



## Barriers of Empowerment of persons with Disabilities - Is Inclusive Education is an Answer? - A Critical Analysis.

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### ABSTRACT

People with disabilities should have the same rights like other citizens in society. People with disability always have limited access to both education and skill training. The issues of education, empowerment of disabled people generally ignored in development agendas and treated as welfare rather than human rights. Barrier of learning is nothing but anything that prevents a learner from full engagement of the learning process. Learning barriers also prevent to achieve the learning goals and prevent to involve in mainstreaming of learning process. According to the RTE Act 2009 every child has the right to free and compulsory education between the ages of 6 to 14 years. Learning barrier can be caused by several factors like external and internal barrier, like emotional barrier, motivational barrier and personal barrier. Inclusive education helps to bring all types of learners including students with disability to access and gain equal opportunity for learning. Breaking the barriers for inclusion of disabled people in national development program helps to get quality education participate in mainstreaming society and also aware about their fundamental human rights. Better social inclusion, effective interventions always help to empowerment of person with disabilities. So, the importance of inclusive education now increases day by day in our education system. This paper discusses the types of barriers preventing empowerment and learning of people with disabilities and importance, needs of inclusive education to remove the barriers and also the role of the Government as well as society. The researcher has collected data from different journals, website, articles and e-books, published papers etc.

**Keywords-** inclusive education, disability, right to education act, mainstreaming.

### INTRODUCTION

Barriers to the empowerment of persons with disabilities are nothing but anything that prevents a learner from full engagement in the society. Disability is defined as a deviation from a person's average that exceeds the limits of physical and mental capacity and results in serious and significant difficulties in functional capacity or social adjustment.

Under the Disabilities Rights Act, 2016

**"Person with disability"** means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment interacting with barriers, hinders that prevent them from participating fully and effectively in society with others.

**"Person with benchmark disability"** means a person who has 40 % or more of a specified disability where specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms and includes a person with disability where specified disability has been defined in measurable terms, as certified by the certification body.

The 21 disabilities covered are as follows.

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

Proper education and quality education help to fraught many challenges and helps in employment. If a person or group of people affected by learning barriers cannot achieve their learning goals, they gradually become frustrated and unwilling to mainstream the learning process. Learning can be caused by various factors. It may be categorized as external and internal and sometimes both.

According to the Right of Children for Free and compulsory education 2009, every child between the ages of 6 to 14 years has the right to free and compulsory education as stated in the 86th Constitution Amendment act via article 21A. So, all types of learners should come for learning, including children with disabilities and there should be no discrimination of gender, language learning ability, physical ability, property, race, and ethnicity. In 2009, disabilities

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### **Objectives:**

- To study the types of barriers to learning affecting empowerment.
- To study inclusive education
- To study the importance and needs of inclusive education to remove the barriers to empowerment
- To study the present barriers to implementing inclusive education.
- To study the role of the government of India in implementing inclusive education
- To study the role of local bodies in implementing inclusive education

So how to overcome these learning barriers and how to make availability of education to all types of learners to empower them is now and emerging questions since few years.

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### **Methodology**

This paper is based on the data collected from different secondary sources, like websites, journal articles, eBooks, reports, articles published in local papers, etc. The researcher intended to briefly discuss barriers to learning and how inclusive education helps to empower disabled persons, while also focusing on the importance of inclusive education to overcome search barriers.

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### **What is the empowerment of persons with disabilities?**

Persons with disabilities (PwDs) or Divyangjan are an important social group who are truly not provided the right opportunities, skills and platforms to showcase their talent and productive potential. Unfortunately, the assumption that PwDs cannot make meaningful contributions to our economy's growth it is incorrect. People with disabilities have great potential to contribute significantly to the economy but they need the skills that are best for them. It is

an insincerity that PwDs, who represent two per cent of the total population, are not allowed to be a part of mainstream communications, engagement and empowerment through inclusion.

*“Empowerment can be described as a process that promotes power in people for use in their own lives, communities, and society by acting on issues they define as important”.* (Pages & Czuba, 1999). Empowerment is the process of becoming more secure and preparing to make vital decisions and complete the tasks. It helps people take decisions and resolve problems as they occur in life. Empowerment of persons with disabilities is indispensable, to enable individuals and their families to support the growth and development of persons with disabilities and contribute to society. Empowerment makes disabled people more practical members of the community and also gives them a positive approach.

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### **What are learning barriers, and what types of learning barriers are there?**

The barrier to learning is anything preventing a learner from full engagement in the learning process. It may affect a person or a group of people, resulting in frustration or an unwillingness to achieve their learning goals.

A learning barrier can be caused by various factors. These are purely external factors like a tight schedule, too much work, a lack of availability of materials and technology, and so on. The second is internal; it includes people's prior experience, emotions, or mindset. Sometimes both internal and external factors act as barriers to learning, with, for example, the fear of failure due to an unsupportive environment, a lack of coping skills, pressure, or the lack of knowledge needed for a particular task.

So to engage the learners in the learning process, the barriers should be eliminated as much as possible so that nothing could stop the learners from learning.

#### ***External barriers:***

A tight schedule of school hours sometimes prevents poor and disadvantaged groups of learners from coming to school. Pressure from learning beyond the abilities of the learners and disinterest among the learners sometimes increase the achievement gap. Lack of structure in courses, training of teachers, and learning materials also creates problems in the learning process. The architectural barriers of the institute are also a major issue for physically challenged students.

#### ***Internal barrier***

##### **Emotional barrier**

This type of barrier generally makes the learners feel deeply uncomfortable, which sabotages the learning process. Learners' experiences with fear, doubt, and the feeling that they are not good enough sometimes create barriers to learning. The emotional barriers also include resistance to change, fear of failure, and lack of focus.

#### ***Motivational barrier:***

Learning comes stage by stage, and no stage should be omitted. So a lack of previous knowledge sometimes creates a barrier for learners. Lack of purpose and goals, boredom, and social isolation can have a big effect on motivation, which ultimately affects learning.

##### **Personal barrier:**

This type of learning barrier is closely related to a person's particular characteristics. Sometimes the attitude of the teacher to include disadvantaged groups with lower learning potential in mainstream educational processes makes learning more difficult for such categories of learners. Different learner's learning styles and languages also create barriers to learning.

Impaired learners make the learning process more challenging. Such conditions may include visual, hearing, and learning disabilities like dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, etc. Learners who are deaf or blind, have cerebral palsy or have chronic and acute health problems all face significant challenges to the learning process.

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### **Institution related barriers**

Sometimes student with disability and disadvantage group aspiring to get admitted themselves in inclusive school faced challenges to secure admission. Institute sometimes impose several criteria for admission of such student like parents' willingness to take on extra responsibility and extra fees in private school.

Non availability of schools near the residence and lack of transportation facility makes accessibility problem of parents become major to the disabled student.

Buildings and infrastructure if not been constructed disable friendly, student with special need face problems to access such places and faces barriers. Classroom size and presents of many students in classroom sometime creates problem to teachers to deal with the so many students with diversity.

Curriculum is most important to achieve the goal of learning in our country. There is severe lack of proper curriculum to meet the needs of wide ranges of different learners. In many cases student with disability is compelled to follow the normal curriculum which affect their success and is one of the major barriers of measurement of achievement of children with special needs.

Lack of proper trained teachers, lack of skill to handle the students with special needs and lack of adequate financial resources is also a big challenges and barrier of inclusion of students of diverse community.

Henry Ford said that "Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goals." If learners remain focused on their particular goals, face the fear of failure, and keep themselves away from the cause that motivated them, the favorable attitude of the instructor and institution can easily remove the barriers in the way of learning, and for this purpose, universalization of education is urgently necessary and inclusive education is the most effective way to give opportunities to all types of learners to learn and develop the skills they need to thrive.

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### **What is inclusive education?**

Literally, inclusion in education means to bring all students access and gain equal opportunity to learning and education. Here all types of students can attend and welcome by their neighborhoods school and give them the opportunity and support to learn according to their age in the regular classes this way the learners contribute and participate in all aspects of life at the school.

Inclusion in education is an approach to teaching students with disabilities. In the inclusion model, students with disabilities spend most or all of their time with people without disabilities. A society is said to be inclusive when children with disabilities attend the same school as children without disabilities and received the support they need to succeed there. All students at the school, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses in any area are part of the school community "Inclusive education means full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all respect of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy" (Loreman & Deppeler). Inclusive education ensure access to quality education for all types of students by effectively meeting their diverse needs by the respectful and supportive way and learners can participate in the education process in a common learning environment with support which can diminish and remove the everything barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion. the development and design of schools' classroom programs and activities should be modified so that every student participates together without fear and anxiety. Inclusive education generally occurs in common learning environment students with different ability students with disability different backgrounds learn together in a common learning environment. Common learning environment used for all types of the students including students with special needs. An effective common learning environment enables each student practice fully and gets opportunity to share the learning experience with their peers. it also provides a positive climate that promotes students' appropriate personal social-emotional behavior and helps to achieve academic goals. A share learning environment is an inclusive environment where lessons are designed by the teachers for student with mixed ability, giving students the opportunity to discuss with their peer group for better understanding and easily clarify the learning topic.

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### **The importance and need for inclusive education to empower the disabled**

Education always tries to improve behavior and always acts for the well-being of learners. But inclusive education is an important concept to promote education for all, and it helps to Student's confidence

Inclusive education always boosts the confidence level of students with different abilities. Traditional methods of dealing with students who are slow learners, have disabilities, or are from disadvantaged groups can always have a harmful impact on a student's self-worth. The formation of separate small groups for teaching always from the main classroom pushes the idea of stigmatization that they are different.

Improve Communication skill

Inclusion of learners from diverse communities creates the opportunity to exchange their cultural views with each other, which improves their communication skills.

-Provide a better opportunity for learning in an inclusive environment surrounded by other children.

-The expectations of the learners become higher as they become more confident that everything is possible for them, which helps them achieve their goals.

-Encourage parents to involve as a partner of the concept.

-It fosters the cultural exchange of different communities and provides the opportunity to accept individual differences.

-Learners without disabilities hold a more positive attitude and show friendly behaviour towards their peers with disabilities. They learn the responsibility of caring for one another and are motivated towards self-discovery.

-Helps teachers develop lesson plans according to the strengths and weaknesses of the students.

- Provide new members with manners, methods, and parameters for education for all without any discrimination.
- The thinking process, decision-making skills, and problem-solving skills improve with the inclusion of students from diverse backgrounds.

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### **Present barriers to implementing inclusive education in India.**

When it comes to implementing inclusive education, there are definitely some barriers. These are

- The legal assistance
- Education budget
- Property training of school staff
- Curriculum problem
- Attitudinal problem
- Admission problem
- Transportation problem
- Lack of recreational activities and sports facilities

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### **Role of government and local bodies to implement inclusive education**

After independence, the central government of India started funding education and giving grants as in aid to several institutions and universities that provide education. The contributions of the central government and state governments also increase over time. Several acts have passed from time to time to strengthen the education system of our country, like IEDC 1974, RCI 1992, the PWD Act 1999, SSA 2000, RTE 2009 and Amendment 2012, RMSA 2009, IEDSS 2013, etc.

The Parliament of India has passed the act by the 86th Amendment to the Constitution for free and compulsory elementary education in the age group 6 to 14 through inclusion known as the RTE (right to education act). So the Right to Education Act must apply to all citizens of India, both in the central government as well as the state government and other social sectors. Children from disadvantaged groups and with disabilities should attend school, and the government's primary role must be to establish inclusive schools.

Providing legal action and legislation like the RTE, PWD, and RCI Acts to ensure the smooth implementation of inclusive education throughout the country.

Provide educational resources through funds and human resources

A curriculum-design initiative should be taken by the government to design a proper curriculum that fulfils the needs of learners from disadvantaged groups and students with disabilities.

The National Education Policy 2020 also emphasizes the importance of making provisions to provide equal opportunities for quality education to children with disabilities. The alteration of NCERT textbooks for Classes I to VI into Indian Sign Language for hearing-impaired children has been completed. It is a vital program to include to deaf students in conventional education. It is certainly encouraging that the Government is taking some steps to empower Divyangjan. This helps to increase Divyangjan's credibility. This is very important to boost the skills they needs for the day. People with disabilities have talents and abilities that are sometimes superior to those of general population. Inclusive growth, development and trust must embrace the aspirations of people with disabilities.

#### ***Relationships with different organisations***

To implement inclusive education policies, the government should maintain close contact with local bodies, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and world bank.

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### **Role of private organizations and NGOs.**

- establishment of private schools that provide inclusive education
- A programme for the sharing of knowledge and skills.
- Identifying the children with disabilities and disadvantaged groups
- Keeping records of identified children

- Providing of financial resources
- Research
- Provide human resources.
- motivating parents to send their children to school, especially girls.
- Proper leadership
- Providing suitable extracurricular activities

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## Conclusion

The successes of learners are dependent on both school and community. But unfortunately, both poses barriers in the implementation of the inclusive education policy. These barriers are both external and internal in nature. an in order to simplify inclusive education there has to have an alteration in the environmental situations. It includes the physical changes in the school buildings and also increased the numbers of school. Besides this very importantly needs to change the adverse attitudes and more accountability towards learners with special needs and for these changes of policy necessary. Empowering the disabled, whether it is a physical disability or an intellectual disability, is important because everyone has their own individual identity, emotions, interests, and hobbies. So, the person is first, not the disability, and proper steps should be taken to encourage and promote their independence and inclusivity so that they can participate in society and all its activities for a good and quality life. So, the basic education, training, and employment that help empower people with disabilities through inclusive education are the only alternatives, although there are many challenges in implementation.

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