

'State of the Education Report for India 2019- Children with Disabilities' - UNESCO

August 21, 2019

Source: *PIB and UNESCO*

Recently UNESCO presented 'State of the Education Report for India 2019- Children with Disabilities' to Vice President of India. The report contains 10 recommendations, including amendments to Right to Education Act to align with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act by incorporating specific concerns of children with disabilities

Key highlights of the report are

- To be published annually, the 2019 report is the first of its kind published by UNESCO New Delhi and highlights accomplishments and challenges with regards to the right to education of children with disabilities (CWDs).
- Based on extensive research of national and international documents of reference, it provides comprehensive and detailed information on the current state of education of CWDs
- It mentions that at present, three-fourths of the children with disabilities at the age of 5 years and one-fourth between 5-19 years do not go to any educational institution. The number of children enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling.
- The report took into account the 2011 census, according to which there are 78,64,636 children with disability in India constituting 1.7 percent of the total child

population.

- It also states that the number of children enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling. There are **fewer girls with disabilities in schools than boys** with disabilities in school.
- The report said, a large number of children with disabilities do not go to regular schools but are enrolled at the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).
- **Attitude of parents:** According to the UNESCO report, the attitude of parents and teachers towards including children with disabilities into mainstream education is also crucial to accomplish the goal of inclusive education.
- As per the report development of inclusive practices requires flexible curriculum and availability of appropriate resources. Different frameworks for curriculum design can be adopted to develop a curriculum that is both universal and suitable to adaptations. Accessibility to physical infrastructure, processes in the school, assistive and ICT technology and devices are also essential resources.
- It also mentions that the **RTE Act 2009 and the RPWD Act 2016 have helped create a comprehensive legal framework for inclusive education.** However, there remain a few ambiguities in terms of where children with disabilities should study and who should teach them; and gaps in terms of appropriate norms and standards applicable to all educational institutions and services provided to children with disabilities and an absence of a coordinated authority that can enforce the norms and standards

Ten Recommendations

Emerging from extensive analysis, the report proposes a set of ten recommendations:

1. Amend the RTE Act to better align with the RPWD Act by including specific concerns of education of children with disabilities.
2. Establish a coordinating mechanism under MHRD for effective convergence of all education programmes of children with disabilities.
3. Ensure specific and adequate financial allocation in education budgets to meet the learning needs of children with disabilities.
4. Strengthen data systems to make them robust, reliable and useful for implementation and monitoring.
5. Enrich school ecosystems and involve all stakeholders in support of children with disabilities.
6. Massively expand the use of information technology for the education of children with disabilities.
7. Give a chance to every child and leave no child with disability behind.
8. Transform teaching practices to aid the inclusion of diverse learners.
9. Overcome stereotypes and build positive dispositions towards children with disabilities, both in the classroom and beyond.
10. Foster effective partnerships involving government, civil society, the private sector and local communities for the benefit of children with disabilities.

Significance of the report

- UNESCO's State of the Education Report 2019 is expected to deepen our understanding in this regard and help the education system better respond to the learning needs of children with disabilities.
- This will enable India to make significant progress towards its collective objective of leaving no one behind and provide to all children and youth equitable opportunities for quality learning