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Education of Children with Special Needs

The current issue of the newsletter focuses on ‘Education of Children with Special Needs’. This issue includes articles written in the above context by various experts and researchers from different member-institutions from countries such as Australia, China, France, India, Pakistan and South Korea. Apart from these articles, the issue also includes a section of important news and events in the context of these member-institutions.

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The first article, from Australia, discusses the limitation of traditional approaches towards teaching-learning when it comes to addressing the educational requirements of children with special needs. It notes that what is required in this context is a developmental approach that is based on the premise that all students can learn. In this approach, learning opportunities focus on helping the student develop the skills and knowledge, and teachers identify a student’s developmental level through observing evidence of learning through what the student does, says, makes and writes.

The second article discusses the situation in China, where the recently published “14th Five-Year Plan” - Special Education Development and Upgrading Action Plan developed by the Ministry of Education and other departments focuses on the goal of building a high-quality special education system, and clarifies the roadmap and mission statement for the reform and development of special education. The article further elaborates the provisions envisaged in the plan. The third article, from France, details the efforts undertaken by the IIEP in addressing and assessing the education of children with special needs across the world. This includes a roundtable on ‘Inclusion and Disability in Sectoral Planning in Education in Asia and Anglophone Africa’, involving governments from Cambodia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, South Africa, and Vietnam, collaborative works with the UNICEF, and rapid assessment studies conducted across countries like Colombia, Bangladesh, Mauritius, and Rwanda.

The fourth article is in Indian context and discusses the multiple pathways that the country has sought in terms of ensuring quality education to all. It also underlines the challenges in this regard and points towards the way forward, including providing teachers, other front-line implementation staff as well as school leaders with professional development programmes to assess and subsequently fill the gaps in skills and competencies required to implement inclusive education related provisions. Whereas the next article, which is also in Indian context, underlines gaps in the formulation and implementation of policies in ensuring universalisation of education, the sixth article discusses the National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020, which was adopted by India on 29 July, 2020. The article cites that the goal of the policy is to provide education to all, including the disadvantaged and underrepresented section of society. It states that full equity and inclusion are the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system. Thus, the author adds, the NEP 2020 provides a roadmap for the education of *Divyang* students or those with disability. The next article, which is also in the Indian context, details the need for a careful Individualised Reasonable Accommodation Plan (IRAP) for schools to ensure individualised accommodation and support for children, along with other necessary supports. Its scope should extend to imparting education in the most appropriate languages, modes and means of communication, universal design and modifications in the curriculum and pedagogy, including assessment, provision of teaching-learning resource materials in accessible formats and acceptance of learners' responses in their own convenient forms. These, the author argues, are of paramount importance for providing equal educational opportunity and high quality of education.

The eighth article, from Pakistan, chalks out the constitutional and policy provisions in the country towards ensuring universalisation of education.

The Article 25 A of the constitution of Pakistan recognises that provision of free and compulsory education is a fundamental human right. The article guarantees the provision of free and compulsory education for all children aged 5-16 years in such a manner as may be determined by law. The subsequent article, which is also from Pakistan, notes that in spite of the constitutional guarantees and policy interventions, the education system in the country is facing considerable barriers in providing equitable access to quality education to all the children, and therefore, there is a need to develop strategies to overcome these complex and multifaceted challenges and ensure inclusive and equitable education for all to fulfil the constitutional obligations and international commitment of SDGs, whereby Pakistan can create a more compassionate society that recognises and celebrates the unique abilities and potential of every individual.

The last article is in the context of South Korea and traces the attempts made by the South Korean government towards ensuring universalisation of education. To meet the unique instructional needs of students with different types of disabilities, schools, regional education offices and the Ministry have made efforts to provide well-crafted services and support for counselling, family matters, treatment, care assistants, assistive technology devices, learning equipment, commuting, and information access. For children who are found eligible for special education, the pre-primary, primary, and secondary education is mandatory. South Korea also provides tuition-free programmes to toddlers younger than three years and high school graduates who wish to pursue career training. Despite this, the author notes that there is still a long distance to go as the number of classrooms, and the specially-trained teachers remain inadequate.

The articles included in the current issue have drawn upon the issue at hand by acknowledging its seriousness as well as chalking out the way forward towards ensuring universalisation of education by cutting across the obstacles posed by various disabilities.

Several measures and policies have been planned and undertaken by each country to alleviate these issues. While many of these interventions have met with further challenges and obstacles, there is no denying the fact that the concise discussions provided here will enable the stakeholders in juxtaposing their approaches with one another and fine tuning their own respective policies and approaches. It also has to be underlined that all the countries have made great strides towards ensuring the

integration of children with special needs into their own respective schooling systems

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Developmental Approaches and Tools for Teaching Students with Disability in Australia

According to UNESCO (2023), there are between 93 million and 150 million students with disability, globally. In terms of education, students with disability are less likely than their peers to attend school, they are overrepresented in relation to non-completion of schooling, and they are less likely than their peers to develop basic literacy skills (UNESCO, 2018). This indicates considerable inequity in educational opportunities for students with disability. Improving education for this at-risk group of students is crucial.

Though there is currently widespread advocacy for greater inclusion of students with disability in education, yet many teachers do not have the knowledge or experience to support these students to progress well in their learning (Cooc, 2019). Despite their potential to learn, academic achievement of students with disability can often fall behind that of their peers (for example, Mattison, et al., 2023). This leads educators to ask: How can we support the learning of students with disability to optimise educational opportunities and outcomes?

Traditional educational approaches take a deficit perspective whereby a student with a disability is found lacking. In this model, educators teach the content specified for the year level, the students are expected

to learn the content, and the teacher assesses how much the student had learned. From this perspective, the focus is on what students cannot do and not what they have achieved. This focus excludes students whose learning needs and trajectories are different from their peers, and different from the normative standard such as students with disability.

Developmental approaches to teaching and learning are based on the premise that all students can learn. This enables a different educational focus, moving the perception from deficit approaches (i.e. the need to “fix” what students do not know) to developmental approaches (i.e. building on what has already been learned). In this approach, learning opportunities focus on helping the student develop the skills and knowledge that will enable them progress to the next developmental level (Griffin, 2018). Teachers identify a student’s developmental level by observing evidence of learning through what the student does, says, makes and writes (Griffin, 2018). This means that well designed assessments, and appropriate adjustments and modifications to assessment are essential to gain an accurate picture of where the student is in their learning. This individualised approach can enable greater access to learning opportunities for students with disability.

There are several tools that teachers can use to help identify the developmental levels of students. These include individual education plans and learning progressions. Learning progressions are empirically designed maps that describe the way in which learning typically develops from early knowledge and skills to more advanced knowledge and skills within an area of learning (Waters, 2018). These are fundamental in areas such as numeracy, reading, writing or spelling but can also be applied for more complex areas of learning such as physics or history. By using learning progressions, teachers can identify evidence of learning that students have produced. This information enables teachers plan according to what the student is ready to learn next. Teachers can also use learning progressions to identify when a student is not developing along typical learning trajectories. This information is essential in predicting the next steps in learning.

Individual education plans are also essential tools that can enable teachers, parents and health professionals to reduce barriers to learning and support each student with disability to succeed in learning. Through the use of individual education plans, the student's support network identifies barriers to learning, devise strategies to remove or reduce barriers and identify learning goals and support structures that will facilitate learning

In conjunction with classroom level supports, school level supports can enable greater inclusion of students with disability. At school level, research supports the use of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) as the ideal approach for identifying and addressing the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties (Roberts, et al., 2021). At Tier 1, the MTSS model looks at high quality, evidence-informed initial instruction and evidence-based practices throughout all approaches. Tier 2 includes interventions that are implemented by trained teachers to small groups. At Tier 3, individualised programmes are delivered one-to-one. In doing this, MTSS improves their educational experiences for all students with disability. Such approaches ensure the consideration of the full range of academic, behavioural and social needs among children.

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Education of Children with Special Needs in China

The Chinese government regards the quality and level of special education as an important indicator of the progress of national social civilisation in China, which serves as an essential demonstration of highlighting educational philosophy, delivering moral support around the metropolitan areas, and displaying the brilliance of human nature. School education should create conditions to support the further development of integrated education, and the integration of children with special needs and ordinary children, which is not only a matter of the education system but also should be widely understood and supported in society.

This year, the General Office of the State Council of China forwarded the “*14th Five-Year Plan - Special Education Development and Upgrading Action Plan*” (hereafter referred to as the “Plan”) developed by the Ministry of Education and other departments, which focuses on the goal of building a high-quality special education system, and clarifies the roadmap and mission statement for the reform and development of special education. The 14th Five-Year Plan stresses on expanding school section services, promoting integrated education, improving support capabilities, and strengthening organisation and implementation. The Plan demonstrates four distinctive characteristics. Firstly, the Plan emphasises the necessity of effectively protecting the rights of children with disabilities to access education equally and educating indiscriminately. Secondly, it highlights respecting the characteristics and individual differences of the physical and mental development of children with disabilities, and educating them according to their capabilities and interests, which helps achieve appropriate development and enables children understand and respect one another in an integrated environment, and grow and progress together, irrespective of their disabilities and limitations. Thirdly, policies need to be reviewed and implemented on a case-by-case

basis. Special education needs to respect the actual conditions of economic and social development, and population distribution in different regions, encourage and support all regions to adapt to local conditions, plan appropriately and comprehensively promote the development of special education in their local regions. Special education also requires to respect the educational needs of children and adolescents with disabilities of different categories, degrees and ages, and scientifically assess, appropriately place and implement education based on specific scenarios. Fourth is the guarantee of special education. The Plan emphasises the need to increase support in terms of policies, funds, programmes and so on, and provide special support on the basis of inclusive policies to enhance the well-being of children with disabilities comprehensively. The general idea of China’s special education is intended towards “... suitable integration, expanding school section services, promoting integrated education, and improving support capabilities”. Accepting and embracing the individuality of each child from the perspective of integration, exploring how early childhood education can truly educate each child according to their capabilities and interests.

After much effort, it is believed that more kindergartens, schools, communities and educational institutions will be able to actively participate in exploring and practicing preschool integrated education in future and work together to provide an equal and quality education for every child. They will collaboratively build an inclusive, open and harmonious society and work together to create a future full of love and hope.

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Education of Children with Special Needs: Global Perspective

By 2030, SDG 4 aims to guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. However, for children with disabilities, this ambition does not reflect the realities that they face. Children with disabilities continue to be the most vulnerable group in education systems with the highest risk of marginalisation and exclusion. They are twice as likely as children without disabilities to never have attended school, and are considerably more at risk of being out of primary (44%), lower-secondary (33%), and upper-secondary education (27%). The reason behind this is not only school infrastructure and learning materials which lack adaptation for special needs but also, inadequate data monitoring, weak national leadership and management, and social stigma, which constitute additional barriers to accessing education (IIEP-UNESCO and UNICEF, 2019).

IIEP-UNESCO recognises that education systems must extend equal opportunities for academic advancement to children with special needs. It is vital to identify and overcome the context-specific barriers to education encountered by these children. To do so, governments must not only properly incorporate specific needs into planning processes at the national level (especially in education sector analyses and sector plans), but also engage more broadly, in a process of holistic and systemic reflection, based on rigorous planning. The objective here is two-fold: taking into account the cognitive, social and emotional development of children with disabilities in a better manner, and also promoting the development of inclusive societies by fostering acceptance and interaction with others.

Since 2018, IIEP-UNESCO has created spaces for political dialogue and supported governments' capacity-building on inclusive educational planning and management through research and training. In 2018, in cooperation with UNICEF, IIEP hosted two technical roundtables to advance governments' skills for inclusive educational planning and management. The first roundtable on 'Inclusion and Disability in Sectoral Planning in Education in Asia and Anglophone Africa' involved governments from Cambodia, Ethiopia,

Fiji, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, South Africa, and Vietnam, which were selected based on their valuable contributions to disability-inclusive planning. The second roundtable focused on 'Inclusion and Disability in Sectoral Planning in Education in Francophone Africa'. Overall, staffs from 16 national ministries of education, and disability organisations explored the topic in question.

Based on the lessons learnt from the two roundtables, IIEP and UNICEF developed a report and conceptual framework on disability-inclusive education. A 9-week course was co-organised on the topic of foundations for disability-inclusive education planning, addressed to staffs from ministries of education. Since then, the course has been re-organised five times. Each time, it was adapted to the needs of a specific regional audience, namely: Southern and East Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Francophone Africa, and Eastern and Southern Africa, MENA, and East Asia. Those readers interested in exploring the impact of this online course can view the evaluation. Inclusive educational planning, as a subject, has also been integrated into IIEP's Advanced Training Programme.

Moreover, IIEP has conducted research on the link between inclusive education and technology. ICTs have long provided alternative learning offers for those often excluded from traditional channels. However, while the COVID-19 pandemic has imparted prominent attention to the potential of ICTs, it has also shed light on persisting issues of accessibility and inclusivity. IIEP, together with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education (IITE-UNESCO), has carried out case studies on existing practices in inclusive digital learning to explore these intricate issues. Moreover, it has conducted rapid assessments to measure the impact of COVID-19 on access to distance learning for pupils with disabilities in Colombia, Bangladesh, Mauritius, and Rwanda.

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Pathways for Transforming the Education of Children with Special Needs: Indian Experiences and Learnings

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 was a landmark legislation towards the universalisation of elementary education in India. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 has further established a right to inclusive education by providing a legal framework for the education of children with special needs (CWSN). Additionally, from 2018-19, Samagra Shiksha, together with state specific schemes, offers specific programmatic provisions for inclusive education. NCERT has prepared innovative materials to encourage inclusive attitudes among students and teachers.

Despite the above supportive policy frames, U-DISE data suggest that enrolment of CWSN, in schools, remains low while drop-out rates among CWSN are high. The enrolment of CWSN sharply declines with each new educational level. While continued prevalence of segregated systems of education (e.g. special schools and home-based education) and difficulties in obtaining disability certifications pose major challenge in the realisation of inclusive education, resource deficiency and incapacity in implementation (e.g. lack of awareness about provisions, limited number of resource teachers and inadequate monitoring) are also severe constraints.

It is undeniable that the last two decades have seen changes owing to positive legislation and implementation of specific inclusive-education related provisions. Thus, there is a hope of positive change in the future. Efforts to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation by enhancing domestic spending on education (to ensure allocation of at least 6% GDP) will definitely influence inclusive education in a positive manner. Self-advocacy mobilisations by parents of CWSN and the larger community of people with disabilities can be effective in ensuring that their specific needs are efficaciously addressed through budgetary allocations at all levels. Such advocacy initiatives will also, in the long run,

sensitise society and enhance inclusiveness in the larger society.

The government should also work towards prioritising the adoption of standard criteria for disability-related data collection and review legislation to ensure alignment in the provisions for inclusive education. Since states are responsible for educational planning, efforts to enhance technical capacity of the system, including inter-state collaborations and cooperation among different departments and ministries must also be encouraged. Moreover, segregated provisions must be phased-out in a gradual manner, and referral mechanisms as well as monitoring and evaluation systems must be strengthened.

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School Education of Children with Special Needs in India: Policy Formulation and Implementation

The concept of universalisation of education for all is alien for the children with special needs. This stems from certain gaps in the comprehension of a few concepts. There are also gaps in policy formulation and implementation as per these concepts.

Firstly, universalisation of education means education for all up to Class XII as per the centrally sponsored Samagra Shiksha scheme. However, it is only available as per legal right (RTE) up to the Class VIII. These two may need synchronisation. Secondly, the universalisation of education means the provision of education at input, process and output stages. If it is to be operationalised in action, it means admission for all, participation by all in all educational activities, and also learning for all as per their potential and curriculum. The Right to Education Act of 2009 and subsequently formed model rules have helped in getting admission for all children in Class I. However, from the data (UDISE Plus) as also the national surveys (Pratham and NAS) on learning outcomes, it is deciphered that learning is not happening at desired level. Certainly, in the absence of the universalised pedagogical interventions, the universalised outcome of learning is a far-fetched expectation. So, it can be concluded that in India, universalisation is yet to be achieved at process and outcome stages of education.

Thirdly, on probing further, it is found that the children who are lagging behind in schools are children with special needs (CWSN). The term CWSN is used as a broader term to cover all children who are facing difficulty on account of language barrier, exposure, resource deficit and impairment. However, there is a huge difference in the needs of each category of students. It needs to be clarified for the educational functionaries in order to provide interventions. A child with disability but not certified due to the fact that the

disability is below 40 per cent on the scale, is still a child with special needs.

Fourthly, a Child with Disability (CwD) and a Child with Special Needs (CWSN) are not defined in any document. The RPwD Act has defined only benchmark disability. But a child below benchmark disability also faces hurdles in educational activities and requires intervention.

There are innumerable strategies to achieve universalisation of education and to include all children (top to bottom approach). However, the most important is planning. It is advisable that keeping a child at the centre, mind maps are drawn on the basis of the needs specific to the child. Each strand of the needs may be labelled with what is available or what has to be made available. Further branching may be projected specific to those needs, which are to be made available; whether it is at policy level or implementation level. Here, policy may be conceptualised as executive orders which can be monitored and not as visions. Thus, planning must begin at child level with a bottom to top approach.

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Educational Status and Challenges of Children with Special Needs in India

Children with Special Needs (CWSN) are ignored at many levels. In many circumstances, their own parents do not believe in educating these children. The National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 intends to provide education to all, including the disadvantaged and underrepresented section of the society. It states that full equity and inclusion is the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system. Thus, NEP 2020 provides a roadmap for the education of *Divyang* students or those with disability.

As per the census 2011, disabled persons constituted 2.21% (2.68 Cr.) of the total population in India. However, there is a lot of variation amongst the states in this regard. In 15 States /UTs, the prevalence of disability (proportion of disabled persons to total population) is higher than that of the same at the all-India level. The highest number of disabled persons is from the state of Uttar Pradesh (15.5%), whereas the highest percentage of CWSN (5-19 years), presently attending educational institutions, has been reported from Goa and Kerala. The percentage of disabled children who never attended educational institutions is highest in Nagaland (39%) followed by Assam (35%).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines persons with disabilities as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (UNCRPD, 2006). According to NEP-2020, *Divyang* students should have complete access to education. Inclusion is the key to promoting education for persons with disability. The basic idea is that *Divyang* population should have access to school

and higher education as well. Education systems of various levels should ensure equity and inclusion for persons with disabilities in all categories.

NEP envisions “increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures, including greater opportunities for outstanding public education; scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students; online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL); and all infrastructure and learning materials accessible and available to learners with disabilities”. Towards meeting these targets, it is essential to increase enrollment of *Divyang* students in school and higher education, by making the curriculum more inclusive, promoting the use of technology in curriculum transaction, etc.

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The *July-December 2023 issue* and the *January-June 2024 issue* of the ANTRIEP Newsletter will focus on the themes ‘**Addressing Children’s Nutritional Needs and School Meal Programmes**’ and ‘**Importance of Incentives in School Education**’ respectively.

Reasonable Accommodation for Children with Disabilities in Schools in India

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 has described reasonable accommodation as “necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden in a particular case, to ensure persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of rights equally with others.” The Policy has endorsed the recommendations of the RPwD Act 2016 with regard to school education and the Samagra Shiksha scheme (2022), the framework for its implementations, has also made provisions for reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities in Chapter-IX on *Inclusive Education* under the different components for implementation of its recommendations. Reasonable accommodation is basically catering to specific individual needs of the child, and denying reasonable accommodation is a form of discrimination. Its scope is broader, not just restricted to infrastructure, but extended to modification in curriculum, flexibility in timing, extra leave, compensatory time, services of scribes for writing an exam and so on. Accommodations are always individualised. Some people may need fewer accommodations while some may need more.

The concept of reasonable accommodation may be described through: (i) learner related components like learners’ specific needs, difficulties faced, abilities and expectations, etc. (ii) The ecosystem of learning centers i.e. the availability and accessibility of materials, equipment, required modifications, supports, resources and expectations of stakeholders other than the learners with disabilities, etc. (iii) The learning activities, including naturally occurring activities, instruction and assessment activities, activities that require special attention, activities to be adapted, etc. and (iv) the learning tools like no-tech, low-tech, and high-tech tools, assistive technology, strategies based on universal design and other accommodations, services and supports, etc.

Hence, a careful Individualised Reasonable Accommodation Plan (IRAP) has to be prepared and implemented in schools for individualised accommodation with other necessary supports. Its scope should be extended to impart education in most appropriate languages, modes and means of communication, universal design and modifications in the curriculum and pedagogy, including assessment, provision of teaching-learning resource materials in accessible formats and acceptance of learners’ responses in their own convenient forms. These are of paramount importance for ensuring equal educational opportunity and high quality of education.

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School Education of Children with Special Needs in Pakistan

The provision of school education is the responsibility of the federal and provincial governments in their respective areas. Consequently, in order to fulfill the constitutional obligation, several policy interventions have been implemented to provide accessible quality education across the country. School education of children with special needs is a critical aspect in any society, and in Pakistan, this issue is of utmost importance, therefore, successive governments have taken several steps to ensure equal opportunity to all the children, including those with disabilities/special needs. Inclusive Education Policy is adopted to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Under this policy, efforts are made to ensure that such children have access to the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled peers. Moreover, advocacy and awareness campaigns through various organisations are actively involved in creating awareness about the rights and needs of children with special needs. Simultaneously, a network of special schools has been established to educate, train and rehabilitate children with disabilities by developing supportive learning environment. Efforts are being made to provide training and professional development programmes for teachers to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach children with diverse abilities. Similarly, NGOs and governments are providing assistive devices and technology to facilitate learning process of children with disabilities and enabling them to access educational contents and participate in classroom activities.

In spite of the constitutional guarantees and aforementioned policy interventions, the education system is facing considerable barriers in providing equitable access to quality education to all the children of age five to sixteen, and a large number of children remain out of school due to (i) lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities to accommodate all the children, including those with special needs.

Most of the educational institutions lack ramps, elevators, and accessible washrooms, making it difficult for children with physical disabilities to access classrooms; (ii) shortage of qualified and trained teachers with expertise in special education hampers the delivery of appropriate teaching techniques and individualised support required by these children. This lack of specialised training often results in ineffective teaching methods that fail to address the diverse needs of students; (iii) the existing curricula in mainstream schools often do not cater to the diverse learning styles of children with special needs; and (iv) financial constraints, allocation and spending on education remained around 2.5% of GDP in the last decade; less than internationally recommended.

There is a need to develop strategies to overcome these complex and multifaceted challenges and ensure inclusive and equitable education for all to fulfill constitutional obligation and international commitment of SDGs. The federal and provincial governments may prioritise the needs of infrastructure development, teacher training, curriculum development, allocation of required funding and attitudinal barriers, whereby Pakistan can create a more compassionate society that recognises and celebrates the unique abilities and potential of every individual.

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A Rights-based Approach to Education of Children with Special Needs in Pakistan

Provision of education to all children requires a rights-based approach. This approach makes it imperative that all children be included in the educational process, regardless of any differences. Differences in ability bring disenfranchisement from education process to children with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN). The fact that they account for one-third of all out-of-school children along with other vulnerable groups like working children and minorities is testament of their exclusion. International commitments in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other such protocols call for extending opportunities for quality education to all, including those with disabilities or SEN.

Inclusive education has become a priority policy championed by donors, international organisations, and governments across the globe. The focus on inclusion, which has been given increased attention through efforts to meet SDG 4, has brought about a concerted effort to include children with disabilities within the education system. Global treaties and declarations over the past decades such as Education for All commitment (1990), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994), the Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (2006) and the Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2015) have brought about a shift in approaches to the education of learners with disabilities from one of segregation, to integration, and ultimately towards 'inclusion'.

Pakistan has approximately 5.035 million people with disability (PWDs), of these, 43.4% are children with disability. It is estimated that around 1.4 million (28.9% of total number of PWDs) are the children of school-going age who do not have access to education. Only 14% of persons with disabilities are in work, rest rely on family members for financial support.

Pakistan has a system of special schools where children with disabilities and special needs are enrolled. These cater to specific disabilities like school for children with hearing impairment, school for children with visual impairment and so forth. These are run by the special education department and, in Sindh province, this is the responsibility of 'Department of Empowerment of People with Disabilities' under Government of Sindh. Some children with special needs and disabilities having difficulties that are mild in nature do get admissions in mainstream schools.

Teachers in mainstream as well as special schools are not trained very well in addressing the needs of children in academic, physical, and socio-emotional areas. This creates further hindrances in bringing quality education to them and in further marginalisation of these children. Some schools in the private sector are promoting inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education. These schools are imparting training to their teachers and trying to provide the support needed in this process. However, their numbers are still small. Article 25 A of the constitution of Pakistan recognises that provision of free and compulsory education is a fundamental human right. The article guarantees the provision of free and compulsory education to all children aged 5-16 years in such a manner as may be determined by law. However, much work is needed to bring universal quality primary education to all children, including those with special needs and disabilities.

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Education of Children with Special Need in South Korea

Korea holds a strong stance towards educating children with special needs. More than 12,000 specialised classrooms are operated in this regard, across kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high schools. We also have 187 special education schools in Korea for those students who need to be educated with special care. As of April 2021, about 260 students have been educated across the 199 special education support centers (KMOE, 2023).

Enacted in 2008, the Act on Special Education for Persons with Disabilities, etc. is intended to provide individuals with special needs with an integrated learning environment and educational approaches in line with the characteristics and degree of disability at different stages in their life cycle, so that they can realise their full potential within a society (KMOE, 2023). The role of concerned organisations and institutions (central and local authorities) such as selection and placement of special education recipients, compulsory schooling is described in the Act. The enrollment rate of students with disabilities has increased from 40% to 80% as a result of the Act (EBS News, 2023).

To meet the unique instructional needs of students with many different types of disabilities, schools, regional education offices and the Ministry make efforts to provide well-crafted services - support for counseling, family matters, treatment, care assistants, assistive technology devices, learning equipment, commuting, and information access (KMOE, 2023). For children who are found eligible for special education, pre-primary, primary, and secondary education is mandatory. Korea also provides tuition-free programmes to toddlers younger than three years and high school graduates who wish to pursue career training. The special education programme can be divided into four areas: kindergarten, core courses, electives - which follow general education

requirements - and basic courses designed to help students incapable of fulfilling general education competency and strengthen their independence and community engagement (KMOE, 2023).

For the students whose physical conditions do not allow them to go to school, online schooling service is also available. “School for you” operated by KMOE, Education Offices and KEDI, is launched to ensure students’ right for education. This online education service is for students not only with special needs but also for who are hospitalised for more than 3 months. The standard student-teacher ratio for special education classroom is 4 to 1 according to the Act. However, despite the governmental efforts to increase educational opportunities for the students with special needs, the number of classrooms, and the specially-trained teachers remain insufficient (EBS News, 2023).

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News from ANTRIEP Member Institutions (July-December 2022)

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)

France

- IIEP organised the Regional Forum on Education Policy “How to address the learning crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean” from 4-6 October, 2022.
- IIEP, along with UNESCO, organised an event on “Planning for the future of education and training in Africa with IIEP-UNESCO: priorities for the continent and book launch on planning for higher education” on 19 October, 2022.
- Launched Webinar on “What do we know about the impacts of COVID-19 on education?” on 30 November, 2022.
- The IIEP Governing Board met for the future of educational planning on 15 December, 2022

National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)

India

- A training programme was organised by NIEPA, on “Methodology of Formulating Outcome Based District School Education Plan in North- Eastern States” from 12-16 September, 2022 at Guwahati, Assam.
- Organized a training programme on Methodology of Formulating outcome Based District School Education Plan in Manipur, from 17-21 October 2022.

- Organised an orientation programme on ‘Student Based Financial Support System in School Education: Issues and Challenges’ from 14-18 November, 2022.
- Conducted a workshop on “Improving School Participation and Learning on Reopening of Schools in India with a Special Focus on School Preparedness” from 14-18 November, 2022.
- Organised a National Seminar on “Educational Administration and Governance in India: Emerging Dimensions, Challenges and Possibilities,” from 2-4 November 2022.

The Aga Khan University (AKU)

Pakistan

- AKU Medical College received international award in curriculum development on 2 September, 2022.
- Aga Khan University launched Women Leadership Academy on 5 October, 2022.
- AKU-IED hosted a “Global Meet on Learnings from the Pandemic” on 16 November, 2022.

SEAMEO INNOTECH

Philippines

- SEAMEO INNOTECH donated school supplies, food, toys to children for the Christmas season on 13 December, 2022.
- Conducted training on “Project-Based Learning in Thailand” on 10 October, 2022.

- SEAMEO INNOTECH held a “Blended Knowledge Forum for Teachers” on 7 October, 2022.
- Conducted school leadership programme in Cambodia on 12 September, 2022

Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) *South Korea*

- In July 2022, Dr Juil Kim and 13 Master's students from the Korea University of Technology & Education visited KEDI. They had an opportunity to understand more about the vision and goals of KEDI, along with significant research projects that have been and are being conducted by KEDI. In addition, there was a fruitful Q&A session, enabling them understand the types of literacy and issues/suggestions on literacy education in Korea.
- Organised an International Conference on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) on 26 August, 2022.
- The latest issue of KEDI Journal of Educational Policy was released and made available online from 12 December, 2022. KJEP Vol.19 No. 2 contains a total of 5 research papers.

Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES) *Vietnam*

- VNIES coordinated with the Association of High School Mathematics Teaching, Education Magazine and Hung Vuong University to organise a scientific conference with the theme "High school mathematics in a new context: some theoretical and practical issues" on 9 December, 2022.
- VNIES organised the “2022 Annual Conference on Educational Sciences” in a combined form of face-to-face and online on 8 December, 2022.
- On 30 November, 2022, VNIES, in collaboration with UNICEF Vietnam, organised a National Consultation Workshop on “Learning and equity in children's education - evidence-based education policy making (National Consultation Workshop MICS EAGLE Initiative)” in hybrid format.
- VNIES, in collaboration with UNESCO, organised the conference "Education for sustainable development: Panoramic perspective and practical experience” in person and online on 3 October, 2022.

For further details on ANTRIEP activities, please contact

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ANTRIEP Member Institutions

1. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 19 Prospect Hill Road, Private Bag – 55, Camberwell, Melbourne, VICTORIA-3124, Australia (www.acer.edu.au)
2. Balitbang Dikbud Centre for Policy Research (Puslit Penelitian), Office for Educational and Culture Research and Development (Balitbang Dikb), Ministry of Education and Culture, Jalan Jenderal Sudirman, Senayan, JAKARTA-12070, Indonesia. (www.kemdikbud.go.id)
3. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) 75, Mohakhali Commercial Area, DHAKA – 1212, Bangladesh (www.brac.net)
4. Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), 5/14, Humayun Road, Mohammadpur, DHAKA – 1207, Bangladesh (www.campebd.org)
5. Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR), R.S. No. 9A2, Plot No. 82, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Nagar, Near Yalakki Shetter Colony, Lakamanahalli, Dharwad-580004 KARNATAKA, India (www.cmdr.ac.in)
6. National Institute of Education (NIE), P.O. Box 21, High Level Road, Maharagama, Sri Lanka (www.nie.lk)
7. Institut Aminuddin Baki (National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership), Malaysia Education Ministry, Value Education Complex 71760 Bandar Enstek, Negeri Sembilan, MALAYSIA (<http://iab.moe.edu.my>)
8. International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), 7-9 rue Eugene-Delacroix, 75116 PARIS, France (www.iiep.unesco.org)
9. Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), 7, Gyohak-ro, Deoksan-eup, Jincheon-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do, South Korea (www.kedi.re.kr)
10. National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), Dhanmodi, DHAKA – 1205, Bangladesh (www.naem.gov.bd)
11. National Centre for Educational Development (NCED), Sanothimi, BHAKTAPUR 2050, Nepal (www.nced.gov.np)
12. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi - 110 016 (INDIA) (www.ncert.nic.in)
13. National Institute of Education (NIE), 80, Preah Nordon Blvd, Phnom Penh-120207, Cambodia (www.nie.edu.kh)
14. National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), 17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi –110016, India (www.niepa.ac.in)
15. Pakistan Institute of Education, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Taleemi Chowk, G-8/1, ISLAMABAD-44000, PAKISTAN (<http://aepam.edu.pk>)
16. Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID), Tribhuvan University, G.P.O. Box 2161, Balkhu, KATHMANDU, Nepal (www.cerid.org)
17. Institute of Human Resource Development (SIHRD), Shanghai Academy of Educational Sciences 21 Chaling Road, SHANGHAI, P.R.C.-200032, China
18. South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology, SEAMEO INNOTECH P.O. Box 207, Commonwealth Avenue, U.P. Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines (www.seameo-innotech.org)
19. State Institute of Educational Management & Training (SIEMAT), 25, Sir P.C. Banerjee Road, Allenganj, Prayagraj-211002, ALLAHABAD, Uttar Pradesh, India (www.siematup.org)
20. The Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P) 1-5/ B-VII, Federal B Area, Karimabad, Karachi – 75950, PAKISTAN (www.akdn.org/akes)
21. The Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development, (AKU-IED), 1-5/B-VII, Federal B. Area Karimabad, KARACHI-75950, Pakistan (<http://www.aku.edu/iedpk>)
22. Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES), Centre for Higher and Vocational Education Studies 101, Tran Hung Dao Hoan Kiem HANOI CITY, Vietnam (www.vnrw.vnies.edu.in)

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