

SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN



CONFLUENCE

CONCEPT AND MEANING OF INCLUSION

July 2006
Vol. (1)

CONTENTS

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Name of the Article</i>	<i>Pg. No.</i>
	Education of Children With Special Needs	
	Concept and Meaning of Inclusion	
	Preparing Schools for Inclusion	
	Facilitating Inclusion of Children with Visual Impairment	
	Need for Training Teachers on Inclusion	
	A Report on National Workshop on Inclusive Education in SSA	
	Helping Children with Social – Emotional Problems	
	<u><i>News from the States</i></u>	
	TLM Exhibition in Orissa	
	Initiatives in the Making: Sayantana Vedi Camps in Kerala	
	Tamil Nadu Case study- NGO Experience in Inclusion	
	Is Inclusion Appropriate for all Children with Special Needs	
	An Inclusive Curriculum --- Some Tips	

Education of Children With Special Needs in SSA

Government of India is fully committed to the realization of the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) and to boost it, the Parliament has passed the Constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, making free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right for every child in the age group of 6-14 years, incorporating a new Article 21A in Part III of the Constitution, as follows:

‘The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.’

This gives a new thrust to the education of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) too, as without including them the objective of UEE may not be achieved.

Box-1: Objectives of SSA

- All children in school, Education Guarantee Centre, Alternate School, ‘Back-to-School’ camp by 2005
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010
- Universal retention by 2010.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an endeavour to provide eight years of quality education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010. Its main focus on increasing access, enrolment and retention of all children as well as improving the quality of education. The objectives of SSA (**Box-1**) can be realized only if CWSN are also included under the ambit of elementary education.

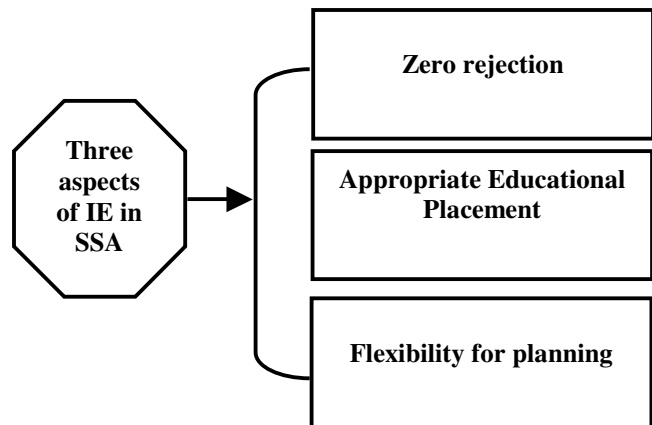
Realizing the importance of integrating CWSN in regular schools, SSA framework has made adequate provisions for educating them.

Provisions for CWSN under SSA

SSA offers the following provisions to CWSN:

- Upto Rs.1200/- per child for integration of disabled children, as per specific proposal, per year
- District plan for children with special needs will be formulated within the Rs.1200 per child norm
- Involvement of resource institutions to be encouraged.

SSA ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. Hence, it has adopted a zero rejection policy, that is, no child having special needs should be deprived of the right to education. Strengthened by the 86th Amendment to the Constitution. Elementary Education becomes a fundamental right of every child. The SSA framework, in line with the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 provides that CWSN be taught in an environment, best suited to their learning needs, which might include special schools, EGS/AIE, or even home-based education. SSA also offers each district, flexibility to plan for Inclusive Education (IE) activities, depending on the number of children identified and the resources available to effectively implement the programme.



Priorities of CWSN under SSA lay emphasis on the following for inclusive education of CWSN:

- Early detection and identification
- Functional and formal assessment
- Educational placement
- Preparation of Individualized Educational Plan
- Aids and appliances
- Teacher training
- Resource support
- Strengthening of special schools
- Community awareness and parental counseling
- Removal of architectural barriers
- Monitoring and evaluation

SSA framework provides Rs.1200 per disabled child per year. While planning the possible utilization of this amount, it should be borne in mind that the ceiling of Rs. 1200/- has to be utilized for planning of IE activities at the district level. For example, if a district has identified 1000 CWSN, the total budgetary allocation for that particular district for that year would be Rs.12.00 lakh (1200x1000). The SSA State Mission Societies would have to prepare a plan consisting of all essential activities on which the amount of Rs.12.00 lakh could be spent. A draft plan on the possible utilization of Rs.12.00 lakh is provided in Table 1.

Table - 1

Draft Sample Plan on IE - Possible Utilization of Rs. 1200/- Per Disabled Child in SSA

S. No.	Activity	Estimated Cost	Remarks
1.	Identification	Estimated Cost	Since this would be a part of micro-planning and once a year activity, no cost will be incurred on this. However, micro-planning exercise should be done by those who have had some orientation to IE so that no children are left out in the survey
2.	Functional and formal assessment	Rs.10,000/- per camp 10 camps would mean Rs. 1.00 lakh	A team of experts shall be constituted at the district level that can conduct camps to ascertain the type, nature and degree of disability at the block level.
3.	Provision of aids and appliances*	Rs.5.00 lakh per district	The first attempt should be to provide an aids and appliances through convergence. If this is not possible, then SSA funds could be utilized for this purpose.
4.	Development of training material	Rs. 1.00 lakh per district	Review of modules prepared by RCI, national institutes, IGNOU and other agencies should be undertaken and modules for different target audiences could be developed for IE
5.	Teacher training on IE- (3 kinds)		
	•General orientation		Part of 20-day in-service teacher-orientation training in SSA
	•Special orientation	As per SSA norms,	A 3-5 day training should be done for regular teachers exclusively on IE to make them understand the problems, needs and effective classroom management of children with disabilities

S. No.	Activity	Estimated Cost	Remarks
	• Long-term training for enrichment of resources	Rs.1600/- through distance mode as already determined by M.P. Bhoj Open University	With the help of RCI, long-term training of in-service teachers should be undertaken so that every child with a disability is provided the necessary support, s/he needs
6.	Awareness and community mobilisation on IE	Rs.1.00 lakh per district	This is important to make the community aware of the needs and potential of disabled children. IE should be made a part of the community leader training under SSA and if possible, a part of disabled children should be made a member of the VEC.
7.	Support from NGOs/special schools	Rs.3.00 lakh per district	Networking with good and competent NGOs could be established. Their experience could be utilized for training, assessment, providing aids and appliances, preparation of modules, TLM preparation etc.
8.	Workshops/meetings	Rs. 50,000/- per district	For district level workshop on IE.
9.	Providing home-based education	As per need	Under Innovation head of SSA.
10.	Utilization of AIE/EGS for education of CWSN	As per SSA norms	In remote habitations, where CWSN cannot come to school, EGS centres should be utilized for disabled children also.

* ***SSA funds should be used for aids and appliances only if they cannot be obtained through convergence.***

SSA State Mission Societies should develop a plan on CWSN providing details of the number of CWSN identified and enrolled, proposed activities for that year and budgetary allocation against each activity.

Concept and Meaning of Inclusion

Ms. Ruma Banerjee, Director, Seva-In-Action

A Human Rights Issue

The inclusion of pupils with special needs in ordinary schools and classrooms has gained significance in India and all over the world. It is presently a part of a large world-wide human rights movement, which calls for full inclusion of all people including those with special needs in all aspects of life. This concept of inclusive education enjoys a high profile around the world by virtue of its incorporation into the policy documents of numerous international organizations, most notably the United Nations. Standards of UN policies such as those embodied in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the 1994 UNESCO Report on the Education of children with disabilities (Salamanca Statement) besides National Education Policies(1986) and Persons With Disabilities Act (1995). All these documents emphasize and affirm the rights of all children to equal education without discrimination within the mainstream education system. The underlying philosophy of inclusive education is a human rights issue.

A recent reappraisal of the strategies of educating children with special needs in our country has helped us realize that segregated and special school approach cannot meet the needs of majority of children with special needs. Therefore, regular schools have to play a bigger role through redesigning, restructuring and modifying the objectives and strategies and curricular approaches of the general school system with an inclusive approach in order to meet the needs of children with special needs.

From Integration and Inclusion – A Paradigm Shift

It is of utmost importance to understand the evolution of Inclusion in our context. In the Indian context the conceptualization of Inclusive Education was started with The National Policy of Education (1986) which clearly stated “The objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicap with the general community as equal partners to prepare them for normal growth and enable them to be a part of the mainstream education system” NPE was transferred into action with the centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC). Though in early 80’s and 90’s the emphasis was integration, but the shift in paradigms towards Inclusive education was obvious with the implementation of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), 1996.

In order to understand Inclusive Education it is essential to know the difference between Integration and Inclusion in the context of the education of children with disabilities. In integration, children with disabilities are perceived as having problems, while in inclusion the onus is shifted to regular schools, which have to be redesigned and restructured to meet the needs of all children, including CWSN. Hence, it is a need based approach.

Concept of Inclusion



Inclusion is an approach that seeks to address the learning needs of all children youth and adults with specific focus on those who are vulnerable, marginalized and excluded. The principle of Inclusive Education was adopted at Salamanca World Conference on Special Education Needs (UNICEF 1994) and was restated at Dakar World Education Forum (UNESCO 2004).

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning community. The basic concept of Inclusive education hinges on understanding diverse needs of children in the education system, and how responsive is the education system to meet these needs of learners in a given community.

Meaning of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education means all children, young people and adults, who are disabled, non-disabled and disaffected (a learning problem arising due to social issues), being able to learn together in regular education setting form child hood to adulthood or in community education settings, with appropriate networks of support.

IE, in the Indian context, is either casual inclusion or inclusion by default or both in many rural schools. There seems to be general perception among parents “if my child is not in the neighborhood school, where else can I send her /him?”

The focus, in the concept and meaning of Inclusive Education, in our context is on the:

- Child
- Education System ; and
- Community

The Child

It is becoming more and more clear that a number of groups remain particularly vulnerable, not least children with disabilities and others who for a variety of reasons experience barriers to learning within the existing arrangements. These may include:

- Children with special needs
- Children with severe special needs requiring additional support, who may be already in schools, but might not achieve adequately; and

- Children who are not enrolled in school, but could participate, if alternative forms of schooling in their community were made available

The immense variety of regional, cultural and social contexts in which learning has to be facilitated for all learners represents a challenge, which defies a single solution. It necessitates the need for determining differing modalities for inclusion. The concern is to make schools effective for ALL children.

Looking into Diversity

Inclusive Education is more than including the child with special needs in a regular school. It also implies examining the many other exclusionary practices within society and its schools. The issue of inclusion is not concerned with how a relatively small group of pupils might learn along with others, but it lays the foundation for an approach that could lead to the transformation of the system and the society. Inclusion enables effective teaching practice for all.

Inclusive education is concerned with providing quality education, with special emphasis on all marginalized groups who experience barriers to learning and participation. They include not only those within the system who have not received the kind of education required to meet their unique learning needs, but many who are outside the system who have no access to education and require support to unfold their potentials.

Who forms this diverse group will clearly vary from time to time, from location to location. Scattered population of CWSN in a community is a major challenge for Inclusion. It is observed on an average, there are special educational CWSN who are classroom with least there may be more children who may support. Generally, disabilities are as lacking the required They are judged by appearance or their mode of communication. They are also excluded because of a lack of resources. Inclusion is a broader team involving attitudinal transformation, so that teachers and all the others involved are motivated to provide the required input and support services.



Education System - Taking Education to All

Formal and informal education, though overtly designed to facilitate learning, comprises a range of barriers to learning and participation for CWSN. These could be structural, pedagogical, temporal, conceptual, epistemological, professional, financial or attitudinal.

The barriers can be located within the learners, within the education system, within the families and within the broader social, economic and political context.

These barriers manifest themselves in different ways and only become obvious when learning breakdown occurs, when learners drop out of the system or do not join it. Equally important is to recognize taking education to all. There might be a situation when the child cannot reach the school. How does education reach this child? It is important to consider that often the indigenous solutions have come about through efforts of parents, educators, policy makers etc., while trying to demolish barriers to learning.

Role of Teachers

Teachers are the backbone for developing Inclusive practices. They can make or mar inclusion. Teachers need to develop the capacity to improve and adjust the curriculum to deliver educational programs, which are appropriate for all children. A shift in philosophy is needed from a focus on deficits to an understanding that all children are capable of learning. Rather than placing responsibility for failure on the child or the environment, the task is to specify the conditions under which diverse students can achieve optimal learning success.



The school and the classroom provide space to the teachers to carry out inclusive practices, such as class-room transactions which includes pedagogical processes and instructional material used for effective teaching, besides a friendly environment. Often in the past, schools tended to ignore the diverse needs of learners. The practice of inclusive education hinges on an understanding of this diversity among learners and planning sustainable educational provisions

responding to specific situations.

It is a reality that the existing teachers are the first generation practitioners of Inclusion, but fact is that it is a teacher only who can provide solutions to physical and learning barriers. Experience has also revealed that adequate training and support to regular teachers can enable them to provide solutions to barriers faced by CWSN at the school level. Teachers have developed teaching learning materials for CWSN and also indigenous barrier free environment.

Within the overall move towards Education for All, it is essential to ensure a concern with quality. This being the case, there will be a need to consider issues such as how can education systems, institutions and services within them, review their existing arrangements to provide adequate supportive measures to the teacher and child to make inclusive practices effective.

There will perhaps be a need to consider issues such as: “Inclusion is an idea and a belief to discuss and elaborate according to local conditions and merely not a universal model to impose.” Inclusion defies a single solution and necessitates the need for determining different modalities. The main concern is to provide education, which is effective for ALL children.

Community

Often, the education system is unable to respond to the life style of the community, barriers to learning, thus arise.

Empowering Parents

At times, parent’s and community involvement poses to be a barrier, since the parents and community members might themselves often experience marginalization due to living in poverty, or in isolated communities, or as members of ethnic and linguistic minorities. Most often, they are uneducated and feel they have nothing to contribute to the schooling process. While legislative protection is an important basis for parents involvement, it is not enough in itself. If, however, education is seen as entirely the province of professionals, then parents and the wider community have little to contribute and school-family-community partnerships are likely to be little more than token gestures, if they exist at all.

Building partnerships, therefore, depends on an acceptance that parents and the community are heterogeneous and have a real contribution to make. It is essential to understand the local issues and their needs and develop parents and community participation towards bringing about the change in the education of CWSN. Any change may be possible through empowering the communities and the parents. There are examples of developing accessibility for schools through community participation like ramps made by School Development and Management Committee (SDMC) in the State of Karnataka.

In different parts of the country, especially in the large majority of rural area, the system is not hindered by a legacy of segregation, there is more community solidarity, and over the years developed ways of utilizing existing resources. Examples of good policy and practices in inclusive education exist and excellent initiatives are taking place at the community level. There is evidence of ‘spontaneous inclusion’ in many rural areas where the issue often is that if the child is not taken in the only existing government school, then where else would the child go? Children are being educated in multi-grade classrooms, large classes, in AIE/EGS etc. A movement gaining momentum is the ‘child friendly school’, which imparts education using child-centred methods and processes by creating learning situations appropriate for each child and making learning a joyful experience. A number of experiments have already helped develop the basic fabric of child friendly inclusion, which needs to be fostered further for Education for All.

Meaning of Inclusion clearly states that it is not the children who ought to change; we have to change; it is the education that need to respond to the needs of the children and their communities.

Preparing Schools for Inclusion

Late Shri Lal Advani

Learning to Live Together

India is a pluralistic society, implying that people belonging to many religions, castes, tribes, linguistic groups, regions, (urban and rural) and areas live together. However, when India is referred as an inclusive pluralistic society, it meant that all the different people, with their peculiar emotional bonding and social interaction do learn to live together. Precisely the same meaning applies to placement of children with disabilities in regular schools. In inclusive education the general school system takes responsibilities for the education of all children regardless of their ability levels, special problems or other factors. Facilities must be provided for all children to learn to live together. This cannot happen without adequate preparation.

A Complex Panorama

This article endeavours to outline some preparatory steps that should be taken before enrolling children with disabilities in regular schools. The schools should be able to adopt a zero rejection policy. According to section 39 of the Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, all schools receiving grants from the Government are obliged to reserve at least 3% vacancies for children with disabilities. But, this may not be adequate. The precise number of children with disabilities in the country is not known. The Census 2000 says 2% of the people in the country have a significant disability. But the Census enumerators were not trained to identify CWSN really? People in rural areas do not always like disclosing information about a disabled child in the family and a very limited number of children with disabilities were enumerated. For example, learning disability, autism, cerebral palsy, and multiple disabilities have not been separately enumerated.

While it is hazardous to guess the number of children requiring special services in regular schools, going by the experience of other countries, it may be reasonable to assume that 2-5% of our child population may have a significant disability, calling for the provision of special support services in regular schools.

Need Assessment

Before a child with a disability is placed in a regular school, it is of crucial importance that s/he should be properly assessed, both formally and functionally. By formal assessment is meant, evaluating the child's physical, sensory and mental ability. Deficits, if any, should be clearly spelt out. By functional assessment, is implied the child's level of functioning in activities of daily living as well as the age appropriate academic ability.

Let us now turn our attention as to how schools have to be prepared for inclusion. The foremost step is teacher orientation. There is wide spread prejudice against children with disabilities among parents and teachers alike. Every teacher must be oriented as part of



his/her pre-service and in-service training to accept all children in the same classroom. S/he must learn how to manage the class with disabled children and how to adapt his/her teaching strategies to meet the learning needs of all children in the class. Therefore, orientation to inclusive education should be a part of all teaching diplomas, degrees and in service courses. Some children coming to regular schools may have mobility problems. They require a barrier free school building, with ramps and handrails in place of steps, adaptable toilets and level play fields and

floors, so that children with moving difficulties may be able to play or go round the building with minimum strain. The classrooms should avoid steps and provide adequate space for children using calipers, wheel chairs or other appliances. Similarly, children with hearing problems need to be seated in the front rows, the teacher facing them while speaking slowly and clearly. Still other children with seeing problems need a well lighted classroom with adequate and uniform natural lighting. Such children should be seated in the front, preferably near a window. The teacher should repeat orally while writing on the blackboard so that if the children cannot see the blackboard, they can still understand what the teacher is teaching.

There may also be children who are mentally retarded for whom the teacher must use special teaching strategies. For instance, every concept must be concretized. The language should be simple and within the range of experience of the child. Every lesson should be divided into small units, with revision undertaken very often.

Special Services

Thus, far the needs of mildly disabled children have been dealt with. Some children may have more severe problems requiring special services of a resource or an itinerant teacher to assist the regular teacher classroom. To illustrate a moderately or severely hearing-impaired child will need to be taught language in a special way, also requiring a specific therapy. The resource teacher can teach the regular classroom teacher how to do this or where necessary, can take the children out in a special room or even seat them under a tree to teach them lip-reading and other techniques of learning language. The only disadvantage in seating the hearing-impaired children in the open ground is that the ambient noise may prevent them from using their hearing aids efficiently. Therefore, in some cases, the schools may have to reserve a special room where children with disabilities can be taken for their lessons.

The same applies to visually impaired children who may need to be taught Braille, use of special mathematical frame and a special drawing device to cover the entire curriculum. For them too, a special room would be advisable.

Inclusive education cannot be effective without appropriate support services. Therefore, schools must be prepared to obtain the services of special teachers to teach special skills.

Such teachers can be obtained from nearby special schools or they can be appointed at a block or cluster level.

Many children with disabilities require special equipment for their education. The school system must identify sources of supply so that no child's education is affected for want of an assistive device. In fact, the PWD Act envisages the provision of equipment to children with special needs free of charge.

Moreover, it becomes all the more important, if the Constitutional Guarantee of Education for All children between 6-14 years of age is to be fulfilled. It will be advisable to provide equipment and other assistance to children with disabilities for good quality inclusion.

Preparing Teaching-Learning Material

It may be re-iterated that the need to concretize every concept is very crucial. This can best be done by preparing special teaching learning material (TLM). For example, if the concept of an elephant is to be taught to a blind child, it can be done by preparing a toy model of an elephant out of the locally available clay, wood or any other low cost/no cost material. Similarly, if the map of India is to be taught to a blind or a visually impaired child, an embossed map should be made available in the class.

On the same principle, the concept of an elephant is to be clarified to a deaf child. It may be useful to prepare a flash card with the picture of an elephant and the word elephant written beside. The foregoing are only a few examples of TLM that could be prepared to teach children with disabilities. An imaginative teacher can prepare a great deal of TLM to teach children with different needs. It may be advisable to prepare special illustrated textbooks to make teaching more interesting and enjoyable. This has been tried out in some States. By making books more interesting, the children focus and retain better. Concepts also become much more clear.

Using Other Resources

At least in urban schools audio-visual aids of many kinds using the computer could be used. Children with low vision can read enhanced letters on the computer screen. They can also use special lenses to read ordinary books. Books on tapes can be used both in urban and rural areas since the tape recorders can be operated on batteries, if electricity is not available.

It is most important to ensure flexibility in the examination system. For e.g. a blind child could be given the help of a writer. This could also be allowed for dyslexics, cerebral palsied children and children having problems with writing. In the case of hearing-impaired child, it is now well accepted that they should be exempted from the three-language formula and be taught only one language.

The regular teacher must also learn to counsel parents, convincing them on the value of educating children with disabilities and advising them on how to bring up children with various physical or mental problems. But the most difficult part of counseling may be to persuade peers to accept children with disabilities on a footing of equality. If help is given, it should be done unobtrusively. There should be mutual exchange of help, cooperation and support.

At present education is laying considerable stress on the development of well-rounded personality of a child. This may mean teaching many extra curricular activities. These activities may have to be adapted according to the special need of every child. The resource teacher could help in doing so.

No education programme can succeed without community participation. Therefore, the regular as well as the special teacher should make a special effort to educate the local community regarding the value and potential of developing disabled children into fully productive citizens.

Education means preparation for life. Earning a living is part of the life of every individual. In a knowledge-based developing society, newer technologies are being used for various purposes. Therefore, children with disabilities, should also receive training and at an appropriate stage they can practice and in such vocations as they can achieve the cherished goal of economic independence.



In conclusion, it will be appropriate to state that the major goal of inclusive education is to mainstream disabled children in the community and the society as a whole. Inclusive education should do all that necessary to achieve this over riding goal.

Facilitating Inclusion of Children with Visual Impairment

A.K. Mittal

Regional Director, National Institute for the Visually Handicapped,
Regional Centre, Poonamallee, Chennai

Backdrop

This article is intended not to critique the various research studies on inclusion, nor also to extol the virtues of inclusion, for, these are self-evident. Nor is the intention to enter into a debate on the relative merits of special schools and regular schools as the best means for facilitating universalisation of elementary education of children with visual impairment. The aim prima-facie, is to present in the succeeding paragraphs, a realistic portrayal of the current status of progress in the efforts to provide education for all the visually impaired children, in the backdrop of relevant historical developments and to draw pertinent lessons and to look ahead with realistic targets and strategies.

In Retrospect

Let's, then, begin from the beginning and try to look through the eyes of history how we started off and how far we have traversed.

Landmark Initiatives

The first organized effort to educate blind children dates back to 1887 when a premier institution for the blind was set up in Amritsar. The country had just another thirty-two institutions for the blind during the subsequent 60 years till the dawn of independence. The number of such institutions has now exceeded 350, during almost the same number of post-independence years.

It was in the year 1951 that a Common Braille Code for all Indian languages, Bharati Braille, came to be recognized and accepted officially. The acceptance, it might be mentioned here in passing, was preceded by a virtual 'Battle of the Dots' with over twelve different contestants hotly vying with one another for recognition of their particular Code. The first Braille Printing Press came to be established at Dehra Dun (now Uttaranchal) the next year, followed by the setting up, also in Dehra Dun, of the first Workshop for the Manufacture of Braille Appliances, a couple of years later.

The year 1960 witnessed the launch of a National Academy for the Teachers for the Blind at Palayamkottai in Kerala (South India), the first attempt for training teachers. However, this programme could not survive its teething problem and Government of India undertook, in 1963, a scheme of providing professional training primarily to in-service teachers of the blind at the regional level.

Integrated Education - Initial Stirrings

Meanwhile, in late 50s and 60s a few states, notably, Maharashtra and Gujarat, took up small experiments of enrolling blind children in regular schools, with support from resource teachers. A number of professionals in the field also received specialized training at the noted Perkins School for the Blind in the USA. They were deeply touched by the growing programmes of integrated education there. Also, several visually handicapped persons, who had, themselves, completed education in regular schools and colleges, primarily through their own individual efforts with necessary family support, entered the field of work for the blind about this time. Thus, a movement was gathering force for education of blind children in regular schools. This culminated in the first Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children initiated by the Government of India in 1974. In early 1980s, India witnessed the introduction of the first University Degree Course, M.Ed. in Integrated Education for the Blind at Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu). The course proved a precursor to the establishment of Departments of Special Education in a number of universities across the country during the subsequent years.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE) made a special mention of education for handicapped children stressing placement of all mild and moderately handicapped children in regular schools. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992) recognized that every child with disability had a right to be educated by qualified teachers and, therefore, made a provision for regulating training programs for teachers. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 also lays considerable stress on education for all children with disabilities. It calls upon Governments and local authorities to ensure that every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till 18 years of age. The Act also enjoins upon the concerned authorities to endeavour to promote 'the integration of students with disabilities in normal schools,' besides other options.

The District Primary Education Programme launched in the country also included a component of education for children with disabilities in regular schools during 1997 and now, the 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' (SSA) places special focus on interventions for children with special needs.

Present Status

The above chronological evolution of educational services to the blind reveals a long way since 1887 to date -- just 32 institutions in undivided India to the possibility of having special intervention strategies in place almost in every block within not too distant future, under SSA. Certainly, India is among the largest manufacturers of educational aids and appliances for the blind among all developing countries. India also has a number of very high-speed computerized Braille Presses capable of producing Braille at the amazing speed of 400 characters a second. The number of special institutions for the blind has gone up more than ten times after independence. There is also in place a statutory body to

lay down courses of training for professionals and to ensure maintenance of proper standards, which is something not available in many other developing countries.

The Flip-side

The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in their 58th round (July - December 2002) carried out an extensive survey of disabled persons. Among other important facts, the Survey report reveals, that the levels of illiteracy amongst the visually disabled are second highest in all disability groups, the highest being among persons with mental retardation. The Report says, despite all efforts, so far, only 23-26% of visually disabled persons are literate. This, indeed, is a most appalling and alarming a figure calling for some honest introspection and soul-searching. Also, it is believed that only about 25-30% of visually disabled children in the age-range of 6-14 years, are currently receiving education of one form or the other. The poignancy of the situation is that the quality of education received even by this limited percentage of visually impaired children is reported to be far from satisfactory. Research studies carried out in the 80's and 90's show that blind children receive very limited training in such basic compensatory skills as Braille, daily living skills, personal management, mobility etc. in many programmes of integrated education.

So, a two-fold challenge dares in the face insofar as inclusion of visually impaired children is concerned. First, an appallingly large number of children with visual impairment are outside the reach of our educational programs and, secondly, the need to make systematic and deliberate efforts to bring about significant quality-improvement and upgradation vis-à-vis addressing the crucial challenge.

Thus, before getting down to the nitty-gritty of execution and implementation, the concept of 'Inclusion' and its implications in respect of visually impaired children must be clarified in unambiguous terms.

International Meets and Mandates

The Salamanca Statement, adopted at the World Conference on Special Educational Needs: Access and Quality, organized by UNESCO in 1994, is a clarion call for including all children--disadvantaged and disabled--in regular schools, unless there were compelling reasons for doing otherwise. A school should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions, including disabled and gifted children. The Statement further explains: "Regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving Education for All. Moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and, ultimately, the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system."

Thus, inclusion does not only denotes access to schools for visually impaired and other children with disabilities, but also leads to success through improved functioning of the general school system.

It may also be noted that this country is currently observing the Extended UN--ESCAP Decade of the Disabled (2003-2012). At a high-level inter-governmental meeting held in Otsu City, Japan from 25-28 October 2002, a detailed developmental agenda, adopted for



persons with disabilities, in the region, titled “The BIWAKO Millennium Framework For Action Towards An Inclusive, Barrier-Free And Rights-Based Society For Persons With Disabilities In Asia And The Pacific”, lists important targets and action programmes. The point to note, here is that the Framework calls upon governments to actively make a paradigm shift from a charity-based approach to a rights-based programme for

the development of persons with disabilities and to move towards the human rights perspective in all matters pertaining to the educational and socio-economic development of persons with disabilities. Thus, inclusion, today, is not just an academic issue or a matter of clichés and rhetoric. It is to be viewed as a matter of basic human right for the visually impaired and other disabled children, marking an important shift from charity to legal recognition, from welfare to acceptance of legitimate rights and freedom, from exclusion to inclusion.

A couple of international mandates also deserve mention, here. The UN General Assembly through its path-breaking Resolution 48/96, on 20th December 1993, adopted the “Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons With Disabilities”. The document consists of 22 Rules. Rule 6, dealing with Education, calls upon all governments to promote education for all children with disabilities, since there can be no equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, if they do not have access to quality education that will provide them with the means for empowerment. For this purpose, the Rule stipulates that all children with disabilities should have easy access to physical environment in schools and that teaching and instructional methods and material should be readily available as per the child’s requirements (Hissa Al-Thani, Special Rapporteur on Disability, 2004).

The Draft Convention on Disability, titled “Draft Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons With Disabilities” as it stands now, has 25 Articles. Its Draft Article on Education recognizes that all member-countries shall allow education to all children with disabilities as a matter of human right. All children will have the option of choosing educational settings most suited to their specific needs and interests.

Clearly, these international documents lay great stress on inclusion, on educational services for all children with disabilities, though none of them prescribes any single option as a panacea to all problems of school-enrollment and success.

Obviously, then, inclusion to be practical must be rights-based providing also for visually impaired children an environment in the school which is Accessible; Enabling and Enriching.

Targets

As stated earlier, the ongoing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) makes provision for interventions for children with special needs. It stipulates that SSA will ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment, adopting a 'zero rejection' policy, so that no child is left out of the education system. While the intervention provisions do not indicate any time-bound targets for covering all children with disabilities, this would need to be read with the specific objectives of the scheme. Thus, one of the objectives of SSA is that all children (and this covers children with disabilities, too) complete 5 years of primary schooling by 2007 and that all children complete 8 years of elementary schooling by 2010. The Scheme also has an important objective of focusing on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on Education For All.

It would be clear from the foregoing objectives that, at least by implication, all children with disabilities complete 8 years of elementary education by the year 2010--a laudable goal, though too ambitious in the context of visually impaired children. About 70% of these children are, today, reported to be out of our education system--special or inclusive--and, as such, universalisation of 8 years of elementary education for all of them, by 2010 might be a difficult target to achieve.

Setting the Goals

The BIWAKO Millennium Framework For Action For Persons With Disabilities in the ESCAP Region lays down seven priority areas for action. One of these is: Early Detection, Early Intervention and Education. The targets set for action for this priority area also includes the visually impaired children also. Three important targets are set for this area of priority:

- At least 75% of disabled children of school age should complete a full course of primary schooling by 2010;
- All children and youth with disabilities should complete a full course of primary schooling along with the other population targeted by the Millennium Development Goal, by the year 2015;
- All infants and young children (0 to 4 years old) should have access to and receive community-based early intervention services by the year 2012.

According to this formulation, the cut-off year for ensuring universalisation of elementary education for all children with visual impairment would be 2015. Given the necessary political and administrative will, the commitment of personnel--both governmental and voluntary--judicious utilization of available resources and active mobilization of support of village Panchayat leaders and grass-root functionaries, concerted efforts should be made to turn this goal into a working reality.

Approaches and Strategies

First and foremost, there has to be a growing realization among all quarters that the approaches should be such as would ensure that the anticipated benefits of inclusion percolate down to the children with visual impairment at the block and village levels. Mere proximity of blind children with their sighted counterparts, limited as it has been, is no inclusion. Inclusion calls for some basic preparation. Grandiose statements about integrated education for blind and partially sighted children, young and adults, are not enough. The basis of true integration is that visually handicapped persons are given the skills necessary to ensure their full participation as opposed to their mere presence in the regular educational system.

International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) and the World Blind Union (WBU) in a joint statement support “Inclusive education as one of the alternative models of service delivery, on condition that all necessary steps are taken to first put in place the required number of teachers trained in the special needs of blind and low vision children and the essential support systems--necessary equipment, Braille textbooks, low vision devices--are available to guarantee true inclusion.”

While making the availability of especially trained teachers and equipment/books a precondition to service-delivery, seems a tall order in the current circumstances, yet, the point being made by these two world organizations is relevant. It is that as a first step to inclusion, some programmes to prepare visually impaired children for inclusion should be in place.

Convergence of Resources

The question, then, is what can be done? The starting point is early detection and assessment. There has to be, for this purpose, much greater interaction between grass-root workers available in villages, families of blind children and rehabilitation personnel available in the district. Visually impaired children should have ready access to the Anganwadis for preschool children being opened as a part of ICDS programmes. Besides, ICDS workers, village Panchayat leaders and paramedical health personnel also need to be sensitized more actively and widely. There have already been several attempts towards such sensitization of these important functionaries in issues relating to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and parent counseling in the field of visual impairment. An institution for the blind or a training centre functioning at the District Headquarters could work as a nodal and coordinating agency with necessary support from trained social workers and others. What is needed is a convergent approach involving State

Departments of Women and Child Development, Rural Development and available rehabilitation professionals to produce the required synergy of effort and action. Also, the recently established District Disability Rehabilitation Centres, functioning in 47 districts could be used as an important resource in this direction.

Convergence of Approaches

For facilitating inclusion of the visually impaired children in the age group of 6-14 years, it may be re-emphasized that no single agency--either special schools or inclusive programmes--could singly achieve this important goal. In fact, the two must work in partnership. While it is a welcome trend to recruit one or two special teachers/educators for the benefit of children with disability in each district, yet there might be a few bottlenecks in this regard. Most of the teachers may not be especially trained in the education of blind and low vision children. They have had limited exposure to such components as a part of the course in special education attended by them. Thus, it is neither fair nor appropriate to expect such special teachers to provide the required systematic and intensive training in compensatory/plus curriculum skills (Braille, orientation and mobility, daily living skills, special equipment, low vision devices etc.) to visually impaired children under their charge.

Along with the appointment of separate full-time special teachers for visually impaired children in every district, another alternative strategy suggested, here, is based on the principle of active partnership between special schools, available in most districts and special teachers. The strategy has the following components:

- Visually impaired children of the preschool and school age may be identified by the ICDS workers, under the supervision of special teachers, wherever available.
- Parents of children, thus identified, may be provided necessary counseling by ICDS workers/special teachers, if available, and necessary support facilities may be made available to them through Panchayat leaders.
- Identified children may be suitably prepared to enter a nearby ICDS nursery/ balwadi, if available or a nearby SSA school, as the case may be, with the intervention of special teachers or, if they are not available, by village functionaries, opinion leaders and representative of the institution for the blind in the District.
- The concerned village level functionaries may be required, as an essential part of their documentation work, to submit details of work undertaken by them for visually impaired children and their parents, in their reports to the CDPOs/ other authorities.
- All eligible visually impaired children must be admitted to the nearest SSA school or a special school, as per need, assessment to be undertaken by representatives of the school and SSA of the staff of the institution for the blind may be enlisted actively to



impart intensive training in plus curriculum activities, that is, living skills, to visually impaired children attending regular schools.

- To facilitate the required comprehensive training, all visually impaired children enrolled in regular schools in a given cluster of districts may be brought to a special school for the blind for the period of vacations-- summer vacation (about 6 weeks), autumn break (about 2 weeks) and winter vacation (about 2 weeks). They would thus get about 10 weeks of intensive training in the years.
- Therefore, it would be possible to provide necessary compensatory skills training to every visually impaired student through the intervention of specialists at a special school, something, which could not have been possible otherwise.
- Funding as per specific norms, may be made available for the suggested intensive training at the special schools to cover costs of board and lodging for visually impaired children and some allowance to the trainers.
- The specially trained teachers on inclusive education and some regular school teachers may be entrusted the task of follow-up and monitoring the application of skills learnt by the visually impaired students during training in the preceding vacation.
- There should be a provision for continuing programmes of sensitization for State level officers in charge of education, Chief Education Officers (CEOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs) to the policy and practices relating to inclusion in schools of children with visual impairment. National/State level organizations may undertake this important responsibility. Such sensitization may form an integral part of the general orientation arranged for these officers from time to time.
- Short-duration orientation courses on visual disability may be organized from time to time for regular teachers from SSA and other schools to give them an idea of different aspects of education of visually impaired children.
- National Institutes, regional branches, Composite Regional Centres and NGOs have been proactively organizing sensitization and orientation programmes for headmasters and teachers from regular schools in the Southern states. What is needed is a mechanism to ensure proper follow-up to ensure in turn that the information and insights gained through such programs are not lost after attendance.
- A checklist of basic Braille-writing, computing, mobility, recreational and low vision devices may be worked out in advance by all SSA and other schools, where visually impaired children are likely to be enrolled. These devices may be obtained well in time and made available to the students for training at the special school and then for use in the regular school.
- There is also a pressing need for initiating research activities for ensuring proper monitoring and evaluation in respect of activities concerning inclusion of children with visual impairment. The following is a suggested list of areas in which such research efforts are urgently required:
 - Enrolment and retention of visually impaired children in SSA schools and problems being encountered;
 - Assessment of performance of visually impaired children in regular schools and identifying measures for making improvement;

- Preparation of suitable and easily accessible material--video films, posters, reading material in local languages--for generating greater awareness about visual disability;
- Evaluation of the impact of sensitization programmes conducted so far by various organizations, for different officials and functionaries like headmasters and teachers of regular schools, ICDS workers, Panchayat leaders etc;
- Development of suitable material for parent counseling and parent support; and
- Preparation of low cost teaching-learning material for visually impaired children in regular schools.

Constructive Partnership

A convergent approach making judicious use of resources and ensuring close coordination, suitable follow up, research, monitoring and evaluation holds the key to meaningful and accelerated inclusion of visually impaired children. A new phase of collaboration and partnership between SSA and special schools is the need of the hour. The targets must be realistic and strategies clear and focused. The government, the community and organizations of blind persons themselves must all be closely and collectively associated with this challenging task of Universalisation of Elementary Education for children with visual impairment.

Need for Training Teachers on Inclusion

Dr. J.P. Singh
Member Secretary, RCI

Learn Together, the Ground Role

The concept of inclusive education was first globally introduced through the Salamanca Statement, World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994), adopted by 92 Governments and 25 International Organizations as a guideline framework for formulating policies, development of inclusive schools and provision for special services. According to this statement, “The fundamental principle of the inclusive schools is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences, they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both, different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnership with their communities”. In simple words, inclusive education is the situation in which all children study in the same school, regardless of their physical, mental, social and emotional abilities or circumstances or characteristics.

Mainstreaming, the Core Principle

Access to primary education is a human right as enshrined in our Constitution. In the context of education for children with special needs, there has been gradual evolution and transition from special education to integrated education to inclusive education. The system of inclusive education is yet to be fully evolved as there are differences of opinion about the system among the professionals, layman and implementers. However, there is no denying the fact that the inclusive system approach is most cost effective and most tangible in overcoming attitudinal barriers leading to smooth mainstreaming. The implementation strategies are still being worked out by various Government and NGOs having experience of teaching CWSN. DPEP and SSA are two such schemes of the Central Government that aim to achieve UEE and, in this process, include CWSN.



Multi-pronged Approach

It must be borne in mind that the education system should be developed to suit the needs of the children and not the other way round. Therefore, no single system may be the answer to the needs of the children.

Multi-pronged approach is required to meet their special needs. A variety of options should be made available so that the divergent needs of CWSN could be effectively met. These options may include:

- Special education
- Integrated education
- Reverse integration
- Inclusive education
- Home based education
- Open system of education.

In any education system, the teacher and the taught are two important components. Given that, the taught is a child with special needs, the teacher must be equipped accordingly with adequate knowledge and skills. Since, all children are unique, special children have special needs. Children with different disabilities require disability specific instructions and support services. In the long run the general teacher training programme should include adequate contents on pedagogy and skills at various levels. The support services should ideally be available in the schools itself. However, they can be availed from special schools located in the vicinity.

Capacity Building of Teachers

For the effective implementation of inclusive education for all types of disabled children, general classroom teachers need training on understanding the educational and emotional needs of these children. It is ideal to teach about special needs children in the pre-service teacher preparation course itself. The Curriculum Framework of the NCTE (1998) indicates that the pre-service teacher preparation course should include content on special needs children. Teachers, thus trained, will be in a position to take care of the educational needs as well as of children, special needs in general classroom if appropriate disability specific assistive devices are made available. The work of general classroom teacher may be occasionally assisted by specialist teachers. The in-service courses may be offered to at least one teacher from each school to begin with and eventually cover all general classroom teachers in a block. This initial investment on capacity building would be vital for developing a strong base for inclusive education.

Specialist Teacher Input

Till the time, all general education teachers are capable of serving children with special needs, presence of specialist teacher for a cluster of schools is inevitable. If inclusion is to be successful, the special teacher and the general teacher should work together as a team. The role of the general teacher and the specialist teacher should be clearly defined. It should be a cooperative role and not one or the other. IE can best be promoted by pooling of skills of both the regular education teacher and special education teacher. Both of them should consider all children in the school as their own responsibility.

Sensitization of Policy Planners

For inclusion to be successful, besides the training of teachers and other rehabilitation professionals, the sensitization of administrators, policy makers and planners is also vitally important. The planning and implementation of programme to prepare wide range of professionals is an issue that needs to be addressed on priority basis at the national level to give impetus to inclusive education movement.

Foundation Course

To meet the immediate needs of inclusive education in regular schools, short-term foundation / orientation programmes with appropriate incentives to the teachers may be the solution. The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), a Statutory Body has standardized a foundation course of 45 days duration for IE resource teachers working under DPEP. RCI has also developed a foundation course for in-service general teachers in collaboration with M.P. Bhoj Open University, Bhopal. This is a 90 day course, with in-built contact classes for 3-week duration. A provision has been made for such trained teachers to complete a full-fledged training programme leading to Diploma in Education of CWSN.

Training of Specialist Teachers

The Council has developed a number of training programmes in the field of special education at diploma levels teachers in the institutions/ RCI to offer fields. The special as resource services can teachers. A list developed and follows:



diploma, degree and Post Graduate to meet the requirement of special country. About 125 training universities are recognized by the these courses in various disability teachers so trained generally work in schools and they can also be utilized teachers in inclusive set up. Their also be availed in SSA as itinerant of courses in Special Education standardized by the RCI is as

1. Diploma in Teaching Young Hearing Impaired Children
2. Diploma in Early Childhood Special Education
3. Diploma in Special Education (HI)
4. Diploma in Special Education (VI)
5. Diploma in Special Education (MR)
6. Diploma in Special Education (CP)
7. Diploma in Special Education (Deaf-Blind)
8. Diploma in Special Education (Autism Spectrum Disorders)
9. PG Diploma in Special Education (Multiple Disabilities)
10. PG Diploma in Early Intervention
11. B.Ed. (Special Education)

12. M.Ed. (Special Education)

Apart from the above, a number of training programmes have been developed by the Council for providing support services complementing and supplementing special education. All these courses prepare professionals who could provide appropriate support services to CWSN in regular schools. The needs of these children are diverse and, therefore, they need a host of disciplines to assess them.

Also, training of parents of children with disabilities, para-teachers and Anganwadi workers is very important for providing professional and comprehensive educational services.

There is no denying of the fact that the need for training teachers in inclusion is enormous. In order to provide education to all kinds of children including children with special needs, at affordable cost, in remotest part of the country, training of teachers for inclusive education is a must. In this direction, two apex level statutory bodies, namely, Rehabilitation Council of India and National Council of Teacher Education have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for ensure development of optimum teacher training programmes catering to the special needs of children with disabilities.

Research Possibilities

Further, research studies need to be conducted on retention of special needs children in inclusive settings, teachers' attitude towards children with disabilities, learning achievement of special needs children etc. Impact study on inclusive education is an important step towards this end. An evaluation of the effectiveness of various teaching strategies/methodologies would give an important insight into curriculum modifications. Duration of teacher training at pre-service level is another debatable issue, which needs to be addressed carefully.

Holistic Strategies

Every disability calls for the development of specific teaching strategies. In inclusive setting, this would mean training the regular education teacher to adopt methods that would help all children learn by providing them resource support in the form of special education teacher for rendering remedial assistance to those who need it. The idea is to bridge the gap between inclusive education and special education so that there is fusion of support services and skills. To make education achieve the goal of mainstreaming all children in a community, a holistic approach would have to be adopted with primary role being given to teacher preparation.

A Report on National Workshop on Inclusive Education in SSA

The national workshop on “**Deepening Perspectives and Approaches in Inclusive Education under SSA**” was held in Bhopal from 28th February – 1st March, 2006. The first day was devoted to presentations by the States and technical sessions. The second day mainly concentrated on visits and an open session. About 76 participants from 20 States took part in the workshop.

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- To review the status of IE in SSA
- To discuss making education more child friendly for Children With Special Needs (CWSN)
- To explore taking up the possibility of providing education to CWSN through home based support or EGS/AIE in more States
- To share with the States role of NGOs in providing Braille books to the visually impaired children
- To discuss strategy for vocational education of CWSN on a pilot basis in selected States.

Inaugural Session

The workshop started with Ms. Richa Sharma, Deputy Secretary, MHRD welcoming all the participants to the workshop. She started by stating that in the year 2005-06, the Project Approval Board allocated an amount of Rs. 187.20 crores under this component Expenditure on IE component in SSA was Rs. 122.70 crores (66.0%).

The progress in IE varied from state to state. Most of the States have identified and enrolled CWSN in schools. Some States have enrolled CWSN in AIE/EGS and some are providing home-based education to CWSN. States like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Madhya-Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal have also taken up novel initiatives in the area of Inclusive Education (IE). The States would now need to plan and focus on out of school CWSN. Although States of Andhra and Uttar Pradesh have conducted exclusive residential bridge courses for CWSN, mainstreaming strategies for this group would need to be developed.

The total CWSN identified in SSA is 27.65lakh and 16.65 lakh CWSN (60.23%) are enrolled in schools. 3.49 lakh CWSN, as reported by the States, have been provided assistive devices. 530 NGOs are involved in the IE programme in 26 States. The States should explore the possibility of involving more NGOs in the IE programme. Similarly 4052 resource teachers have been appointed in 17 States. On barrier free access, Ms. Sharma said that the progress on this front had to be expedited. So far in SSA, 2.23 lakh schools (18.60%) have been made barrier free.

Ms. Sharma also touched upon the issues of providing Braille books to the visually impaired children, undertaking vocational education for CWSN and improving the quality of monitoring of IE related activities.

This session was followed by in-depth review of the progress made by different States in IE.

Review of Progress on IE

After the inaugural session, States made presentations about the status of IE implementation in their States.

ANDHRA- PRADESH

- 152938 CWSN identified and 120407 CWSN enrolled in schools and 3955 in EGS Centres
- 48323 aids and appliances have been supplied to these children with the help of ALIMCO, Dept. of Disabled Welfare, NIMH etc.
- 223511 teachers have been given five-days training on IE
- 161031 teachers have been given training through the mass teacher training programmes and 633 teachers trained through RCI foundation course.
- 8222 schools made barrier free.

ASSAM

- 72335 CWSN have been identified and 42061 CWSN are enrolled in schools.
- 5047 aids and appliances have been supplied to these children with the help of CRC, DDRC and NIOH.
- 16021 teachers have been given five-days training on IE
- 40,000 teachers have been given training through the mass teacher training programmes and 240 DIET/BTC faculties trained through RCI foundation course.
- 14816 VEC members oriented to IE
- For IE friendly support, 11055 schools and all CRCCs and new school buildings are being equipped with ramps and handrails.

BIHAR

- The identification data showed that there were a total of 168710 CWSN, out of which 100274 have been enrolled in schools and 7651 in EGS
- 35000 CWSN have been provided assistive devices mainly through ALIMCO.
- Conducted 45 days foundation course training for 425 teachers
- 164075 teachers trained through general teacher training
- 2350 CRCCs trained
- 109515 community leaders oriented to IE

- 20782 schools provided ramps out of a total of 49652 schools.

CHATTISGARH

- 34777 CWSN have been identified and 29453 CWSN are enrolled in schools
- 12037 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- One day orientation programme has been organized for 83443 teachers
- 3-day training given to 20036 teachers
- 50 teachers have been given three-month foundation course
- 4112 schools have been provided with ramps.

DADRA and NAGAR HAVELI

- 350 CWSN identified.

GUJARAT

- 77526 CWSN identified and 65564 CWSN enrolled
- 162995 general teachers have been provided orientation to IE issues in the 2-day mass teacher training.
- 39716 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 1256 teachers have been given 45/90 day training
- 13118 VEC members sensitized to IE
- 24582 schools have been provided ramps and handrails.

HARYANA

- 31907 CWSN identified and 28445 CWSN enrolled in schools. 3462 CWSN enrolled in EGS and 380 provided home-based support
- 72000 general teachers have been provided orientation to IE issues in the 2-day mass teacher training.
- 7998 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 2200 teachers have been given 5 day training
- 4000 schools have been provided ramps and handrails
- 116 resource teachers appointed.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

- 29122 CWSN identified and 26906 CWSN enrolled in schools and 2216 CWSN provided home-based education
- 31155 general teachers have been provided orientation to IE issues in the 2-day mass teacher training.
- 967 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 412 teachers have been given 45/90 day training
- 13118 VEC members sensitized to IE

JAMMU and KASHMIR

- 38071 CWSN identified and 22262 CWSN enrolled
- 33125 general teachers have been provided orientation to IE issues in the 2-day mass teacher training.
- 780 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 32 teachers have been given 45/90 day training and 1990 ZRPs provided a 5-day orientation
- 441 schools have been provided ramps and handrails.

JHARKHAND

- 39797 CWSN have been identified and 21822 CWSN are enrolled in schools. 945 CWSN going to EGS and 171 covered through home-based education
- 4096 aids and appliances have been provided.
- The State has provided a 5-day training on IE to 9018 teachers. 31454 teachers have been given a 3-day orientation to IE in the mass teacher-training programme for the duration of 10-days
- 519 CRCCs have also been oriented to IE
- 110 resource persons have been trained through the RCI foundation course
- 2680 EGS/ para teachers have been sensitized to issues related to inclusion
- 121 parents of mentally retarded and visually impaired children trained through NGOs and 299 parents given counseling. 117010 VEC members oriented to IE
- 6538 schools made barrier- free.

KARNATAKA

- 81900 CWSN identified and 70047 enrolled and 5092 covered through home-based education
- 11654 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 188026 teachers oriented to IE through the 20-day refresher training
- 38635 teachers oriented to IE for 5-days
- 17687 teachers provided training through RCI foundation course
- 606 resource teachers appointed
- 6210 schools made barrier- free.

KERALA

- 96703 CWSN identified and 87319 enrolled in schools. 813 CWSN are enrolled in EGS and 614 provided home-based education and 5092 covered through home-based education
- 38502 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 100434 teachers oriented to IE through the 20-day refresher training
- 20186 teachers oriented to IE for 5-days

- 410 resource teachers appointed
- 9312 schools made barrier- free.

MADHYA PRADESH

- 97681CWSN identified and 77890 enrolled
- 24011 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 195250 teachers oriented to IE through the 20-day refresher training
- 4530 teachers oriented to IE for 5-days
- 1169 teachers provided training through RCI foundation course
- 85 resource teachers appointed
- 18831schools have been provided with ramps and 2123 schools with handrails. 5234 schools have been provided learning corners. However, toilets have not been modified as per requirement of these children. 311 resource centres have been developed.

MAHARASHTRA

- 956426 CWSN identified and 302911 enrolled in schools and 17847 in EGS
- 9232 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 24921 teachers oriented to IE through the 20-day refresher training
- 383082teachers oriented to IE for 5-days
- 1406 teachers provided training through RCI foundation course
- 281resource teachers appointed
- 38168 schools made barrier- free.

MIZORAM

- 3396 CWSN identified, 2971 enrolled
- 4520 teachers trained through mass teacher training

ORISSA

- 133748 CWSN identified. Out of these, 117528 children are enrolled in schools and 4655 covered through home-based education
- A total of 17663 aids and appliances have been provided to CWSN in 499 medical camps organized and 96128 CWSN assessed
- 125 speech-training camps have been conducted for children with speech and hearing problems
- The State is regularly conducting the 45/90-day foundation course of RCI. 533 teachers have been trained
- 133320 general teachers have been trained through mass teacher training
- 47047 teachers have been imparted a 5-day training

- 34209 parents have been trained on home management of CWSN. 34201 Anganwadi workers have been given training on identification and pre-integration skills on CWSN. 177287 VEC members have been oriented to disability
- 277 schools in the selected IE blocks have learning corners equipped with special TLM for disabled children. Ramps in 3575 schools and handrails in 351 schools have been constructed. 24 schools have been provided with toilet modifications.

PUNJAB

- 38953 CWSN identified and 14705 enrolled in schools and 1075 in EGS
- 10200 CWSN provided assistive devices
- 2250 schools provided with ramps.
- 15 NGOs involved in the IE programme
- 180 resource teachers appointed

TAMIL NADU

- 71204 CWSN identified and 59560 enrolled in schools and 4395 in EGS. 3276 CWSN provided home-based education
- 10110 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 67646 teachers oriented to IE through the 20-day refresher training
- 28431 teachers oriented to IE for 5-days
- 13017 schools made barrier-free
- 103 resource teachers appointed.

TRIPURA

- 11777 CWSN identified and 5806 enrolled in schools
- 1334 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 14428 teachers oriented to IE through the 20-day refresher training
- 1188 schools made barrier free.

WEST BENGAL

- A total of 144176 CWSN have been screened and 95421 children have been enrolled in the schools and 365 in EGS. 10000 being provided home-based education
- 11965 CWSN provided aids and appliances
- 65178 teachers have been provided intensive training on IE
- 122654 teachers have been oriented to IE through 20-day training
- 915 teachers provided RCI foundation course
- 382336 VEC members/ parents trained on IE
- 352 resource teachers appointed
- 9032 schools have been provided with ramps.

State specific issues were also discussed in detail. After state presentations, there were presentations by technical experts on various aspects of inclusive education.

Session I: Home-Based Education For CWSN - The Tamil Nadu Experience

In this presentation, the State representative of Tamil Nadu gave an overview of the need, objectives, strategies and techniques of home based education. Home-based education is for children who are severely/ profound disabled for developing individualized programmes for them. It requires assistance from specialized teachers, parents and community. The goal of home-based education is to create opportunity for all children with severe disabilities to participate and learn educational and social skills to its maximum potential within the home environment. The key objectives of home-based education were also delineated.

Parental counseling, resource support, individualized programme planning, vocational education and regular evaluation are the five most important strategies for home based education. Home-based education involves development of low cost innovative assistive devices. These might include TLM, corner chairs, standing frames, corner seats, hammocks, play ground material and calipers. The session ended by stating that there is no blue print for starting a home based education programme. If CWSN have to be rehabilitated, then home based education has to begin at home with the family members as the primary rehabilitation workers.

Session II: Providing Braille Text- Books to Visually Impaired Children

This presentation was made by representative of Arushi, a NGO working for persons with disabilities. Arushi, a local NGO has also been involved in IE activities with M.P. State SSA Society. Some of the activities taken up by Arushi for IE in SSA are awareness, capacity building, preparation of material etc.

This session was devoted to discuss the provision of Braille books to visually impaired children. SSA in convergence with Government Deaf and Blind School are providing books to visually impaired children. For this, all the textbooks from class I – VIII have been translated into Braille. All the modalities were discussed through workshops and discussion meeting. The State and district level functionaries along with resource teachers attended these meetings. It was decided to use Braille software to translate textbooks - 120 GSM paper with a normal print on cover. The average cost was 0.49 paise per page. The cover page costed Rs. 5.00/-. In 2004-05, 100 sets of textbooks from class I – VIII were printed and in 2005-06, 250 more sets were printed. This year the State plans to provide Braille books to all the visually impaired children and also provide training to general teachers on Braille.

Session III: Vocational Education to CWSN

A presentation on Vocational Education was given by Dr. Sumit Roy, Executive Director, Digdarshika Institute and Rehabilitation Centre, Bhopal, a local NGO

conducted vocational education for CWSN. One form of resource support for CWSN is in the form of vocational training. SSA State Mission Societies may also plan for vocational training of these children at Upper Primary Level. Vocational training could be provided depending on the nature of the disability and needs of every child. This could be partly integrated in the general classroom activities and partly given in the resource room with the help of courses already developed by CIVE, especially for CWSN.

In his presentation, Dr. Roy emphasized the importance of providing vocational education and said that Vocational Education and Training (VET) would help CWSN in having employment at a later stage. Acquisition of special equipment, aids and appliances, adequate and comfortable furniture is absolutely necessary. Jobs in printing, book-binding, weaving, etc. can be easily handled by children with speech and hearing disorders. Children with orthopaedic disability can do many jobs, which require the use of upper limbs only. The jobs like agarbatti making, chair canning, bamboo work, arts and crafts, paper bag making, etc. can be performed by children with blindness and low vision.

Dr. Roy described the advantages of VET. After the presentation, it was decided that an appropriate strategy to impart CWSN vocational education under SSA would be chalked out.

Session IV: Using BALA for CWSN

A new concept that was shared with the participants at this workshop was that of BALA (Building as a Learning Aid) by Shri Kabir Vajpeyi – Director, VINYAS. BALA (Building as a Learning Aid) is an innovative concept towards qualitative improvement in education, through intervention in school building infrastructure. Basically BALA says that architecture of a school can be a resource for teaching learning processes.

Basically, there are two levels of this intervention:

1. Develop the SPACES to create varied teaching learning situations
2. Develop the BUILT ELEMENTS in these spaces as teaching learning aids

The spaces can be classroom, corridor, stair-case and out-door space. The built elements can be floor and ceiling, wall and pillars, doors and windows, fans, furniture and platform and raised levels. BALA is about using the space and the built elements in innovative ways to make the existing school architecture more resourceful with higher educational value. The advantages for implementing BALA for CWSN were also discussed.

BALA could be achieved through a large inventory of ‘design ideas’ developed through an interdisciplinary approach. Shri. Vajpeyi also cited a few examples. Thus, BALA has the potential to maximize educational value of built structure. School building architecture should be optimally made to derive maximum educational value. BALA helps planning for school with interdisciplinary approach. Any design intervention in the school must focus on all children for design, implementation and maintenance. BALA

can be accomplished in an education programme by effectively allowing the pedagogy, IE as well as civil works units to work in close coordination.

Visits

All the SSA – IE State Project Directors and coordinators attending the workshop were taken to the field visit to the SSA-IE programme of the State on the second day. The objectives of the field visit were to sensitize the State level officials on making inclusion a reality and meaningful through the SSA-IE programme, feasibility of integrating the CWSN into the mainstream education by the school teachers, acceptance of the CWSN by parents, siblings, peer group, importance of barrier-free access and observing the overall impact of the SSA-IE programme.

Observations of the Visit

It was generally seen that:

- All the children were well integrated
- Most of the children were provided the necessary aids and appliances
- The school had a ramp which had made access easier for orthopaedically impaired children
- The seating arrangement for children with moving problems had also been taken care of inside the classroom
- The BRCCs/CRCCs were very motivated and had been adequately trained on IED
- The resource teachers were visiting the schools regularly.

Conclusion

The progress made by the participating States was reviewed in detail. Nearly all the states had come up with strategies for identification of CWSN. But in general there was unanimity on the need to lay greater emphasis on providing quality education to CWSN. There was considerable discussion on providing aids and appliances. It was decided that a multi-pronged strategy should be used to provide aids and appliances. Convergence should be the preferred mode. However, if this were not possible, then SSA funds could be used for this purpose. The N.E. States and UTs require intensive capacity building on IE. These States had to conduct more planning workshops for functionaries at all levels. There was consensus on strengthening the resource support to CWSN placed in schools. States would now need to focus on out of school CWSN and chalk out strategies to deal with this major group

Some important recommendations regarding inclusive education in SSA were discussed at the workshop. These were relating to identification, enrollment and retention of CWSN, provision of aids and appliances and the possible utilization of Rs.1200/- for inclusive education in SSA. These are crucial suggestions influencing the course of inclusive education in SSA and perhaps, the entire issue of providing good quality elementary education to CWSN across the country.

