Empowering Inclusive Education NEP 2020: A Qualitative Exploration of Professionals Experiences Supporting Children with Speech and Language Disabilities.

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Abstract

Aiming to provide everyone, including kids with disabilities, equal access to education, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places a high priority on inclusive education. Even with its progressive architecture, there are still a lot of implementation gaps that prevent it from providing this vulnerable population with the complete support it needs. This report examines NEP 2020's current provisions, pinpoints major implementation issues, and suggests a thorough plan to improve the policy's effects on kids with disabilities. The strategy emphasizes how crucial it is to improve infrastructure, use assistive technology, train teachers specifically, and modify courses to accommodate a range of requirements. The report also emphasizes that in order to guarantee sustainable implementation, strong monitoring systems, data-driven decision-making and more funding are required. The proposed roadmap aims to empower children with disabilities and enable their full participation and achievement in the educational journey by addressing the crucial areas. This research mainly aims to explore the professionals Experiences Supporting children with speech and Language Disabilities through in-depth interview. Secondary data from government reports, educational studies, and NGO publications served as the basis for the analysis.
Keywords: National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), Inclusive Education, Children with Disabilities.

1. Introduction

An important endeavor in India is the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to change the educational system and make it inclusive of all students, including those with disabilities. The policy highlights how crucial it is to give everyone equal access to education so that kids with disabilities can thrive just as much as their classmates. NEP 2020's inclusive education framework is progressive, but there are still a number of obstacles to overcome, particularly when it comes to children with speech and language impairments. These issues include inadequate utilization of assistive technologies, gaps in the infrastructure, and a lack of specialized training for educators. In order to better support children with impairments, especially in the area of speech and language development, this study aims to examine the current provisions of NEP 2020, pinpoint implementation gaps, and offer solutions.

2. Review of Literature

Aneraye, A. V., Shirpurkar, S. K., Madhukar, N., & Kahalekar, S. S. (2024) 'Impact of national education policy 2020 on inclusive education for individuals with disabilities'. The study highlights the opportunities it presents for the education of individuals with disabilities while analyzing the potential benefits and challenges associated with the policy's inclusion strategy. The study also looks at how technology, teacher preparation, and community involvement could support inclusive practices. By critically assessing the impact of the policy, this study advances our knowledge of how NEP 2020 and inclusive education for individuals with disabilities interact. It is essential

that educational stakeholders, including schools, teachers, parents, and communities, continue to work together to create a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere that ensures equitable opportunity for all children, regardless of their talents or impairments. India's National Education Policy 2020 could help with inclusive education for individuals with impairments. However, for these inclusive policies to be implemented successfully, the policy must be carried out, resources must be allocated appropriately, and progress must be continuously monitored and evaluated. Vyas, Dhaval P. "Curriculum Adaptation: A Demand for Inclusive Education." Creating Inclusive Classrooms. The process of modifying and adapting the recommended course of study to satisfy the learning needs of children with special needs is known as curriculum adaptation. It guarantees that every student is challenged to study and allows the teaching staff to accept students of various skill levels. Every aspect of a student's day requires curriculum customization. The methodologies and significance of curriculum adaptation in inclusive education are highlighted in this research. Curriculum Adaptation Areas The four main areas of instructional strategies, instructional materials, curriculum content, and assessment practices can be used to characterize successful curriculum modifications. Effective curriculum adaption design is a teaching strategy that may not necessitate a great deal of extra effort from educators, but it is unquestionably a distinct approach. Differentiated education is used to modify the curriculum to accommodate the needs of various pupils by giving them many ways to process knowledge and display their learning. Kumar, Deep, and Madhu Singh (2022). 'India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Creating Children with Disability'. The eagerly anticipated new reforms that India sought are outlined in the New Education Policy. Children from low-income families and those with disabilities are given special consideration in the design of these adaptations. Two items will be the main emphasis of this new rule's implementation. focuses on the provisions provided in the New Education Policy 2020. Bringing the divyangjan into the mainstream of education is another stage. It has also done a good job of proposing several admirable solutions to the structural problems providing faculty with information and training on how to instruct students with certain difficulties. The Right of Persons with Disability Act-2016, which mandates that children with disabilities receive an education free from barriers, is being remembered by these nobs. Disability is the most frequent reason why children are unable to attend preschool or primary school. Only about 17% of schools have accessible restrooms, and less than 40% of school buildings have ramps. In order to demonstrate how education for the Divyangjan must be barrier-free in its efforts to reach them, this article of education in inaccessible locations, like education SEZs. However, there are a number of problems with the new approach. It does a disservice to historical communities like the Dalits and Adivasis, even though it may have formed a new category by integrating multiple socioeconomic categories for better resource allocation and administrative efficiency.

3. Statement of the Problem

Although the NEP 2020 has set high standards for inclusive education, there are still a lot of gaps in its application, especially when it comes to meeting the needs of children with disabilities. Due to a lack of infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and inadequate assistance, children with speech and language impairments are frequently excluded in the school system. Empowering Inclusive Education NEP 2020: 'A Qualitative Investigation of Professional Experiences supporting children with speech and language disabilities' is the title of this work. The purpose of this study is to determine the obstacles these children encounter in getting a good education and offer suggestions for enhancing the way inclusive education is implemented as specified in NEP 2020.

4. Objectives

To examine the effects on children with disabilities of the present NEP 2020 inclusive education provisions.

- To determine which implementation gaps prevent students with speech and language impairments from fully achieving the inclusive education objectives of NEP 2020.
- To investigate the experiences of experts who work with kids who have speech and language impairments.
- To put up a thorough plan to improve how the policy affects children with disabilities, especially those who have speech and language problems.

5. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is focused on the implementation of inclusive education provisions under NEP 2020, particularly in relation to children with disabilities, with a specific focus on those with speech and language disabilities. The research explores both the current state of implementation and the perspectives of professionals involved in supporting these children. The study is uses secondary data from government reports, educational studies, and NGO publications, as well as primary data from professionals in the field prevent students with speech and language impairments from fully achieving.

- The study examines the particular difficulties that children with speech and language impairments encounter in obtaining and reaping the benefits of inclusive education.
- It seeks to pinpoint the obstacles these kids have in regular classroom environments, especially with regard to participation, communication, and education.
- The study aims to comprehend the perspectives, difficulties, tactics, and achievements of these professionals in putting inclusive education approaches for these kids into practice through qualitative interviews.
- The study looks at how well inclusive education methods work for kids with speech and language impairments.

- It examines how effectively current policies like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 are being carried out, with a focus on meeting the needs of kids who struggle with speech and language.
- It evaluates how well teaching aids, technology, and modifications made to help kids with these particular requirements are used in regular classroom settings.
- In order to comprehend how various contexts, impact the implementation and difficulties of inclusive education, it is crucial to note whether the study covers rural, urban, or diverse regional settings, even though it may involve specialists from a certain location. If concentrating on India, like with NEP 2020, it can discuss how different states or school districts implement the program differently.

6. Research Methodology

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, gathering primary data through in-depth interviews and analyzing secondary data. This study makes use of the body of current literature on inclusive education and disability support, including government papers, educational studies, and publications from non-governmental organizations. These resources aid in comprehending the present NEP 2020 requirements and detecting implementation gaps. Semi-structured interviews are used to get the opinion of professionals who work with children with speech and language disabilities. These can include speech-language pathologists, special education teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, and special educators. The interviews shed light on the difficulties and experiences faced by people who work closely with kids who have speech and language impairments. With disabilities, with a specific focus on those with

7. NEP 2020 And Disabled Children

In an effort to increase accessibility and inclusivity in education, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has included a number of measures to assist children with disabilities.

7.1 Education That Is Inclusive

NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on the value of inclusive education, in which students with disabilities attend classes with their counterparts without impairments. This strategy encourages social integration and aids in the removal of obstacles. Support and Training for Teachers NEP 2020 advises that all teacher education programs incorporate instruction on how to teach children with particular disabilities in order to guarantee that educators are prepared to assist students with disabilities. In order to meet the special needs of children with disabilities, special educators will also undergo training aimed at enhancing their capacity. The NEP calls for training teachers, teachers with disabilities, and professionals to support inclusive education. Teachers can receive training from NEP 2020 on how to detect and recognize disabilities, particularly learning disabilities. Additionally, teachers have more freedom to select instructional resources that meet the needs of their pupils. Infrastructure and Accessibility The policy encourages the installation of accessible restrooms, ramps, and adaptive technology to provide barrier-free access to schools. This guarantees that kids with impairments can move about school grounds safely and on their own. Resources and Technology for the Disabled to help children with impairments, NEP 2020 suggests using assistive technology, such as screen readers and audio books. Resource centers will also be set up to offer impaired children resources and specialized support. Education at Home NEP 2020 offers home-based education as an alternative for kids with severe or multiple disabilities. This adaptable strategy guarantees that these kids get individualized instruction and assistance. Free instruction and Reservation Children with baseline disabilities between the ages of six and eighteen are eligible for free education under the NEP. According to the NEP, students with benchmark disabilities must be given at least 5% of seats in government and government-aided higher education institutions. Growing early childhood education and care (ECCE) The significance of ECCE is emphasized by NEP 2020, particularly for children with disabilities. Schools are expanding their pre-school programs, especially in underprivileged communities. Establishing a National Assessment Facility, The National Assessment Center, PARAKH, is established by NEP 2020 to guarantee that assessment guidelines are accessible to students with learning difficulties. Other Projects The creation of Braille books, big print materials, and Indian Sign Language (ISL) modules are further projects under NEP 2020. For kids with hearing and vision problems, these resources will help close the gap.

8. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Inclusive Education for Disabled Children and Obstacles

The implications of NEP 2020 are under implementation, and the existing challenges are highlighted as follows.

8.1 Barriers Associated with the Infrastructure

- **Inadequate accessibility:** Children with physical disabilities find it challenging to receive an education at many schools because they lack ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms.
- **Limited assistive technology:** Children with disabilities may find it more difficult to participate if there is a lack of accessible assistive technology, such as wheelchairs, walkers, and communication aids.
- **Inadequate resource rooms:** It can be difficult to offer tailored support in many schools since there aren't enough spaces or resource rooms specifically designated for impaired students.
- To help children with impairments, NEP 2020 suggests using assistive technology, such as screen readers and audio books

8.2 Challenges Associated with Human Resources

- **Lack of special educators:** It is challenging to give impaired children a high-quality education in India due to a severe lack of qualified special educators.
- Insufficient training: Many educators are not

prepared or experienced in working with students who have special needs, which might result in insufficient assistance.

- Inadequate support staff**:** To adequately assist students with disabilities, many schools lack enough counselors, therapists, and attendants.

8.3 Social and Attitude Barriers

- Stigma and discrimination: Children with disabilities frequently experience stigma and discrimination from classmates, educators, and the community, which can have an impact on their academic achievement and sense of self.
- Lack of awareness: Inadequate assistance and accommodations result from a lack of knowledge about impairments among many parents, educators, and community people.
- Cultural and societal barriers: Beliefs that prioritize children with able bodies or see disability as a curse are examples of cultural and societal attitudes that might obstruct inclusive education.

8.4 Barriers Associated with Funding and Policy

- Inadequate funding: Lack of funds may restrict the infrastructure, staff, and resources required to promote inclusive education.
- Lack of policy implementation: The successful execution of NEP 2020 may be impeded by the inadequate application of laws and policies pertaining to disability rights.

9. Findings

NEP 2020 emphasizes inclusive education, but its provisions are not always fully implemented. Key areas like infrastructure, teacher training, and assistive technology remain underdeveloped, hindering the inclusion of children with speech and language disabilities. Professionals report challenges in delivering effective support due to insufficient infrastructure and training. Inconsistent implementation of inclusive education policies across regions, particularly in rural or underfunded areas. And the importance of collaboration between teachers, parents, and specialists to ensure that children receive holistic support. By developing customized lesson plans, evaluating students' individual needs, and providing support, guidance, counseling, and useful information, special educators play a critical role in helping children with special needs. They also create customized training plans, such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), which help children advance in a variety of areas, such as socialization, language development, reading, writing, and motor and physical skills. Structured and natural observations are conducted using predetermined tasks to assess specific behaviors or abilities. Additionally, gathering qualitative information about the child's needs and strengths from parents, teachers, and other caregivers is essential. Brain injury, stroke, autism spectrum disorder, developmental disabilities, learning difficulties, hearing abnormalities, and voice issues are additional illnesses that can impact communication. Teachers might attempt to create a more encouraging environment in the classroom by offering tangible and social motivators. Effective strategies for helping children with speech and language impairments include language development, verbal speaking, social interaction encouragement, behavioral problem reduction, and the development of reading and writing skills. While treating any related behavioral difficulties, these tactics seek to improve academic performance, build meaningful relationships, and improve communication skills. Professionals can establish a nurturing atmosphere that enables kids to realize their full potential in social and academic contexts by taking a comprehensive approach. Identifying objects, point out pictures, repeating words, Sing songs and rhymes, Make use of visual aids are the common methods for dealing the speech and language disabilities. An inclusive classroom ensures that all children, regardless of their needs, cultural background, or language, have equal access to learning. A child with special needs, as well as a gifted child, must feel both supported and challenged in an inclusive educational setting. NEP (National Education Policy) promotes the development of high-quality

modules to teach Indian sign language. Experts mention a variety of roles, such as advocacy, teaching, therapy, and assessment. They work together in various contexts to offer children with speech and language impairments specialized interventions. While some professionals work in schools, where resources and training may be less specialized, others have vast expertise in specialized settings like clinics. A number of experts stress that the effectiveness of therapies is greatly impacted by the early detection of speech and language impairments. To measure language and speech abilities, professionals frequently employ well-known standardized assessment instruments (such as the CELF and PLS-5). Some claim that these resources aren't always suitable for all kids in terms of language or culture.Experts observe difficulties differentiating speech and language impairments from other disorders such as intellectual limitations or autism. It is crucial to conduct thorough evaluations that incorporate parent feedback, observations, and interdisciplinary cooperation. Professionals employ strategies including language modeling, speech drills, and visual aids in their frequently customized interventions. One important finding is the necessity of customized planning. To make sure interventions are maintained at home, professionals usually involve families. Nonetheless, there is a lack of resources or instruction for families to promote the speech and language development of their children. In certain contexts, professionals describe close cooperation with psychologists, occupational therapists, and teachers. This cooperation, however, may be sporadic or uneven, particularly in educational institutions where teachers might not be adequately trained to recognize or assist students with speech and language impairments. Due to systemic or time restrictions, some experts struggle to offer enough resources or training, and parents frequently lack direction on how to properly support their children at home. Experts generally see the NEP 2020's focus on inclusion and early intervention as a move in the right direction. The requirements of kids with speech and language impairments are now more widely known thanks to the policy. Despite the policy's advantages, experts say there are implementation issues. These include inconsistent implementation of inclusive practices in schools, a shortage of qualified personnel, and insufficient resources (such as technology and supplies). Experts believe that NEP 2020 has not sufficiently addressed general educators' training requirements, and they frequently lack the skills necessary to successfully integrate students with speech and language impairments into regular classes. Experts recommend increasing funding for therapy, technology, and training. To close gaps, a greater focus on professional growth would be beneficial. Raising community, parent, and educator awareness of speech and language impairments may help to lessen stigma and facilitate early intervention. Create a well-defined plan for using technology in therapy and instruction, including equipment, software, and training for families and professionals. Children with speech and language impairments should have access to digital resources by utilizing NEP 2020's digital learning potential. Create community engagement initiatives that emphasize educating the public about the value of inclusive education and the advantages of early intervention in order to lessen the stigma attached to disabilities.

Conclusions

The study comes to the conclusion that although NEP 2020 offers a promising foundation for inclusive education, there are significant implementation gaps, especially for kids with speech and language impairments. The study emphasizes the value of infrastructural upgrades, teacher preparation, assistive technology use, and specialized support. To guarantee that all children, regardless of handicap, have equitable access to high-quality education, a cooperative strategy including numerous partners and more money for inclusive education projects are also required. Children with disabilities can reach their full potential if they are empowered through inclusive and comprehensive practices, but this calls for dedication, funding, and efficient policy implementation. The intricate difficulties that educators encounter while assisting kids with speech and language impairments may be

brought to light by this study, as well as the chances presented by NEP 2020 to establish an inclusive educational framework. Significant progress may be made in empowering inclusive education for all children under NEP 2020 by concentrating on enhancing training, enhancing multidisciplinary collaboration, boosting resource allocation, and assisting families.

Limitations of the Study

Interview Sample Size: Although the study involves in-depth interviews with experts, the sample size might not accurately reflect the range of difficulties and experiences encountered by all educators and professionals working in the sector Subjectivity of Responses: The conclusions drawn from the interviews are predicated on the experts' subjective experiences, which can differ based on their particular positions and places.

Suggestions

Infrastructure Improvement: To properly serve students with disabilities, schools should have specialized classrooms and accessible amenities. Assistive Technology Integration: To help kids with speech and language impairments, more schools should implement assistive technologies such as audiobooks, speech-to-text programs, and other learning aids. Teacher Training: To give educators the skills they need to serve children with impairments, particularly those who struggle with speech and in programs are required. More Funding: To make the required adjustments to technology, training, and infrastructure, more money must be invested. Monitoring and Evaluation: To keep tabs on the development of kids with disabilities and assess the effectiveness of inclusive education programs, efficient monitoring methods should be established.

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