone in the policy of inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Special schools should be established for the disabled, but only the needy children should be admitted to the special schools keeping in mind the degree of disability. Sergeant's report suggested two specific things, one is that the education of the disabled should be an integral part of the integrated national education system and should be controlled by the Union Ministry of Education, and the other is that ten percent of the total expenditure on primary and secondary education should be spent on the education of the disabled. . It is meaningful that the future plan of disabled education was created according to this policy. Special schools for the disabled should be created and controlled by the Ministry of Social Welfare, these schools should not come under the education department. This important suggestion was in this report. Briefly, the Sergeant Report outlined disability education in India.

## **Mudaliar Commission, 1952:-**

With the aim of bringing about a positive change in the entire education system of the country, Government of India was established Secondary Education Commission under the chairmanship of a chancellor of University of Madras. Dr.A Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar. This commission is known as 'Mudaliar Commission'. "This commission recommended that all types of disabled people should be educated in special schools such as blind, deaf and dumb etc. A large number of special schools should be established for this purpose, the government should give subsidy to the schools established by voluntary organizations, etc."<sup>15</sup> As this was the first commission in independent India, its recommendations seem to have influenced the policy aspects of education for the disabled.

## **Philosophy of education at 60s decade:-**

One was the time the meaning of disabled education was limited to teaching, reading, writing, addition and subtraction. But after independence, education has acquired the meaning of life. Education came to be used for the overall development of children and to make them self-respecting and powerful in life. Sharachchandra Gokhale, then social welfare officer of

Maharashtra says, "The number of children registered in Mumbai's disabled children's hospital in the last ten years (1960 to 1970) is about 15,000. These statistics of a single hospital, the question of how big the statistics of Maharashtra will be is best left to imagination. These disabled children of today are the future citizens of tomorrow, what are we going to give for their lives? A life of shameful dependence on mercy and begging or an opportunity to become productive in society through education? Mercy or opportunity to work? Society and government should fearlessly answer this question. Through proper education, these children will become self-reliant tomorrow, will start earning, and will contribute to the economic development of the country. Whatever the disability, as long as a person's mind is healthy, there is room for rehabilitation. How to convert the labour power and intellectual power of the disabled person into the economic power of the country should be considered urgently. People with disabilities are citizens of the country like others. Just setting up hospitals and schools and keeping them separate will not do. So efforts should be made to include those people in the river of life. They should get the facilities, concessions, pleasures that others get."<sup>16</sup>Gokhale's ideas regarding the education of the blind during the formation of the state of Maharashtra are useful to understand the nature and philosophy of the education of the entire disabled.

He says, "Education and rehabilitation of the blind is a huge issue. Considering this issue in its entirety, it will be true to say that only when the mental, physical and social obstacles in the path of development of the blind are removed, the great door of education has been opened for the blind. The power of blind children is a great national treasure. It is the real duty of education to make them contribute to the chariot of Jagannath by utilizing this power in national development and for this to awaken the latent power in them. It is a great blindness to think that because children are blind, they cannot be the architects of India's future. All the penance of pedagogy, all the ingenuity of the teacher, all the ingenuity of the planners and all the skill of the administrator are at stake here. Because we want to dispel the darkness created by God with the light of effort."<sup>17</sup>

Regarding teacher training, Gokhale says, "Education and rehabilitation of each group of disabled is a matter of great skill, expertise and experience. It is a difficult task to have a trained teacher specially trained in this technique, even admitting that our experience shows that the majority of teachers working today are untrained. New teaching techniques are still unknown in many schools. Often the curriculum in these schools seems mechanical and unplanned. If we want to realize what are the real problems and needs of the disabled, we need a trained teaching staff. Due to that, it seems that the school management of special schools will remain inadequate. Taking cognizance of the seriousness of this problem, the Social Welfare Department decided to send teachers of the blind to Lucknow. In fact, this training should be facilitated in the state of Maharashtra itself. In the third five-year plan, it has been decided to establish such a training center at a convenient place in Maharashtra. To date, many teachers of the blind and deaf-mute have been trained in Dehradun and Lucknow. A one-year course for teachers of mentally retarded children is being started in Mumbai. However, education of the disabled is a separate branch of pedagogy. Keeping this in mind, there is a need for a separate educational institution

for the training of teachers and rehabilitation workers in this field. Of course, if it is not possible to undertake such a grand program due to financial reasons, then reputed educational institutes like Tata Institute of Social Sciences or Karve Institute of Social Service should undertake training and research work in this field.”<sup>18</sup> In order to create awareness about this work among general teachers, B. Ed. Education of the disabled has been considered as a separate subject in the examination. It is meaningful that Pune University was the first to implement this idea. If these statements of Gokhale are considered representative, it can be said that after 1960, a new education system and a new philosophy of the disabled education started emerging.

### **Kothari Commission, 1964:-**

The Government of India established the 'National Development and Education Commission' in 1964. Under the chairmanship of Dr. D. S. Kothari, Was the chairman of University Grants Commission. It is well known that the Kothari Commission brought about drastic changes in the Indian education system. This commission reviewed the education of the disabled in India till 1964 and brought to light the dismal state of education of the disabled. The following observations have been recorded in the Kothari Commission report-

“In 1964, there were only 115 blind schools in the country and about 5000 blind students were studying there. This number is only one percent of the total blind population. Most of the schools provide primary education and give more importance to handicrafts and music subjects. There is also a huge shortage of trained teachers. 30 to 40 teachers are trained in Dehradun every year. Most of the schools are affiliated to state governments and are run by NGOs.

There are 70 schools for deaf and dumb in our country and 4000 students are studying there. This figure is only one percent of the total deaf population. These schools provide primary education and general technical education to students. The schools are private and state government subsidized. There are 6 institutes in the country for Deaf teacher training. 50 to 60 teachers trained every year is not enough. While most orthopaedic handicapped children attend normal regular schools, about 1,000 children attend 25 special schools. There are no special problems regarding their education.

Mentally retarded students have been a largely neglected subject. There are only 27 schools for these mentally retarded children in the country. The capacity of these schools is accommodate only 2000 students. There are 2 teacher training centers for mentally challenged and 20 teachers are trained annually. This situation is very alarming. What has happened so far is certainly not satisfactory, the education of the handicapped should be urgently addressed.”<sup>19</sup> The commission also expressed this regret. The Commission made some important suggestions for the development of education of the disabled. The special feature of the Kothari Commission was that it considered the education of the disabled as an integral part of India's integrated education system. The commission set the targets of providing basic education facilities to at least ten percent of the total disabled.

Giving priority to the recommendations made by the Kothari Commission, the Government of India implemented the following special programmes. Maharashtra State has a big share in it. "According to the National Education Commission report of 1964, only 5 percent of the blind, deaf, mentally retarded children were accommodated in special schools. All these schools are in the city. Majority of disabled children in rural areas are deprived of education. Only 7000 students with disabilities are learning even in integrated mode of education."<sup>20</sup> While framing the National Education Policy 1968, the recommendations made by the Kothari Commission were accepted in recognition of the above fact.

Education system for the disabled should be expanded more. Physically and mentally handicapped should be accommodated in regular schools and for this 'Integrated Education Program' should be undertaken etc. important aspects were included in this policy. Further, in the year 1974, the Union Ministry of Social Welfare introduced the 'Disabled Integrated Education Scheme', which is significant."<sup>21</sup> Today, disability integrated education is considered a progressive education system at the global level. Further, the concept of disability inclusive education emerged from this. Of course it also has some global context.

### **National Education Policy, 1986:-**

The 'National Education Policy 1986' is considered as a landmark step in the history of Indian education system. 'Education for Equality' has been set as the basic principle of this policy. By considering education in the broader context of social equality, the policy seeks to mainstream all marginalized groups, including the disabled. Section 4.9 of this policy clearly focuses on the needs of children with disabilities. All persons with disabilities have the same basic human rights as other citizens. It is important that they develop their personality holistically. If they are educated in a universal and open environment rather than in a protected environment, it will be in the interest of the society and also of the disabled and this education will enable the disabled to join the mainstream of the society and lead an independent life. This is what this policy intends. "The objective of education of the handicapped was set as to bring the physically and mentally handicapped children together as a homogeneous unit of the society, to bring up the handicapped children in a normal manner and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. This policy gave the disabled the basic right to education."<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that the commitment to reach the disabled in rural areas was expressed.

"The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Integrated Education of Handicapped Children was announced in the year 1974 by the Union Ministry of Welfare. It can be said that it was the real beginning of the measures to be taken by the Government of India in relation to the integrated education of children with special needs. In 1982, the scheme was transferred to the Education Department of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This scheme was renewed in the year 1992. The scheme was intended to provide children with disabilities an opportunity to study in mainstream schools and facilitate their retention in school. If a child is already studying in special schools, this scheme provides for sending such children to general schools after acquiring functional level communication and daily living skills. According to this

scheme, one special teacher for every eight disabled children and one resource center for every ten schools was established. In this scheme, substantial financial provisions have been made for teachers' salary, students' food and lodging allowances, reader's allowance, transport allowance, patronage allowance, cost of materials, cost of uniforms, cost of removing architectural barriers, material room, etc. 15,000 schools and 65,000 students in 26 states were covered under this scheme."<sup>23</sup> "Maharashtra state adopted this scheme from the academic year 1978-79. The scheme was implemented in all the seven educational divisions of the state namely Pune, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Nashik, Kolhapur, Nagpur and Amravati. In the first year, under this scheme, 460 students from blind, deaf, physically disabled and mentally retarded categories were admitted to normal schools."<sup>24</sup> In fact, some schools had already successfully experimented with integrated education at their respective levels. These schools were given priority. According to Sharma, "There were three major problems in the success of the integrated education scheme 1) Lack of specially trained teachers 2) Lack of understanding of the problem of the disabled among the general school teachers 3) Lack of necessary material, these factors limited the success of the scheme."<sup>25</sup> "Integrated Education Project for Handicapped" came into existence in 1987. It was a joint project of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and UNICEF. The project was implemented in states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Mizoram and some Union Territories like Delhi as well as Baroda Municipal Corporation etc. For this, one administrative group was selected from each of these states. 6000 children with special needs from a total of ten such groups were brought together in general schools."<sup>26</sup> This program was implemented by providing effective teacher training considering the group as more important than the individual. During this activity, the rate of absenteeism of children with disabilities was found to be less than that of normal children and it was also observed that the qualitative growth was more than before. It was also observed that the cost of educating children in a general school is very less compared to the cost of setting up special schools. As this project achieved some success, it was further expanded under the 'District Primary Education Programme'. "Children who are initially admitted to special schools to acquire special skills in the curriculum, should also be sent to general schools to acquire daily life education, communication skills and basic academic abilities."<sup>27</sup> This action program aimed at this policy.

### **Prof. Ram Meghe Commission, 1992:-**

Pursuant to the implementation of National Action Program Plan, 1992 in Maharashtra Primary Education Commission was established under the chairmanship of Prof. Ram Meghe. Commission made an extensive study of the problems of the disabled in Maharashtra and recorded its observations on the education of the disabled. In 1990, UNESCO held a World Conference on "Education for All" in Thailand, which announced a manifesto for the education of marginalized groups around the world, from which the concept of disability inclusive education emerged again."<sup>28</sup> After that, India also started a progressive movement towards the education of the disabled. Although this conference had no direct influence on the Indian constitutional process but it is notable that education of the disabled was placed within the

framework of constitutional rights during the same decade. The Action Plan was further strengthened by the Act “Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992”.<sup>29</sup> Previous experience had shown that there was no mechanism in place to standardize and determine the quality of training of special educators and other rehabilitation professions in the country. Therefore, the Parliament of India passed the Rehabilitation Council Act in 1992 to establish a constitutional mechanism to assess and standardize training courses in 16 professional cadres required in the field of special education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. This Act was amended in the year 2000. Accordingly, the Rehabilitation Council of India was entrusted with the responsibility of training special teachers as well as instrumental teachers who could provide supplementary services to children with special needs in ordinary schools.

“Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995”<sup>30</sup> is one of the most notable law in the history of special education in India. Its nature is comprehensive and seven disabilities such as blindness, Low vision, hearing impairment, speech impairment, mental retardation, mental illness, leprosy cured, Locomotor disability have been considered in this act. Chapter Five (Section 26) of this Act deals with education and it specifies the matters to be done by the State and local authorities. In the year 1999, the Parliament of India passed “**The National Trust for welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999.**”<sup>31</sup> and it provides protection to educational institutions off multiple disabilities. Although this Act is not directly related to the education of children with special needs, one of the objectives of this Act has been helpful in creating a supportive environment for education, namely- “Encouraging the development of functional skills among persons with disabilities by creating a barrier-free environment. To promote groups that are willing to help persons with disabilities, to contribute to the initiation of programs that encourage the creation of an open environment for the participation of persons with disabilities.” This Act recognized the right to education of the marginalized disabled category as a whole.

### **86<sup>th</sup> Amendment in the constitution, 2002:-**

The Government of India is committed to making primary education available to all. In order to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years, Parliament passed the 86th Amendment in the year 2002 by inserting Article 21A under the Fundamental Rights in Part-III of the Constitution. That clause reads as follows- "The State shall by law provide for free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 and 14."<sup>32</sup> This constitutional amendment made the way for the education of disabled more accessible.

### **National School Education Curriculum framework, 2000:-**

“The National School Education Curriculum was prepared in the year 2000. It created a program for a group of children with special educational needs.”<sup>33</sup> This framework changed the conventional perception of the concept of disability education. Until now, there was a general concept of disability education as the education of blind, deaf, mentally retarded

orthopaedic handicap children and children with two or more types of disabilities. Now this perspective has changed and the education of the disabled has come to be considered as the education of children with special educational needs. It is not just a verbal change but a representative expression of changed social perceptions.

### **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan:-**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the most recent step taken by the central government to make primary education accessible to all, is a response to the demand for quality basic education everywhere in the country. It will not be possible to provide primary education to all without provision for admission of children with special needs to regular schools for regular education, therefore education of children with special needs has been included as an essential part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan."Maharashtra government has approved the implementation of all education campaign programs in the state since 2002 in order to fulfil the objectives prescribed by the central government under the all education campaign by universalizing primary education in the state."<sup>34</sup> It is expected in this campaign that every student should be given the opportunity of education in suitable environment according to the type of disability. A specific financial provision is made for each student. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan focuses on enrolling disabled children in normal schools. For this, the following activities are planned- "Survey of disabled children, diagnosis of disability, medical treatment and certificate of disability, functional assessment, supply of tools and equipment, proper arrangement of education, all-level training for teachers, guidance services of special teachers, individual education plan for each child, disabled girls Special emphasis on education, removal of physical barriers, assistance to NGOs and special schools, research and evaluation, counselling of parents of children with severe disabilities, public awareness activities, production and translation of training materials, monitoring and evaluation"<sup>35</sup> etc. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has adopted a zero denial policy.

### **Rights to persons with disability act, 2016:-**

Government of India has pass act in 2016 known as Rights to persons with disability act 2016, The act provide broader perspective to ward disability than earlier.21 disabilities identified under RPWD Act 2016 and their causes, examples, symptoms, treatment etc. There are innumerable types of disabilities that can affect a human being. Some of these conditions are more common than others. Some of the types of disabilities are recognized by the government in order to provide disability benefits to the needy ones. Often people wonder what the disabling conditions that are more prevalent are. Here is the list of 21 disabilities that have been identified under the RPWD Act 2016 of India. 21 TYPES OF DISABILITIES are as follow . "1. Blindness 2. Low-vision 3. Leprosy Cured persons 4. Hearing Impairment 5. Locomotor Disability 6. Dwarfism 7. Intellectual Disability 8. Mental Illness 9. Autism Spectrum Disorder 10. Cerebral Palsy 11. Muscular Dystrophy 12. Chronic Neurological conditions 13. Specific Learning Disabilities 14. Multiple Sclerosis 15. Speech and Language disability 16. Thalassemia 17. Hemophilia 18. Sickle cell disease 19. Multiple Disabilities including deaf-blindness 20. Acid Attack victims 21. Parkinson's disease."<sup>36</sup> this act make broader definition of disability education.

## **New education policy, 2020:-**

Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot has taken press conference and tweets about role of NEP 2020 for children with disabilities. Some aspects are as below “Barrier-free access to education for all children with disability “Is the latest provision made in the NEW EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020, approved by the union cabinet of India, in July this year. This provision is done by the Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot. Education Policy in India was first formed in 1986 and was last modified in the year 1992. “Minister Gehlot tweeted some of the major points of the (NEP) on which new reforms will be based. These modifications are made considering children with disabilities and those from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds. The major focus in executing this new rule will be primarily on two points.

1. Imparting knowledge and know how to teaching faculties on how to teach children with specific disabilities.
2. To provide barrier-free education to children with disability as per the RPWD Act 2016.

In order to facilitate this new addition made in the NEP, assistive devices, appropriate technology-based tools and language-appropriate teaching-learning materials will be made available. Also, high-quality modules to teach Indian Sign Language, and to teach other basic subjects using Indian Sign Language will be developed for NIOS. Considering that the children with benchmark disabilities shall have the choice of regular or special schooling as per the RPWD Act 2016, resource centers along with special teachers and trainers will be made available to cater the various rehabilitation and educational needs of students with severe or multiple disabilities. Under the NEP 2020, school and school premises would be helped by providing resources to include children with disability and to appoint special teachers who are trained to teach such students. Funds will be given to states, to make necessary addition and changes for female and transgender students (such as, making of toilets, cleanliness, bicycles and subjected cash transfers). Arman Ali, executive director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) said that they are happy with the provisions made in NEP 2020. He said NCPEDP has been urging to include students with disability in regular schooling since 2018. Further he said that it’s good to see that the new provisions are made in NEP include most of the points mentioned by them and most importantly it is structured in consideration with the RPWD ACT. Though much work is left to be done, especially in courses of higher studies. Further he said that it’s really a great welcoming move to see efforts are being made to make education accessible to all equally and let’s just hope it is well executed. Shameer Rishad, convener of disability rights NGO Javed Abidi Foundation said that the disability sector will keep an eye on the execution and implementation of the new provision. Rishad said long since time and often various policies are being made, but only the policies that are implemented well benefits the society. The NEP 2020 seems promising and have taken into consideration various main points of the RPWD ACT 2016.<sup>37</sup>

## **Conclusion:-**

The education system of this country developed under the control of imperialists for hundreds of years, it is certainly commendable that in just few years after independence, such spectacular progress has been made in the formulation of policies for integrated and inclusive

education for the disabled, but the reality of the flaws in their implementation is quite the opposite. As John F. Kennedy said, "The trauma of fate may kill children, but the carelessness of man should never kill children." These considerations become more important in the context of disability education. Although today it is generally accepted that the foundation of personality is laid in childhood, the problem of providing proper education for the development of the personality of disabled children continues even in the twenty-first century. Education of such children is not considered in rural areas. Even in the city, most of the people do not know that there are special schools that provide education to such children and schools that provide general integrated education. The backwardness of the masses, illiteracy, poverty, wrong religious ideas, ignorance about medical treatment, superstition, hinder the educational empowerment of these children. This has been a fact of the last century.

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