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SAMAGRA

SHIKSHA

ABHIYAN:

What is  
there for  
inclusive  
education  
of children  
with  
disabilities?

The logo for ASTHA is a stylized, light purple graphic. It features a large, rounded arch that frames a central figure. The figure consists of a solid purple circle for a head and a vertical, slightly flared shape for a body, resembling a person standing. Below the figure, the word "ASTHA" is written in a bold, sans-serif font, also in a light purple color.

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POLICY BRIEF.

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# SAMAGRA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN: What is there for inclusive education of children with disabilities?

## **I) INTRODUCTION**

Education is crucial not only for development of the individual but for the society as a whole. The Constitution of India both under the Fundamental Rights as well as Directive Principles of State Policies has provided various provisions to ensure education to the people residing within the contours of the country. The State from time to time has been formulating and implementing laws and schemes with an aim to ensure education to all. However, inclusive education has remained a distant dream as millions of the children belonging to disadvantaged section of Indian society, especially Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs continued to face discrimination in access to as well as accessibility in education. The Right to Education Act, 2009 which provided for free and compulsory education was the first novel step towards outlining the fundamental right to education for all children including the child with disabilities. The Centrally sponsored schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Abhiyan have tried to cater to the need of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs however with minimal success.

The education system in India has in year 2018 witnessed implementation of new integrated education scheme “Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan” - an amalgamation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Abhiyan and the Teachers Training Programs. The purpose to implement an integrated education system through a single program has been to facilitate effective and optimal utilization of budgetary allocations and human resources<sup>1</sup>. Under the new scheme, the expenditure would be endured both by Centre as well as by the state. Under the proposed fund sharing pattern between the Centre and eight North-Eastern States as well as for three Himalayan States in the ratio of 90:10<sup>2</sup>. The scheme provides for fund sharing between the Centre for all other States and Union Territories with Legislature in the ratio of 60:40 while in the case of Union territories without legislature, the scheme would be entirely centrally sponsored<sup>3</sup>.

Another distinguishing feature of the newly implemented integrated scheme has been to envisage the school as a continuum from pre- schools to senior secondary levels<sup>4</sup>. The scheme aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to senior secondary stage in accordance with the sustainable development

<sup>1</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-1, pg.4.

<sup>2</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-1, pg.5.

<sup>3</sup> ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-1,pg-4.

goal for education. The salient features and provisions under the newly integrated scheme provides the opportunity and scope to initiate a debate and deliberate among the disability advocacy groups, academia and various other stakeholders and henceforth critically engage with discontinuities and ambiguities in the scheme. There is a need to engage with issues and concerns like “Are there sufficient provisions for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and do they cater to their specific requirements? What are modalities being formulated by the policy-makers to provide these provisions? Are there enough budgetary allocations and resources for these provisions? Has the scheme taken cognizance of and drawn from the prevailing law for Persons with Disability?

## **II) Some Crucial Statistics**

The U-DISE data reflects that figures of enrollment of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in schools have remained low and drop-out rates of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs continues to remain matter of concern.

The flash statistic of UDISE 2016-2017 reflects that the enrollment rate of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs at all levels of school education has been sharply declining over the years. In 2014-15, there were total of 25,98,480 Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in school education system<sup>5</sup>. This further declined to 25,64,855 in 2015-16 and 23,78,225 in year 2016-17<sup>6</sup>.

At the stages of school education system, one finds decline of students getting enrolled from lower to higher level. While in year 2014-15 a total of 23,17,863 Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs were enrolled in elementary level there has been sharp decline at secondary level 2,19,571 which further drops to 61,046 at higher secondary level<sup>7</sup>. Similar trends were visible in 2015-16 and 2016-17. In year 2015-2016, there were 22,85,531 Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs enrolled at elementary level while there were 2,18,455 Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs at secondary level and merely 60,869 at higher secondary level<sup>8</sup>. The number of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs enrolled at elementary level does not show any important increase despite the enactment of RPD Act in 2016. Their enrollment rates continues to be dismal at all level of school education with 20,97,315 at elementary level; 2,18,261 at secondary level and 62,649 at higher secondary level<sup>9</sup>.

The Flash statistic of UDISE 2016-2017 also reveals that throughout the country the percentage of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs enrolled to total enrollment in school education across various

<sup>5</sup> NIEPA (2017), UDISE FLASH STATISTIC 2016-2017, “School Education in India”, pg.33.

<sup>6</sup> ibid.

<sup>7</sup> ibid.

<sup>8</sup> ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ibid.

state continues to be major challenge and has largely remained between 0.61 to 1.20<sup>10</sup>. Sixteen Indian States have 0.61% to 1.20% Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs within the school education system. The States of Nagaland (0.37%), Uttarakhand (0.38%), Meghalaya (0.46%), Uttar Pradesh (0.54%), Tripura (0.56%) and Haryana (0.58%) were the worst performing States<sup>11</sup>. The States of Punjab, Odisha, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have 1.21-1.80% of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs enrolled. Only two states- Kerala and Mizoram have enrollment rate better than other states ranging between 1.94-2.58%<sup>12</sup>.

### **III) Inclusive Education of the Children with Disabilities : Provisions under The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 and The Right to Education Act 2009.**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 is instrumental in India's endeavor for universal free and compulsory elementary education. Generally, any form of exclusion or denial of the social group from the text of the Laws, Policies and Scheme not only act as an impediment for incurring the benefits from it but would also lead to politics of identity and recognition. Initially the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, did not specifically name Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. After much advocacy from disability advocacy groups, an amendment was brought about in 2012 and Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs were identified as a specific group within 'disadvantaged groups' of the society under the Act.<sup>13</sup> The Act defined Children with Disability in accordance with the "Persons with Disabilities, Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act (PWD Act) of 1995" and with the 2012 amendment, Children with Disabilities under the National Trust Act for the Welfare of Children with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities 2000 (NTA), were also added. Further, amidst much debate children with severe and multiple disabilities were given option of home based education. The RTE Act did not expressly include 'special schools' as a category of schools within its ambit, thus creating ambiguity about their status. The RTE Act has a special provisions for admitting the child into age appropriate class in the neighborhood school and special training to make them par with other children<sup>14</sup>. It also talks about making the building of the school barrier-free access<sup>15</sup>.

In 2016 the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 was replaced by "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD Act)". This right based act has emphasized on the education of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. In this pursuit, for the first time it defines inclusive education and requires the state to

<sup>10</sup> NIEPA (2017), UDISE FLASH STATISTIC 2016-2017, "School Education in India" pg. 265.

<sup>11</sup> ibid.

<sup>12</sup> ibid.

<sup>13</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act (2012), Chapter-I, Section 2(d).

<sup>14</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), Chapter-II, Section 4.

<sup>15</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), The Schedule, Sl.no. 2.

‘endeavor’ to provide inclusive education to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in government and government aided schools<sup>16</sup>. The provisions under Chapter-III (Section-16, 17), Chapters-VI (Section- 31) and Chapter-VIII thus become crucial for the education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. The provisions in these sections range from identification of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and their needs, providing them barrier free access to education without discrimination, bringing reforms in teaching learning process, modifications in examination systems and various other provisions that could cater to their educational needs and henceforth ensure them inclusive education at all levels<sup>17</sup>.

The section on education also talks about the provision of reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities, “providing necessary support individualized or otherwise in environments that maximize academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion”<sup>18</sup>. Further the law endeavors to provide education in the most appropriate language and modes and means of communication. For the first time, the Act talks of promoting the “use of augmentative and alternative modes including means and formats of communication, Braille and sign language to supplement the use of one’s own speech to fulfill the daily communication needs of person with speech, communication or language disabilities and enables them to participate and contribute to their community and society”<sup>19</sup>. Suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system are to be made to meet the needs of students with disabilities<sup>20</sup>.

Additionally, the Act define and incorporate terms like “communication, barrier, information and communication technologies, reasonable accommodation, and universal design” in various provisions of the Act with direct implication for education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

## **VI) Provisions of Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan: Convergence and Departure from Rights of Person with Disabilities Act, 2016 and RTE Act 2009.**

Generally, schemes should be designed in consonance with existing laws. Under the newly integrated centrally sponsored scheme “Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan”, Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs have received substantial attention. Chapter-4 “Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Education” of the scheme

<sup>16</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 16.

<sup>17</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 16-17.

<sup>18</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 16 (iv).

<sup>19</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 17 (f).

<sup>20</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 17 (i).

has been especially formulated to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and their inclusive education.

### **A) Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in Education**

The Scheme under Chapter-4 has defined Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in accordance with the 21 categories of disability as mentioned in the Right of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016<sup>21</sup>. Given the fact of their low enrollment rate and denial to their right to education, the scheme attempts to focus on the education of Girls with Disabilities/Girls with Special Needs<sup>22</sup>.

Chapter 4 of the scheme divides the provisions for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs under two broad components- **a) Student oriented component b) Inclusive education component**<sup>23</sup>. While the former emphasizes on equipping Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs to have access to education, the latter embodies inclusive education system for the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. The key areas under two broad categories are identified as under.

<b>STUDENT ORIENTED COMPONENT</b>	<b>INCLUSIVE EDUCATION COMPONENT</b>
Identification and assessment of Children with Disability.	Education of teachers & other stake holders.
Provision of aids and appliances, medical services, diagnostic services	Curricular access
Access to development of teaching learning material as per requirement	Individualized Educational Plans
Provision of facilities like transport/escort facilities, hostel facilities, scholarship, assistive devices, support staff	Building synergy with special schools
Provision of large text book, Braille Books and Uniform allowances	Research & Development.
Stipends for Girls Students at Rs 200 per months.	

<sup>21</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-4, Section4.2, pg.69.

<sup>22</sup> ibid.

<sup>23</sup> ibid.

The use of ICT to increase access to a vast amount of information.	
Awareness and motivation camps	

➤ **Identification & Assessment**

Identification of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and understanding their specific requirement is essential to procure their right to access to education. The RPWD Act 2016, talks about the responsibility of the state and local authorities to conduct survey of school going children to identify Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs, understand their needs and their implementation<sup>24</sup>. The RTE Rules also provide for school mapping and identification of children with disability in the community by appropriate government or local authorities. The newly implemented scheme provides for the identification of and assessment of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>25</sup>. The scheme further says in section 4.2.3 that all the enrolled Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs will be covered through UDISE and linked with Aadhar. This will enable the States/UTs to track Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs both in school as well as with home based, to facilitate the State/UT. **However, the scheme makes no mention of the training that is required to identify and understand specific requirement of groups of children that have now been added by the 2016 law like children with blood disorder.**

➤ **Medical Facilities, Therapeutics Services and Counselling.**

The scheme also endeavors to provide medical and diagnostic facilities along with therapeutic services and counselling in convergence with other ministries to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs within the education system<sup>26</sup>. However, it remains to be seen how this very important clause will be implemented at ground level.

➤ **Stipend for Girls with Disabilities/Special Needs**

Girls with Disabilities remain amongst the most vulnerable of all children in our country. Among other things this is reflected in the ratio of girls with disabilities enrolled in schools to boys with disabilities (gender parity

<sup>24</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-3, Section 17(a).

<sup>25</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-4, Section 4.1.10, pg.67.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*



index). Since the year 2009-10 on an average only 74 girls with disabilities are enrolled in schools to 100 boys with disabilities. In 2010-11 the Gender Parity Index reflects 0.76% and have remained largely unchanged in the following years with 0.74% in year 2011-12, 2012-13, 2014-15<sup>27</sup>. In order to attract and retain girls with special needs within the school system the scheme provides stipend of Rs. 200 for 10 months to them<sup>28</sup>. **No other strategy for the enrollment and retention of the girl with disabilities is mentioned in the scheme.**

#### AUDIT

- *Modalities for creating awareness, sensitivity and training on identification of the 21 new categories of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs among the teaching and non-teaching members.*
- *Status of survey and mapping, identification of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs within as well as outside the general school system by the appropriate government.*
- *Mechanisms and modalities to provide diagnostic and therapeutic facilities in case of convergence between line-agencies having different structural arrangements.*
- *Disbursement of Rs. 200 stipends to girls with disabilities in various states.*
- *Presence of State specific strategies to encourage girls with disabilities to get a school education.*

#### ➤ TLMs, OLMs & Other Assistance

Availability of TLMs, Books and OLMs is pre-requisite for retention of not only Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs but children in general. The RPD Act under Section- 17 (g-i) documents the provision of free books, OLMs, appropriate assistance, scholarship and suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to facilitate inclusive education for children with disabilities. The RTE also provides free text books and uniforms to meet its objective of universal elementary education. The rules of RTE mention free special learning and support materials for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>29</sup>.

While the scheme talks about the above components including provisions for Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs), Books, Other Learning Materials (OLMs) and appropriate assistive devices all this is to come from Rs 3500 put aside for the child<sup>30</sup>. The scheme provides for large print text books, Braille books under the RTE

<sup>27</sup> Elementary Education in India, Analytical Table 2009-10, 10-11, 11-12, 12-13, 13-14 & 2014-2015.

<sup>28</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-4, Section 4.3.1 (vi), pg.70.

<sup>29</sup> The Rights of Children to free and Compulsory Education Rules (2010), Part-IV, Section 9.

<sup>30</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-4, Section 4.3.1 (iii-v), pg.70.



entitlement and uniform allowances. Similarly, there is provision of supports like readers and amanuensis for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs during exams. However, the scheme makes no mention of materials, alternative and augmentative systems of communication for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs as has been enunciated in RPWD Act. It does not tell us, how the school will have access to such material and the amount to be reimbursed for it.

#### **AUDIT**

- *Access to textbook in accessible format for Children with Disabilities.*
- *Amount reimbursed for TLMs, Aids & Appliances, and Scholarship to schools.*
- *Availability and usage of TLMs, Aids & Appliances in the schools for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.*

#### ➤ **Use of ICT**

The RPWD Act 2016 acknowledges the usage of ICT as a crucial component for the education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs under its various provisions. It provides that the rules of the law should provide the standards of accessibility for information and communications, including appropriate technologies and systems and other facilities and services provided to the public both in urban and rural areas<sup>31</sup>. The appropriate government has the responsibility to make person with disability have an access to information and communication technology<sup>32</sup>. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan recognizes the importance of ICT for the education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. It encourages the use of ICT to enhance the access to vast amount of information that is generally unavailable to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>33</sup>.

Additionally, Chapter- 7 of the scheme deals with the use information and communication technology in school education and teachers' training institute to promote quality education. It provides for the use of assistive technologies such as JAWS and SAFTA, Audio books etc. and other assistive technology-based solutions for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs from classes VI-XII and to Teachers Education Institute<sup>34</sup>. In pursuit of above goals, the scheme anticipates a pro-active role from Rehabilitation Council of

<sup>31</sup> The Right to Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-VIII, Section 40.

<sup>32</sup> The Right to Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-VIII, Section 42.

<sup>33</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-4, Section 4.3.1 (vii), pg.70.

<sup>34</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 7, Section 7.3.3, pg. 40.

India in introducing and using these technologies and also addressing the concerns related to the Universal Design of Learning<sup>35</sup>.

Provision has been added to provide a total of four hour session on the introduction of assistive technologies like JAWS during the induction training of the teachers<sup>36</sup>. The refresher training too will have sessions on development of Digital Contents which is a crucial element for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. However, there are range of things that are to be used in ICT. Is this understanding available in the States?

### AUDIT

- *Access to and usage of ICT and assistive technology by the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in schools.*
- *Presence, condition and usage of ICT in Teachers Training Institutes.*

### ➤ Education & Capacity Building of Teachers & other Stakeholders

Availability and recruitment of the special educators has always been a major challenge for the education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. Their role within the larger education system has remained unclear for a very long time as has the quality and efficiency of their training to work in inclusion within the general school system. The responsibility of all teachers as well as principals to know about how to teach and include diversity has never really been recognized by the government.

The RPWD Act 2016, under various provisions including 17 (c) and (d) in Chapter-III and Chapter-VIII, provides for the training of the teachers and the other staff on inclusive education. It talks about setting up of adequate number of teachers training institute<sup>37</sup>. Although the State under the RPWD Act has been assigned with the task of training and employment of teachers qualified in sign language, braille, intellectual disability, there is as yet no known plan in place<sup>38</sup>.

The RTE Act has also laid impetus on the training of the teachers wherein it levies the responsibility of training the teachers on the government and local authorities. The rules of RTE also document the responsibility of the central government to prepare schemes to provide pre-service and in-service teachers training<sup>39</sup>. However, the

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 7, Section 7.3.6 (B), pg. 142.

<sup>37</sup> The Right to Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 17 (b).

<sup>38</sup> The Right to Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 17 (c).

<sup>39</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules (2010), Part-IV, Section 8 (2).

law and its rules continue to remain silent on the training of special educators as well as on the scheme to provide training in inclusive education.

Chapter-4 of the scheme talks about providing resource persons in the itinerate mode both for school going and home-based learners through the process of rationalization of the existing teachers in the earlier SSA and the RMSA<sup>40</sup>. The procurement of new resource teacher has been conditioned on requirement<sup>41</sup>. Further, the Chapter highlights the guidelines for the appointment of special educators giving the minimum qualification for special educators from pre-school to secondary stage and advocates that educators with specialization in single disability to be trained in other disability to manage diversities<sup>42</sup>. Additionally, a person with D.Ed in special education needs to complete a six months of Special Programme in Elementary Education recognized by the NCTE<sup>43</sup>.

Given the presence of DISE and Census Data on numbers of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in states and in the districts for over a decade, it is surprising that the new scheme does not give us a method and a plan on how resource support for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs should be planned and envisaged. The working conditions and roles of the special educators have not been defined.

Given sharing pattern of resource between the State and the Centre under the new scheme, the salaries and remuneration of the teachers including special educators are no longer totally supported by the Centre. In such a situation, and given the chronic shortage of teachers, it needs to be seen what kind of importance States will give to the appointment of resource teachers. Will rationalization result in the same resource teacher providing support to children from pre-primary to the secondary level?

The responsibility to train the teachers both during the pre-service and in-service have been levied on the Teachers Training Institutes at State, District and Block/Cluster level. Under Chapter 6 of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, documents teacher's education and teachers training and reflects upon structural and functional aspects of teacher training institutes at various levels. Although the scheme encourages the faculty and staff of SCERT across the department, to address the various intersectional issues caused by caste, gender and needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs, it does not provide any substantial steps for the same<sup>44</sup>. The demand for restructuring and strengthening of SCERT has been long but the scheme once again fails to effectively address the same. It continues to provide for a Department of Inclusive and Special Education in SCERT comprising of one or two faculty having expertise in curriculum development and inclusive pedagogy

<sup>40</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 4, Section 4.3.2, pg. 70.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 4, Annexure-III, pg-73.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 6, Section 6.1.2, pg.103.

for children with learning and physical disability<sup>45</sup>. Inadequate numbers of faculty would continue to act as impediment for quality intervention of education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs given the varied needs of different categories of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

At the district level, District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), continues to function as institutes conducting pre-service and in-service teachers' training including specialized training on inclusive education<sup>46</sup>. It would continue to impart training to the head teachers to deal with Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

At the grass-root level besides conducting in-service teachers training, the BRCs has to function as a repository of academic resources that would provide teaching learning resource material in different curricular areas and material for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>47</sup>. They will be equipped with two resource persons for inclusive education for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>48</sup>. Generally, the special educators does not have expertise in syllabus and curricular of general education system. Yet the Chapter remains silent on the training of the special educators/resource persons about the syllabus and curricular of general school system.

Barrier-free access is crucial for person with disability. Ironically, one could not find any mention of separate toilets for person with disability, ramp and railings in the construction guidelines of DIETs. Also, the space provided for separate resource rooms in the DIET for education of the physically handicapped would also function as a faculty room for member of inclusive education. Thus, bypassing the very idea of inclusive education.

#### AUDIT

- *Status of special educators in terms of their number, qualifications, job roles/working conditions at ground level.*
- *Number of schools visited/supported by each special educator.*
- *Salaries of the Special educators in different states.*
- *Expertise of special educators to cater to the different needs of the different categories of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.*
- *Syllabus of D.Ed course on Special Education.*
- *Mechanism and modalities of providing the special program course by NCTE.*

<sup>45</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 6, Table 1(a-b), pg.105-107.

<sup>46</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 6, Section 6.2.3 (19), pg.118.

<sup>47</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 6, Section 6.6.2 (a), pg.127.

<sup>48</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 6, Section 6.6.5 (a), pg.128.

- *Status of the number of post available, filled post and vacant post of Professors and Associate Professors in Teacher Training Institutes (SCERT).*
- *Component of inclusive education in the in-service training program and its implementation in schools.*
- *Readiness of BRC/CRCs for inclusive education?*
- *Readiness of the Schools for inclusive education.*
- *Agencies/ bodies to be involved in conducting the in-service training.*
- *Collaboration between special educators and general teachers.*

### ➤ **Curriculum Access & Examination Reforms**

The RPWD Act under Chapter-3 aims to make suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>49</sup>. This includes extra time for completion of examination paper, scribe or amanuensis, exemption from second and third language.

With regard to the curriculum the scheme under Chapter-4 provides same curriculum for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs as for children without special needs. There would be modifications and adaptations in the learning content, teaching learning processes, teaching learning materials/aids and also in evaluation process as has been enunciated the RPD Act<sup>50</sup>. Also the Central and State Boards need to bring about reforms in examination for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>51</sup>.

The scheme adopts Individualized Educational Plans which has been referred to as “Individualized Support” in the RPWD Act<sup>52</sup>. The individualized support should be reviewed to analyze the effectiveness of various strategies and support services<sup>53</sup>. However, what is not known is how the stakeholders/agencies would involve in monitoring the process.

<sup>49</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 17 (i)

<sup>50</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 4, Section 4.6, pg.71.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 6, Section 4.7, pg.71.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

### **AUDIT**

- *Formulation and implementation of Examination reforms Central and State Boards cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Need.*
- *Curriculum framework made by the States.*
- *Key component of National Curriculum Framework to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.*
- *Status of addressing equity and inclusion in current curriculum, teaching practice and assessment.*
- *Key issues and challenges in curriculum and teaching practices and assessment.*
- *Recommendations to address in curriculum and teaching practices and assessment.*
- *Concessions provided by the State Boards to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Need.*

#### ➤ **Synergy Building with Special Schools**

The scheme also advocates building synergies with special school to meet the requirements of resources for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and education of teachers teaching the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>54</sup>. Also they would function as resource school and also impart special training to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs for age appropriate placement in the classroom<sup>55</sup>. Experience shows that the state engagement with the NGO's that largely works special schools have been variable across the state.

### **AUDIT**

- *Extent to which special schools have become resource centres to promote inclusion.*

#### ➤ **Research & Development**

Like RPWD Act, the scheme under this Chapter also encourages the research and development activities in all areas of education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs, especially focusing on children with high support needs in convergence with various ministries<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 4, Section 4.8.1-2, pg.71.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 4, Section 4.9, pg.71-72.



### ➤ **Discrimination & Social Access**

Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs have always been subjected to discrimination in schools and it has been one of the major causes of their low enrollment & retention. The RPWD Act recognizes this and casts a duty on the state to admit Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs without discrimination<sup>57</sup>. The RTE too promotes elimination of discrimination against children belonging to disadvantaged groups<sup>58</sup>. It further casts a very strong duty on the school management committees to ensure non-discrimination, enrollment and retention of children with disabilities<sup>59</sup>.

The scheme recognizes the need of social access to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and emphasizes that the teachers and peers have to play an important role. Social access may be provided through parental training, peer sensitization, awareness building of different stakeholders across all level and special emphasis on education of girls with disabilities<sup>60</sup>. The Chapter by and large remains silent not only on modalities but also about the actors, bodies, agencies and stakeholders to be engaged in providing training on discrimination and social access and those that will ensure and monitor social access.

### ➤ **Monitoring & Evaluation Process**

Monitoring and evaluation process is yet another important element under the inclusive education in order to refine the program<sup>61</sup>. However, it is unclear about the character, functions or features of the monitoring body and the stakeholders involved in it.

## **B) School Access, Infrastructure Development and Retention**

The provision of RTE Act to provide universal access to free and compulsory education in a neighborhood school till the completion of his/her education is crucial for the access to school of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>62</sup>. Also home based education for children with multiple disability and severe disability has been adopted to prevent denial of their right to education<sup>63</sup>. Admission in the age appropriate class as well as the right to receive special training to be at par with others in the class as enshrined in the RTE and its rule is important for access as well as retention of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>64</sup>. Also the RTE rules endeavor to make appropriate and safe transportation arrangements

<sup>57</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-III, Section 16 (i).

<sup>58</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), Chapter- III, Section-8 (c).

<sup>59</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules (2010), Part-II, Section-6 (h).

<sup>60</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 4, Section 4.10, pg.72.

<sup>61</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 4, Section 4.11, pg.72.

<sup>62</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act (2012), Chapter-II, Section 3 (1).

<sup>63</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act (2012), Chapter-II, Section 3 (4).

<sup>64</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), Chapter-II, Section 4.



with respect to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs to enable them to attend school and complete elementary education.

In order to ensure equity for the universal access to school and quality education, the scheme provides various provisions under Chapter-2. This includes equity, availability of adequate infrastructure, integrated or composite school and full retention of the children from pre-school to senior secondary school. Following the lines of Rules of Right to Education 2009, the scheme provides for school in neighborhood<sup>65</sup>. The very provision of neighborhood school is crucial for the Children with Disabilities.

The scheme under Chapter-2 also provides that the schools should refer to building code IS 4963-1987 “Recommendation of Building and Facilities for Physically Handicapped” for designing, planning, preparation and execution of school infrastructure component<sup>66</sup>. Also, the school should take into consideration “Harmonised Guidelines and Space Standard for Barrier Free Built Environment for Persons with Disability and Elderly Persons” for providing barrier free access in the school<sup>67</sup>. Yet when we look closely at the framework norms for intervention for infrastructure development and maintenance under the Integrated Scheme or norms for KGBVs detailed in the draft document, only toilets and ramps and railings are detailed. Even then toilets are to be provided depending on how many Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs are enrolled in the school! Are such provisions and conditions sufficient to provide Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs accessibility in the school premises?

#### AUDIT

- *Provisions under the guidelines/codes for building and construction to be referred for making the school barrier free to cater to the needs of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs*
- *Status of other component in these guidelines incorporated in the scheme.*

The provisions related to financial norms on transport does not provide any amount for the transportation facilities for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs although the chapter mentions them as one of the beneficiaries and to be considered as entitlement<sup>68</sup>. Ambiguity prevails over their right to this entitlement and over its extension at pre-school and secondary level school. However, the analysis of the PAB Minutes of MHRD on the allocation of funds has recognized the transport and escort as component under inclusive education and not as entitlement under access and retention.

<sup>65</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 2, Section 2.4.3, pg. 14

<sup>66</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 2, Section 2.12.1, Sl. No. 8, pg.23.

<sup>67</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 42, Section 2.12.2, pg.24.

<sup>68</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Appendix-A, Sl. No. 4, pg.201.

## AUDIT

- *Amount and modalities of transport allowances or escort facilities provided to the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.*

### C) Vocational Education

RPWD Act 2016, under Section- 19 provides for formulation and implementation of schemes and programs for the vocational training and self-employment of person with disability<sup>69</sup>. It advocates their inclusion all mainstream formal and non-formal vocational, skill training schemes and programs<sup>70</sup>. Also, the schemes should ensure that a person with disability has adequate support and facilities to avail specific trainings<sup>71</sup>. Additionally, there shall be exclusive skill training programmes for persons with disabilities with active links with the market, particularly for those with developmental, intellectual, multiple disabilities and autism<sup>72</sup>.

Chapter 8 of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, documents vocationalisation of school education from class 6<sup>th</sup> onwards. The scheme will primarily cover government schools and the school may offer two vocational courses in Classes 9-10 and Classes 11-12 with 40 students in each section. The students would also undergo on job trainings<sup>73</sup>. The provisions in this chapter provide that arrangements will be made in schools for removing architectural barriers for learners with special needs<sup>74</sup>. The curriculum and teaching methodologies in vocational education must cater to the needs of all learners with disabilities<sup>75</sup>. Also, the skill trainers/ teachers would be oriented and sensitized towards the needs of these children<sup>76</sup>. The training of vocational teachers on the use of advanced technologies and innovative techniques may be regularly organized specially to support training of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. However, it is unclear what would be the number of sessions or hours allotted for such training, who would be stakeholders involved in providing such trainings. Additionally, the scheme provides that selection of the vocational courses, would take into account the diverse needs of the learners with special needs<sup>77</sup>. This very provision is problematic in case selection of vocational course does not match with the interest of the student with disability.

<sup>69</sup> The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-IV, Section 19.

<sup>70</sup> The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-IV, Section 19 (2) (a).

<sup>71</sup> The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-IV, Section 19 (2) (b).

<sup>72</sup> The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-IV, Section 19 (2) (c).

<sup>73</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 8, Section 8.3, pg.149.

<sup>74</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 8, Section 8.14.2, pg 160.

<sup>75</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 8, Section 8.6.5.1, pg.153.

<sup>76</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 8, Section 8.14.2, pg 160.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*

### AUDIT

- *Number of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs opting for vocational subject, barrier free access and individualized support, adaptation provided to them in vocational subject.*
- *Barrier free access and adaptation in the on- job trainings/internship program for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.*
- *Scope of vocational education for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and their employment rates in the given vocation.*
- *Trade in vocational education under which component of inclusive education has maximum opportunities.*

### **D) Financial Norms**

The scheme has provided a highly inadequate financial provision of Rs 3,500 per child, per year for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs studying in government, government aided and local body school. Moreover, this financial provision will be provided as per the specific proposal. This financial assistance of Rs. 3,500 comprises of aids and appliances, teaching materials and stipends for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs at the rate of 200 per month for 10 months<sup>78</sup>. This budgetary allocation is thus highly insufficient to cater to the needs of these children and hence an ineffective exercise to improve the enrolment and retention rate of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

The financial norms related to ICT provides for the non-recurring amount of Rs. 20,000 as for procurement of Operating System & software as well recurring expenditure of Rs. 24,000 for e-content and digital resources highly insignificant amount for the same given the expensive of such assistance<sup>79</sup>.

The evaluation of PAB minutes of MHRD for the planning and budgeting under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan of various states reflects that there has been no considerable change in the components and activities under the budgetary allocation for financial year 2018-19. Some of the new components and activities supported under the budgetary allocation of various states in the scheme include the amount on organizing sports activities for the children with disability, provision of attendants/ayas for the children with disability and also large print books and braille books for pre-school children under the RTE entitlement. States like Kerala has also provided for the budgetary allocation of home based learning. However, it is important to remember that the funds will be

<sup>78</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Appendix-A, Sl.No. 24, pg.208.

<sup>79</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 7, Section. 7.3.4, pg.140-141.

incurred both by the Centre and the State Government and it is likely that many of the State would face crisis in catering to the needs of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

### AUDIT

- *Proposed amount and actual amount approved by the Central Government or Budgetary allocation of each State on various components of the inclusive education?*

### E) PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Pre-school education system in India has by and large remained isolated from the general school systems although the RTE Act 2009, talks about the Pre-school education very briefly. It says that with the view to prepare children above the age of three years for elementary education and to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years, the appropriate government may make necessary arrangement for providing free pre-school education in the neighborhood school<sup>80</sup>.

Chapter-9 of the scheme specifically deals with the pre-school education. The scheme under this Chapter provides for toilets with appropriate accessories and adaptation in schools for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>81</sup>. It talks about providing facilities for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. Such facilities include construction of ramps and rails with bridges that would enable them to approach the indoor-outdoor areas and access play equipment<sup>82</sup>. For the first time the scheme has talked about ensuring the equipment, playing- learning materials, furniture and other facilities that are available in the pre-school to be suitable for Children with Disabilities<sup>83</sup>. With regard to child abuse and rights the scheme puts forward that all teachers are required to be trained in accommodating Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs with compassion<sup>84</sup>. The scheme also provides that the transportation facilities available in the area may also be utilized in case the distance is more than 1 Km and escort facilities should be ensured for vulnerable children<sup>85</sup>. The scheme under this Chapter also provides for regular medical check-up of children and provide follow-up and referral services<sup>86</sup>.

However, the condition/eligibility for admission requires that the child is able to tackle separation anxiety from family, has developed some verbal competence and can communicate basic needs and has become toilet trained is highly problematic as most of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs are unable to perform these functions<sup>87</sup>.

<sup>80</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), Chapter-III, Section 11.

<sup>81</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-9, Section 9.8, pg.164.

<sup>82</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-9, Section 9.10, pg.167.

<sup>83</sup> ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-9, Section 9.11, pg.167.

<sup>85</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-9, Section 9.12, pg.167.

<sup>86</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-9, Section 9.17, pg.167.

<sup>87</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter-9, Section 9.19, pg.167.

With regard to professional development of the teachers in pre-school system the scheme talks about the courses of early childhood education under vocational programs. However, it remains silent on the component of the inclusive education in the same. The RPWD Act, 2016 has talked under Article 47 (b) about inducting disability as a component for all education courses for schools, colleges, university teachers, doctors and anganwadi workers along with other professionals and community workers<sup>88</sup>. However, the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan has by and large remained silent on the training of the anganwadi workers to deal with Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

#### **AUDIT**

- *Escort facilities for children with disability in the pre-primary level.*
- *Mechanism and modalities to provide health check-up and therapeutic facilities for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs at pre-primary level.*
- *Component of inclusive education in syllabus and course on early childhood.*
- *In-service training being provided to the teachers at pre-primary level for inclusive education.*
- *Mechanism and modalities incorporated by ICDS to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.*

#### **F) Programme Management**

RTE provides for constituting School Management Committees (SMCs) in every school comprising of elected representatives of local authority, parents or guardians of children belonging to disadvantaged group and weaker section which would be reconstituted every two year<sup>89</sup>. The RTE makes SMCs a powerful body by making it responsible for monitoring the working of the condition of school, prepare and recommend school development plan and monitor the utilization of the grants received from various sources<sup>90</sup>. It empowers it to monitor the identification, enrolment, facilities for education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and ensure they complete elementary education<sup>91</sup>.

Chapter-10 of the scheme documents the programme management and its monitoring, the monitoring framework and roles and responsibilities of administrative structures at various levels. At the national level, the scheme provides for Technical Support Group (comprising of Senior Technical and Professional experts) with

<sup>88</sup> The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016), Chapter-VIII, Section 47 (1) (b).

<sup>89</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), Chapter-4, Section 21.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> The Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules (2010), Part II, Section 6 (h).

18 units to provide technical support and capacity building in the various functional areas at State/ District level. This technical group would have one unit of inclusive education<sup>92</sup>.

At the State level the scheme provides for a single State Implementation Society and the State obligation to engage experts for Management Integrated System, Mobilization and gender related interventions. However, engaging experts for education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs has been conditioned and made context specific<sup>93</sup>. The State level Implementation Society should have an effective mechanism for interdepartmental coordination and convergence. The scheme anticipates the Public Work Department to re-visit and re-design school spaces in order to cater to the needs of barrier free access to Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and address the issue of inclusion<sup>94</sup>. A system for equal opportunity for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs was to be addressed with the department's handling Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs<sup>95</sup>.

#### **AUDIT**

- ***Structure at state and district level for inclusive education.***
- ***Role of State Resource Group and District Resource Group in inclusive education***

#### ➤ **Monitoring Through Social Audits**

The chapter advocates for a bottom up approach in monitoring of programs. The monitoring of the scheme will start from the school level through social audit carried out by various stakeholders including members of School Management Committees and representatives of disadvantaged groups. The School Management Committees would play a pivotal role in the social audit. The community participation will involve monitoring the identification, enrollment and participation of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in school education and ensure that facilities for their education are provided<sup>96</sup>.

Monitoring of the conditions of the schools building and infrastructure including maintenance of toilets and ramps would be conducted by Block and Cluster/Lead School Functionaries. The Staff from BRC or CRC will be responsible for visiting each school once every two months to provide curricular support to the teachers<sup>97</sup>.

<sup>92</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 10, Section. 10.3.3, Table 2, pg. 176-177.

<sup>93</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 10, Section 10.4.5, pg.179-180.

<sup>94</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 10, Section 10.4.7 (ii), pg.180.

<sup>95</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 10, Section 10.4.7 (vii), pg.180.

<sup>96</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 10, Section 10.8.4 (iv), pg.184

<sup>97</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 10, Section 10.9.3, pg.185



What is not mentioned is whether they are equipped with expertise to cater to the needs of learning teaching needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

Under the scheme the monitoring at state and central level includes availability of schooling facility at all level of school education in all the habitation to ensure physical and social access in the neighborhood. Monitoring will also be done on the school development plans prepared by SMCs/SMDCs to ensure that schools have facilities such as infrastructure, teachers, TLM and child friendly and barrier free access with good learning environment<sup>98</sup>. It will also ensure age-appropriate admission and completion of education for children especially belonging to the disadvantageous group, and the process of remedial teaching to the children<sup>99</sup>.

#### AUDIT

- *Representative of parents of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in social audit as well as monitoring done by the community on identification, enrolment and participation of children with disability in school education to cater to the needs of children with disabilities.*
- *Status of monitoring conducted by the Central and State Government with respect of development plans prepared by the SMC.*
- *To find component of inclusive education in the development plans.*
- *Status of representation of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in SMCs, training and level of their awareness with respect to diverse educational needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.*

#### **V) Does the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan Endeavour to Bring Inclusive Education for Children with Disability/Children with Special Needs :- Some Observations and Ambiguities**

Although, the scheme tried to integrate various components of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, the provision of the scheme provides glossy picture as provisions are in form of tokenism rather than a wholehearted attempt to provide quality education for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs as per the RTE, 2009 and RPWD Act 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018), Chapter- 10, Section 10.11.3, pg.187.

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*



First and foremost there has been no parity maintained in the entire scheme in the usage of terminologies. Nomenclature like Children with Special Need, Children with Disability, handicapped and Divyaang has been used interchangeably.

The scheme comes after the enactment of a new law on the rights of persons with disability, yet it fails to use and define various terminologies and nomenclature of RPD – reasonable accommodation, communication, augmentative and alternative mode of communication, barrier-free both in words and in principles. The scheme fails to define high support children and other terminologies. Additionally, the scheme also fails to effectively interrogate with the new terms and concepts in the law. Defining these categories is essential for proper allocations of the services and entitlement to these children. Exclusion from definition, ambiguities related to the terminologies and adopting broad definition leaves sufficient scope for stakeholders to bypass the provisions.

The scheme has largely remained silent and does not engage on the mechanism of knowledge building on the 21 new impairment groups.

Additionally, the term inclusive education, the main thrust area of the scheme has been used with different meaning in different chapters. While the scheme in its objective and goals incorporate the inclusive education for children with disabilities along with other categories of the disadvantaged section this parity is not maintained. The organization of the various chapters in the scheme reflects this divergence as inclusive education of girls and children of other traditionally disadvantaged and marginalized section are dealt in one common chapter; a separate chapter has been designed for the education of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs. Such segregation within the text of the scheme leads to failure of the core objective of the scheme.

The scheme has little scope for the children with high support and home-based learning as it fails to provide any provisions and modalities to make education accessible to them. The financial norms of the scheme specify that the key thrust of the scheme will be on providing inclusive education to all Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in GENERAL SCHOOL thus sidelining those categories of students that are under the home-based learning or special schools.

There are provisions for formulation and implementation of new scholarship scheme for the financial assistance for these children except stipend of Rs. 200 for 10 months for girls with special needs. Ambiguities prevail over extending this stipend at all level of school education.

One cannot overlook the fact that despite extensive UDISE data being available on enrollment of different disabilities, there is no plan on the number of resource teachers recognized state-wise for the country. Instead

we see statements such as rationalization of existing teachers which is likely to mean that all the teachers have to work across different age groups and classes.

Last but not the least, the policy-makers have failed to address the issue of child protection and safety inside the school premises in a comprehensive manner. The entire scheme does not provide any detailed provisions, mechanism or guidelines for the safety and protection of the children in general and Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in particular within the premises of the schools given their vulnerability to all forms of physical and sexual violations. Also, one could not find any mention of Disability Commissioner, its role, function and its involvement with National Commission for Protection of Child Rights or with the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights in case of violation of their educational rights.

## **VI) Major Areas to Audit**

The provisions in the scheme have been an eye opener and require us to audit some of the major areas:-

- Modalities for creating awareness, sensitivity and training on identification of the 21 new categories of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs among the teaching and non-teaching members.
- Status of survey and Mapping, identification of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs by the appropriate government both within and outside school system
- Mechanism & Modalities to provide diagnostic and therapeutic facilities in case of convergence between line-agencies having different structural arrangements.
- Status of disbursement of Rs. 200 stipends to girls with disabilities in various States.
- Presence of State specific strategies to encourage girls with disabilities to get school education.
- Access to textbook in accessible format.
- Amount of reimbursement for TLMs, Aids & Appliances, and Scholarship for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Availability and usage of TLMs, Aids & Appliances in the schools for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Timely reimbursement of the funds for textbooks, TLMs, Aids & Appliances.
- Mechanism and modalities adopted by the schools to deal with insufficient funds.
- Access to and usage of ICT and assistive technology by the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Presence, condition and usage of ICT in Teachers Training Institutes.
- Status of the education of the home-based Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.

- Status of Special Educators in terms of their number, qualifications, job roles/working conditions at ground level and their salaries.
- Number of schools visited/supported by each Special Educators.
- Salaries of Special Educators in different States.
- Expertise of special educators to cater to the different needs of the different categories of the Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Syllabus of D.Ed course on Special Education.
- Mechanism and modalities of providing the special program course by NCTE
- Formulation and implementation of examination reforms in Central and State Boards to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Synergy building with special schools to act as resource centre.
- Status of the number of post available, filled post and vacant post of Professors and Associate Professors in Teacher Training Institute.
- Component of inclusive education in the in-service training program and its implementation in schools.
- Readiness of BRC and CRC to be utilized as a Resource Centres for inclusive education.
- Readiness of the schools for inclusive education.
- Agencies and organizations involved in conducting in-service training.
- Collaboration between special educators and general teachers.
- Formulation and implementation of Examination reforms in Central and State Boards to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Curriculum framework made by the State.
- Key component of National Curriculum Framework.
- Status of addressing equity and inclusion in the current curriculum, teaching practice and assessment.
- Key issues and challenges in curriculum and teaching practices & assessment.
- Recommendation to address inclusive education in curriculum and teaching practices and assessment.
- Concessions provided by the State Boards to the Children with Disabilities.
- Extent to which special schools have become resource centres to promote inclusion.
- Provisions under the guidelines/codes of building and constructions to be referred for making the school barrier free to cater to the needs of the children with disabilities.
- Status of other component mentioned in the guidelines/codes of building and construction incorporated in the scheme.

- Amount and modalities of transport allowances or escort facilities provided to the children with disabilities.
- Number of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs opting for vocational subject , barrier free access and individualized support, adaptation provided to them in vocational subject.
- Barrier free access and adaptation in the on- job trainings/internship program for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Scope and avenue of vocational education for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs and their employment rates in the given vocation.
- Trade in vocational education under which component of inclusive education have maximum opportunities.
- Proposed amount and actual amount approved by the Central Government or Budgetary allocation each State on various components of inclusive education.
- Escort facilities for children with disability in the pre-primary level.
- Mechanism and modalities to provide health check-up and therapeutic facilities for Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs at pre-primary level.
- Component of inclusive education in syllabus and course on early childhood.
- In-service training being provided to the teachers at pre-primary level for inclusive education.
- Mechanism and modalities incorporated by ICDS to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Structure at State and District level for inclusive education.
- Role of State Resource Group and District Resource Group in inclusive education.
- Presence of representative of parents of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in social audit as well as monitoring done by the community on identification, enrolment and participation of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in school education to cater to the needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.
- Status of monitoring conducted by the Central and State Government with respect of development plans prepared by the SMC.
- To find component of inclusive education in the development plans.
- Status of representation of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs in SMCs, training and level of their awareness with respect to diverse educational needs of Children with Disabilities/Children with Special Needs.