

## Equitable and Inclusive Education: Learning for all

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### Abstract

This research paper focuses on a significant issue that society is facing in the area of education. The majority of institutions worldwide have been concerned with equality issues at least since the 1950s. In an effort to address this problem and ensure greater participation in education while attempting to lessen social stratification, they have considered and used public policy as a tool. Education considered as a human right and it essential for social cohesion. In the light of such challenges, there is evidence of an upward trend in interest in the concept of expanding access to inclusive and equitable education. There have been significant international initiatives over the past 30 years to promote inclusive developments in education. The United Nations' Education for All (EFA) movement in particular has worked to ensure that all students have access to high-quality basic education. Progress toward inclusion and equity requires an effective implementation strategy, just like any significant policy change does. It requires innovative thinking putting special emphasis on the obstacles faced by some children that cause them to experience marginalization as a result of contextual factors. The implication is that removing these obstacles is the most crucial step in creating educational models that work for all kids. Inclusion then turns into a strategy for enhancing educational systems as a whole. Here we are exploring the topic of equitable and inclusive education with the concept of learning for all.

*Keywords:* Equity, Inclusive Education, Learning for all, marginalization

### Introduction

Education is meant to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and equally. Most educational fields have dealt with the issue of equality at least since the 1950s. Public policy is a tool used to ensure

inclusion and equity. Inclusion is essential for ensuring greater participation in education and lowering social stratification levels. Education has always been considered as a fundamental right and as a fundamental duty by the government. When it is added to the list of fundamental duties, however, education becomes the responsibility of society as a whole. With a wealth of opportunities for students and guarantees of equality and inclusivity in higher education, India's new education policy has emerged. At all educational levels, the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the development of life skills. NEP 2020's main theme is empowering and transforming education.

### **Inclusion and Equity in Education**

Inclusive education, while being closely linked to equity, aims to strengthen the capacity of school systems to reach out to all students (Ibid.)

by responding to the diversity of their needs and ultimately guaranteeing self-worth and a sense of belonging. It means that education systems must be able to implement mechanisms that foster a proper environment for the well-being of these students, an environment that allows them to express their full potential. It should make them feel safe, achieve the best performance possible and, when applicable, feel in accordance with their own cultural values and representations while being enrolled in mainstream schools. It is the role of policy makers and educators to address these challenges together, guaranteeing the educational achievement of all while strengthening intercultural understanding and social justice (OECD,2021).



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The subject of inclusive and equitable education has received a great deal of attention. The UNESCO defined inclusion as "a process which is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers" to education and ensures the presence, participation, and achievement of all

students and their diversities in its Guidelines for Inclusion. Even though earlier educational policies used inclusive education to make education accessible to everyone, there hasn't been much systematic effort in India to inclusive education.

### **Inclusion and National Education Policy 2020**

Through equitable and inclusive education, the National Education Policy 2020 promises to bring about revolutionary changes. India's diversity necessitates extensive reforms and flexibility in the educational system in order to implement the policy in a way that meets the needs of the diverse population. Therefore, to solve this issue, a multidisciplinary approach is needed. In accordance with the NEP 2020, by 2030,

"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" are the goals. The Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) categories in the NEP 2020 have been expanded to include individuals and critical intersectionality's like migrant communities, transgender people, students in rural areas, and aspirational districts, moving away from the traditional sites of exclusion. The National Education Policy 2020 places a strong emphasis on the importance of education for realizing human potential,



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creating a fair and just society, and advancing national development. The governments take a number of actions, such as ensuring adequate government funding and establishing clear goals for higher education for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. NEP 2020 calls for improving gender balance in admission to institutions of higher learning. NEP 2020 encourages teaching in the appropriate local languages and supports the use of those languages. For the students who are coming from the disadvantaged backgrounds, NEP plans to develop a bridge course.

## Elements and Challenges of Equitable and Inclusive Education

Important Elements of achieving equitable and inclusive education is access to education for all. To ensure that everyone can access the educational system, barriers such as those caused by geography, economics, culture, or physical limitations must be removed. Equity in education is not just about access; it also has to do with the standard of instruction. A good education should be open to all students, flexible, and sensitive to their individual needs. This includes qualified instructors, suitable curricula, and available materials. By acknowledging and addressing various learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds, inclusive teaching practices cater to the diversity of learners. Making a welcoming and encouraging environment for all students to succeed is part of inclusion.

The hurdles of achieving inclusive and equitable education includes the improper resource allocation. Fair resource distribution is a challenge for many educational systems. This includes unequal funding for schools, insufficient teacher preparation programs, and a lack of educational infrastructure in underserved areas. Discrimination and bias are obstacles to inclusive and equitable education by influencing everything from curriculum choices to classroom interactions. Some people, in particular those with disabilities, may find it difficult to access education due to inadequate transportation, a lack of schools in outlying areas, and physical barriers. Limited access to education and learning gaps among students can result from poverty and economic inequalities.

## Conclusion

As we previously mentioned, education will only be meaningful if it ensures equity and inclusion by being accessible to all. Education is a tool for growth and change all over the world. Let's use this method to ensure social cohesion. Exclusion can occur in a variety of ways, including based on gender, race, or economic standing. The needs of every child in every community must be met by inclusive schools, and the federal and state governments must train teachers to run inclusive classrooms.

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**About Author:**

Ms. Mariyam Marseena M (Daughter of Abdul Naseer M & Fousiya P.K) resides in Kozhikode, Kerala. She graduated from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi with a master's degree in Educational Planning and Administration. She has seven years of mentoring and inclusive leadership experience. She is an innovative mentor for young minds and an enthusiastic learner. Being a lifelong learner, she is a strong proponent of continuous growth and self-enhancement. She is committed to utilizing her work to better the lives of young people and give back to society. She possesses high ethical standard, values, & self –efficacy to handle novel situations.

The research paper titled "Understanding the Organization of Common University Entrance Test: Students' Perspective," was submitted as part of her post-graduation studies. In 2023, she has presented a research paper titled “Higher Education in Kerala and the Emerging Trend of Student Migration to Foreign Universities” at Fathima Mata National College, Kerala. She has participated and presented a paper on “Covid 19 and Crisis Leadership in Teacher Praxis” in one day national seminar organized by Hyderabad Central University.

In several instances, she performed multiple roles, including Resource Person, Guest Speaker, Convenor, and Vice President. She has organized and taken part in a number of national and international academic programs.

Her areas of interest in research are educational leadership and ethics.