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## Facilitators of Inclusive Education with the Perspective of Population and Sustainable Development

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### Abstract:

Policy determination plays a critical role in shaping inclusive education and fostering sustainable development. While significant progress has been made, addressing the gaps in implementation and ensuring the active participation of all stakeholders are essential to achieving the vision of an inclusive and equitable education system. By aligning policies with the goals of social justice and sustainability, countries can ensure that inclusive education becomes a reality, contributing to a more equitable and prosperous society. Inclusive education, which aims to provide equitable access to quality education for all, is deeply rooted in India's constitutional framework. The Indian Constitution enshrines the principles of equality, social justice and individual dignity, laying a strong foundation for inclusive education. This analysis explores the constitutional provisions that support inclusive education in India and their implications for fostering an equitable society. The objective of this study includes the assessment of the facilitators of the inclusive education and also their influence on the way population and sustainable development play a crucial role in their life. The outcome of the study enables the policy makers to have the resources to mend the problems in inclusive education related to the provisions in view of population and sustainable development.

**Key words:** Equitable society, inclusive education, individual dignity, population, sustainable development

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### Introduction:

Inclusive education is a transformative approach aimed at ensuring equitable access to quality education for all individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic status, gender, disabilities, or ethnic backgrounds. In the context of India, a country marked by its diversity and challenges of population dynamics, fostering inclusive education is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for sustainable development.

#### Population dynamics and their implications for education

India's population of over 1.4 billion presents unique challenges and opportunities for its education system. Key population-related factors influencing inclusive education include:

##### Demographic Dividend:

With a significant proportion of the population under the age of 25, India has the potential to harness its youth for economic growth. However, this requires an education system that caters to all segments of society, including marginalized groups.

**Urban-Rural Divide:** Disparities in access to quality education are stark between urban and rural areas. While urban centers often have better resources and infrastructure, rural areas struggle

with inadequate facilities, teacher shortages, and high dropout rates.

##### Gender Imbalance:

Despite progress, gender disparities persist in education. Girls, especially in rural areas and marginalized communities, face barriers such as early marriage, safety concerns, and societal norms.

##### Disability and Special Needs:

According to the Census 2011, India has over 26 million persons with disabilities. The integration of these individuals into mainstream education remains a significant challenge due to inadequate facilities, lack of trained teachers, and societal attitudes.

##### Influence of Policy Determination on Inclusive Education for Sustainable Development

Inclusive education, which ensures that every individual has access to quality education regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, or ability, is a cornerstone of sustainable development. Policies play a pivotal role in shaping the structure, implementation, and success of inclusive education. This analysis examines the influence of policy determination on inclusive education and its role in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

**Inclusiv Education and Sustainable Development**  
**Inclusive education aligns directly with several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly:**  
**SDG 4: Quality Education:** It calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

**SDG 5: Gender Equality:**

It addresses barriers to education caused by gender-based discrimination.

**SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities:** It promotes social, economic, and educational inclusion of marginalized groups.

**SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** It equips individuals with the skills and knowledge needed for meaningful employment.

**Policies Influencing Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education policies are designed to eliminate barriers and foster equitable learning environments. The influence of such policies can be understood through the following frameworks:

**International Agreements and Commitments**

**UNESCO's Salamanca Statement (1994):** It advocates for inclusive education systems globally.

**Education for All (EFA) initiative:** It emphasizes universal primary education and equity.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD):** It mandates inclusive education for persons with disabilities.

**National Education Policies**

**India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** It focuses on equity and inclusion as the foundation of the education system. It emphasizes special education zones and gender-inclusive funds.

**Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009:** Provides free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years. It ensures 25% reservation for disadvantaged groups in private schools. It encourages specialized Policies for Marginalized Groups.

**Policies for Gender Equality:** It includes Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme promotes girls' education.

**Policies for Disabilities:** It includes Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensures the inclusion of children with special needs.

**Tribal and Rural Development Policies:** It gives Provision of ashram schools and scholarships for Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes.

**Impact of Policy Determination on Inclusive Education**

**Access and Enrollment:** Policies like RTE Act have significantly increased enrollment among disadvantaged groups. Reservation policies have created pathways for marginalized communities to access quality education.

**Infrastructure Development:** Inclusive policies promote the construction of accessible infrastructure, such as ramps, braille materials, and inclusive classrooms. It emphasis on digital

infrastructure ensures access to remote and rural areas.

**Teacher Training and Curriculum Reform:** The policies mandate capacity building for teachers to handle diverse classrooms and employ inclusive pedagogies.

**Curriculum reforms under NEP 2020 emphasize holistic and flexible education.**

**Community Engagement and Awareness:** Awareness campaigns and community-driven approaches help combat societal prejudices and encourage participation. Parental involvement policies foster environments conducive to inclusive education.

**Challenges In Policy Implementation**

Despite robust policy frameworks, there are challenges persist:

**Funding Constraints:** Insufficient allocation of resources for infrastructure, teacher training, and technological integration.

**Policy-Practice Gaps:** Weak enforcement mechanisms result in inadequate implementation.

**Resistance to Change:** Societal prejudices and lack of awareness hinder the acceptance of inclusive education.

**Regional Disparities:** Uneven implementation of policies leads to disparities between urban and rural areas.

**Recommendations for Strengthening Policy Influence Enhanced Resource Allocation:**

Increase budgetary provisions for education, focusing on underserved regions and groups.

**Capacity Building:**

Invest in teacher training and development programs for inclusive pedagogy.

**Technology Integration:** Leverage digital tools and EdTech platforms to bridge gaps in access and quality.

**Robust Monitoring Systems:** Develop accountability mechanisms to track policy implementation and outcomes.

**Community and Stakeholder Involvement:** Foster partnerships between governments, NGOs, and local communities to ensure inclusive policy design and execution.

**Constitutional Provisions For Inclusive Education In India**

**Fundamental Rights and Inclusive Education**

The Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution establish a framework for inclusivity in education:

**Article 14: Right to Equality**

Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws. Ensures non-discrimination in access to educational opportunities, creating a legal basis for inclusive education.

**Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination:** It prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. It includes

provisions for special measures (affirmative action) to promote education for socially and educationally backward classes and marginalized groups.

**Article 21A: Right to Education.** It is introduced by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002. Mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years as a fundamental right. Provides a legal framework for ensuring that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to education.

**Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability:** It abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form. It supports the integration of historically marginalized communities into mainstream education.

### **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs) and Inclusive Education**

**The Directive Principles of State Policy guide the State in promoting educational inclusivity:**

**Article 39:** It ensures that children are not forced by economic necessity to enter vocations unsuited to their age and strength. It highlights the importance of access to education to prevent child labor.

**Article 41** directs the State to make effective provisions for securing the right to education, among other socio-economic rights.

**Article 45** originally mandated the provision of free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14. Post-86th Amendment, this provision emphasizes early childhood care and education for children below six years.

**Article 46** Promotes the educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and other weaker sections of society. Encourages special measures to address educational disparities among marginalized communities.

### **Reservation Policies and Affirmative Action**

In alignment with constitutional mandates, reservation policies have been implemented to promote educational inclusion:

#### **Reservation in Educational Institutions:**

There are reserved seats for SCs, STs, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government and government-aided educational institutions. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensures 5% reservation for persons with disabilities in higher educational institutions.

### **Constitutional Amendments and Provisions**

#### **The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments:**

It empowers local governments (Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies) to play an active role in planning and implementing educational programs. It promotes community-driven approaches to inclusive education.

#### **Scheduled Areas and Tribal Communities:**

There are special provisions under the Fifth and Sixth Schedules for the protection and promotion of education among tribal populations.

### **Judicial Interpretations and Inclusive Education:**

The judiciary has played a significant role in reinforcing constitutional mandates for inclusive education: *Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh* (1993): Declared that the right to education up to the age of 14 is a fundamental right under Article 21 (Right to Life). *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka* (1992): Emphasized that the right to education is intrinsic to the right to life and human dignity. *Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India* (2012): Upheld the constitutional validity of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, making it binding on private unaided schools.

### **Challenges in Implementing Constitutional Provisions**

**Despite robust constitutional provisions, challenges persist in achieving inclusive education such as:**

**Infrastructure Deficits:** There is lack of accessible infrastructure for children with disabilities.

**Disparities in Quality:** There is significant gaps in educational quality between urban and rural schools.

**Societal Barriers:** There are deep-rooted prejudices and discrimination against marginalized groups.

**Policy Gaps:** There are ineffective implementation of laws and policies due to inadequate monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

### **Recommendations:**

It is to strengthen the enforcement of constitutional provisions through effective monitoring systems. There is a need to enhance budgetary allocations for education, focusing on marginalized and underserved groups. It is possible to invest in teacher training programmes to promote inclusive pedagogies. It is required to foster community participation in education planning and implementation. There is a need to leverage technology to bridge gaps in access and quality.

### **Facilitators of Inclusive Education in India**

Inclusive education can be achieved through a multi-faceted approach involving policy interventions, community engagement, and technological advancements. Key facilitators include:

#### **Policy Frameworks:**

The Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14, emphasizing inclusivity. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights equity and inclusion as fundamental principles, with provisions for underrepresented groups. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 advocates for inclusive education for children with disabilities.

#### **Capacity Building:**

Training programs for teachers to handle diverse classrooms and employ inclusive teaching methodologies. Development of accessible learning

materials, including braille textbooks, sign language interpreters, and assistive technologies.

#### **Community and Parental Involvement:**

Mobilizing communities to challenge discriminatory practices and support education for all children. Empowering parents, especially in marginalized communities, through awareness programs and financial incentives.

#### **Technological Interventions:**

Digital platforms like DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) provide accessible educational resources. EdTech solutions leveraging AI and machine learning for personalized learning experiences.

#### **Infrastructure Development:**

Building schools equipped with ramps, accessible toilets, and other facilities to accommodate students with special needs. Expanding schools and classrooms in underserved areas to reduce overcrowding and improve learning conditions.

#### **Inclusive Education and Sustainable Development**

Inclusive education directly contributes to achieving several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

SDG 4: Quality Education: Ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

SDG 5: Gender Equality: Addresses gender disparities in education and empowers women and girls.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities: Promotes the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, gender, disability, or ethnicity.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: Builds a skilled and knowledgeable workforce that can drive sustainable economic growth.

#### **Challenges and the strategies**

Despite progress, several challenges hinder the implementation of inclusive education in India:

**Funding Constraints:** There is insufficient allocation of resources for education infrastructure and training.

**Cultural Barriers:** There is the Deep-rooted societal norms and biases against marginalized groups.

**Monitoring and Accountability:** There is the lack of robust mechanisms to track the implementation of inclusive policies.

#### **Recommendations:**

The programmes such as an increase in budgetary allocations for education, with a focus on marginalized groups, strengthening public-private partnerships to enhance infrastructure and technological access, fostering a culture of inclusion through awareness campaigns and community participation and a system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of inclusive education policies and practices can make the effective implementation of the inclusive education for sustainable development.

#### **Conclusion:**

Inclusive education in India is pivotal for leveraging its demographic potential and achieving sustainable development. By addressing systemic barriers and leveraging facilitators like policy frameworks, technology, and community involvement, India can create an education system that not only fosters equality but also contributes to the holistic development of society. Such an approach ensures that no one is left behind in the journey toward progress and prosperity. The constitutional provisions for inclusive education in India reflect the nation's commitment to social justice and equity. However, translating these principles into practice requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders—government, civil society, educators, and communities. By addressing the existing challenges and reinforcing the constitutional mandates, India can pave the way for an inclusive education system that upholds the rights and dignity of every individual.

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