

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA

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Persons with disabilities are most marginalized and suffer from social deviance, stigma and social exclusion and oppression. The prevalence of disability is increasing as globalization, liberalization and modern life style have promoted accidents rate causing impairments and disabilities. Though, efforts on the part of government agencies and non government agencies have been made to rehabilitate disabled, however in absence of a national policy on disabled, only a small proportion of disabled has got benefits from rehabilitation services and programmes. The majority of them are living in rural areas where awareness about government programmes and services is very low and thus they are deprived of such benefit. With the change of time, there has been paradigm shifting towards addressing the problem of disability. There is more focus on empowerment and rehabilitation of physically and mentally challenged persons rather than welfare orientation. There is more focus on inclusive education for mainstreaming persons with disabilities. against this backdrop, present paper attempts to examine the government efforts for inclusive education for PwDs in India.

INTRODUCTION

Disabled persons are the most marginalized and suffer from social deviations, stigma and social exclusion and oppression. As it is estimated that there are 600 million disabled persons worldwide, while about 26.81 million disabled persons live in India. Out of total disabled population, about 64 per cent disabled persons were categorized as non-workers. They mainly constitute students (22.7 per cent), persons engaged in household activities (15.3 per cent) and dependence (45.7 per cent). Out of total disabled non-workers, about 20 per cent disabled were physically challenged while more than 10 per cent disabled were mentally challenged. About 18 per cent

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were blinds while about 1/4th disabled were deaf and dumb. The prevalence of disability is increasing as globalization, liberalization and modern lifestyles have increased the rate of accidents leading to loss of human parts and disability. With increased political activism and voluntarism at the international and national levels, disability has become the focus in recent times and there is increasing debate about the development of 'alternative' service programs such as community-based rehabilitation. The Constitution of India, through its preamble, inter-alia, seeks to secure all its citizens; Justice, social, economic and political; Freedom of thought, expression, belief, belief and worship; Equality of status and opportunity. Part-III of the Constitution provides a set of six fundamental rights to all citizens. These include - the Right to equality; Right to freedom; Right against exploitation; Right to freedom of religion; Cultural and educational rights and constitutional remedies. All these rights are also available to persons with disabilities (PwDs) even though there is no special mention of such persons in this part of the Constitution. Part-IV of the Constitution contains the Directive Principles of State Policy. These principles are considered to be the essential basis of state policy. These are actually in the nature of directives issued to future legislators and officials for their guidance. Article 41 of the constitution provides that the state shall make effective provision to protect the right to work for education and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disability, within the limits of its economic capacity and development. Further, the following provisions in the Constitution take care of issues related to PwDs: (i) Eleventh Schedule for Article 243-G: "Social Welfare including the welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded people", (ii) Article 243 of Twelfth Schedule "To protect the interests of weaker sections of the society including the handicapped and mentally challenged".

In order to give effect to the Proclamation, the Central Government enacted the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. to provide education, rehabilitation, employment, non-discrimination and social security to individuals. "Disability" with disability is defined as disability arising in people suffering from blindness, low vision, hearing loss,

loco-motor disability, mental retardation, mental illness and leprosy. The Act provides for a mechanism for coordinated action among all stakeholders through the Central Coordination Committee at the level of the Government of India, so as to effectively implement the policy to ensure equal opportunities and social processes for PwD. To ensure participation in joint efforts have been made to develop a comprehensive infrastructure to develop manpower by providing courses / training to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The government has established seven national institutes specializing in different types of disabilities and eight Composite Regional Centers (CRCs) to promote research and conduct training to facilitate delivery of services to the disabled. While existing national institutions are being continuously strengthened, new national centers of excellence such as the National Institute of Universal Design and the Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation are being established. The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Center has also been established to promote sign language training, research and standardization in India. The Government of India has also decided to set up a National Institute of Rehabilitation Science and Disability Studies to promote higher education for persons with disabilities and capacity building in the disability sector in the country. Emphasis is being laid on setting up Spinal Injury Centers and Braille Press, Disability Sports Center.

Education is the most effective vehicle for social and economic empowerment. In keeping with the spirit of Article 21A of the Constitution, the Fundamental Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Guarantee of Education Act, 1995 as Section 26, children with disabilities up to the minimum age of 18 have been provided free and compulsory education. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2010) launched by the government has a target of eight years of primary education for all children, including children with disabilities aged 6–14 years. Children with disabilities under 15 years of age are provided free education under the Integrated Education scheme for children with disabilities. Under SSA, educational options, learning aids and equipment, mobility aids, support services etc. are being made available to students with disabilities. It includes an open learning system and open schools, alternative schooling, distance education,

special schools, home-based education wherever necessary, iterative teacher models, remedial teaching, part-time classes, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) and vocational education. Concrete efforts will be made by the government to identify disabled children through regular surveys, enroll them in appropriate schools and continue their education successfully. It will be the endeavor of the government to provide the right kind of teaching material and books for children with disabilities, suitably trained and sensitive teachers and schools that are accessible and disabled friendly. The Government of India is providing scholarships to students with disabilities to study at school level. The government will continue to support the scholarship and expand it. Persons with disabilities will be given access to universities, technical institutes and other institutions of higher education to pursue higher and vocational courses with scholarship and fellowship facilities.

During 2011, total population of disabled persons was reported 26.81 million which constituted 2.21 per cent of total population of the country. The proportion of disabled population against total population was recorded significantly high in the state of Odisha (2.96 per cent) followed by Jammu and Kashmir (2.88 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (2.68 per cent) and Chhattisgarh (2.45 per cent). The proportion of disabled population against total population was recorded low in Delhi (1.4 per cent) followed by Tamil Nadu (1.64 per cent), Gujarat (1.81 per cent) and Uttarakhand (1.84 per cent). Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Odisha and Gujarat are the major states where large chunk of disabled children are living. Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Dadra Nagar Haveli, Jharkhand, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Assam constituted most of the children with disability in India. More than 1/4th disabled children are not attending educational institutions. This was found more pronounced in Nagaland (39 per cent) followed by Assam (36 per cent), Meghalaya (35 per cent), Daman and Diu (34 per cent), Bihar (34 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (33 per cent). About 29 per cent disabled children are not attending educational institutions in Uttar Pradesh.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kathleen Tait and Nola Purdie (2010) examined the attitudes of pre-service teachers at a large Australian University to people with disabilities. Thomas and Loxley (2007) were of the view that 'the essence of thinking of inclusion is in the acceptance of diversity and striving for equity for all members within a system'. They pointed out that inclusive education, as it appears, is embedded in a range of contexts - political and social, as well as psychological and educational. They were in agreement with the conclusion arrived at by others (Fuller & Clark, 1994; Ainscow, 1999) who acknowledged the fact that schooling is so closely tied to local conditions and cultures that importation of practices from elsewhere is not easy. Diamond (1994) conducted a study on "attitude of parents of preschool towards integration" and examined parent of preschool children with and without disabilities who were enrolled in integrated or self contained classrooms and parents programmed and found that all parents held generally positive attitudes toward integrated school. Bender, Vail and Scott (1995) in their study reported that 70 percent general education teachers agreed that mainstreaming or inclusion has been beneficial for students with disabilities, while 56 percent agreed that mainstreaming or inclusion had been beneficial for students without disabilities. Hence according to this study the responses of general education and special education teachers were quite similar. Minke et. al. (1996) conducted a study on collaborative teaching in inclusive educational setting found that general and special educators working collaboratively in inclusive settings had higher levels of personal efficacy and higher self-ratings of competence and satisfaction in teaching students with disabilities than general educators who taught in traditional classroom arrangements where there was no inclusion practiced. Susana Padeliadu and Venetta Lampropoulou (1997) studied the attitudes of regular and special education teachers towards school integration of students with special educational needs. Hayes and Gunn (1998) in a study conducted on "attitudes of parents and teachers towards mainstreaming" found that attitudes of parents and teachers at this school which was following mainstreaming were more negative than those of their counterparts at the schools with no mainstreaming

programme. Palmer et. al. (1998) conducted a study on influences on “parent perceptions of inclusion practices for their children with mental retardation”. Bryan G. Cook (2001) in a study conducted on comparison of teachers’ attitudes towards the inclusion of students with mild and severe disabilities examined the attitudes of seventy teachers and it was found that students with severe disabilities are significantly overrepresented among teacher’s nominations in the indifference category, whereas student with mild disabilities are significantly overrepresented among teachers’ nominations in the rejection category. A research on “parents’ attitude to inclusion of their children with special needs” was conducted by John Elkins, et. al. (2003) while Watgson, J. And Boman (2005) in their study found that, even though schools and governments say that student with learning difficulties and other disabilities are well supported within schools, there was clear evidence which suggested that inclusion was not really doing well.

Singal, N (2006) considered the possibility of inclusive education of children belonging to marginalised groups, with particular reference to children with disabilities, within the Indian context. The study by Kala (2006) attempted to study the attitude teachers as being one of the most important variables in the education of children with disabilities. The study by Das et. al, (2001) examined the challenge for teacher education” and considered the Person with Disabilities Act, 1995 and looked at the benefits for the students with disabilities. Cowasji (1985) in a conducted a study on the effectiveness of the orientation programme for teachers working in the integrated education for the disabled children found that the headmasters of the selected schools had high qualifications, were well experienced and were experts in the field of teaching. Rane (1983) in a study on integrated education of disabled children evaluated the administrative infrastructure of implementing agency, namely the Department of Education of the Government of Maharashtra for operating the scheme for education students with disabilities. Verma and Verma (1974) “Integrating mentally retarded children with normal children:- An Experiment” studied about integration of the mentally retarded students on an experimental basis in a regular school in New Delhi. Prasad and Srivastava (1992) studied

the perceptual motor problems of learning disabled and non-learning disabled children in the age range of 5-10 years. The results implied that the children who are poor in perceptual skills are also inferior in their academic performance. Sharma (1993) attempted to examine the difference in the personality characteristics of the learning disabled and the non-learning disabled children. The study assessed the efficacy of intervention programmes developed specifically for parents, teachers and the learning disabled children in improving the academic performance and children with varied learning disabilities. Swarup and Sharma (1993) studied the effect of cognitive behavioural training on the written syntax of the learning disabled children in the age range of 10-14 years . The study showed implications in terms of creating an awareness of learning problems in syntax faced by the students in the normal school set-up. Gupta et al. (1996) studied the incidence and nature of learning disabilities at the end of class II and evolved preventive strategies. All the subjects identified as learning disabled in a general class showed deficits in Hindi, Oral reading and comprehension, written expression, and in arithmetic deficiencies were observed in mathematical operations, serialization, visual spatial orientation, auditory sequential memory, concept formation, verbal, numerical, temporal relationship and visual auditory association. Aminabhavi (1996) studied the adjustmental ability of post-graduate physically disabled and abled students, from the colleges of Dharwad and Belgaum in Karnataka. Physically disabled were maladjusted with respect to family, emotion, mode and leadership aspects. Kamalam (1996) in his study focused on the capacity building of the teachers in educating the mild mentally retarded. The teachers gained knowledge about mild mentally retarded after training. Paranjape (1996) compared the achievement in language and mathematics of normal and hearing handicapped pupils studying. Achievement in language was different in children with and without hearing impairment. Ramalingam (1996) conducted a study on development and effectiveness of a strategy training programme for cognitive learning among the learning disabled, Non-learning disabled and slow learners. Results of the study indicated that strategy training had a positive significant effect on the test of cognitive learning among all the groups. Vaijayanthi

and Meera (1997) studied academic problems of the learning disabled children in the Primary Schools. Venkatasan Prakasam and Hema (1997) estimated the prevalence of disability and impairments among pre-school children in rural areas. They decided the significant socio-demographic variables that influenced the prevalence rates of disability among pre-school children in rural areas. Zaveri (2001) developed an awareness module on inclusive education for students with disabilities for administrators and teachers of general schools. The teachers felt inclusion to be desirable but not feasible. Kala Parasuram (2006) studied the variables that affect teacher's attitudes towards disability and inclusive education. The review of literature simply demonstrate that there is paucity of imperial data and pertinent literature on inclusive education and educational development of PwDs in national perspective.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Adopted in 1992, the Central Government enacted the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, in the wake of the Declaration on Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Regions. India is a signatory to the proclamation. The Act is providing education, rehabilitation, employment, non-discrimination and social security for persons with disabilities who are "handicapped" as blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, loco-motor disability, mental retardation, mental illness and disabilities. It also defines "a person is suffering from a disability" as being not less than forty percent of any disability certified by a medical authority. The PwD Act, 1995 provides certain benefits to persons with disabilities who have not less than 40 percent of any disability, as evidenced by the Medical Authority. Thus, persons with a disability who wish to receive benefits under the Act, have to obtain a disability certificate from the notified medical authority for this purpose. State governments are responsible for issuing disability certificates based on applications received from persons with disabilities. Recognizing the fact that a person with a disability constitutes a valuable human resource for the country and that the majority of such individuals can lead to a better quality of life if

provided equal opportunities and effective access to rehabilitation measures, the government creates an environment. To provide such persons with equal opportunities for the protection of their rights and full participation in society, which in 2006 took the disabled National policy issues had went prepared and ready. The major areas of intervention under the policy are: prevention, early detection and intervention; Rehabilitation programs; Human Resource Development; Education of persons with disabilities; Employment; Barrier free environment; social Security; Research; The Office of the Chief Commissioner for Disabled Sports, Recreation and Cultural Activities has been set up under Section 57 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. The Chief Commissioner is mandated to coordinate the work of the State Commissioners for persons with disabilities, monitoring the use of funds disbursed by the Central Government and safeguarding the rights and facilities available to people with disabilities. The National Trust is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament for the welfare of people with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1999. The National Trust offers registration with voluntary organizations, persons with disabilities and associations. The new plan management system has about 500 registered organizations of National Trusts in the country.

Disability is a complex term and is defined as an activity or restriction or disability within the limits of what is considered normal for a human being, resulting mostly in impairment. Disability has been recognized as a human rights issue in the international arena, with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focusing on the needs of persons with disabilities globally. Disability is any physical or mental condition that limits a person's activities, senses, or activities. The term disability has traditionally been used to refer to characteristics that are sufficient to interrupt or prevent day-to-day activities in general. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, "Persons with disabilities include those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory defects, who interact with various barriers, which their full and effective participation in society. Disability can be permanent,

temporary or episodic. They can affect people from birth, or can be acquired later in life through injury or illness. Disability as a social concern is slowly but surely coming to attract public attention at the highest levels of government and policy-making in recent years, efforts by grassroots groups and non-governmental organizations No small measures have been taken. The Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has been established under Section 57 of the Persons with Disabilities (Protection of Equal Opportunities, Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and has been mandated to take steps to protect the rights of individuals. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was published on 1 January 1996 and notified on 7 February 1996. The Persons with Disabilities Act basically lays down the facilities that various types of disabled persons will be entitled to responsibilities and obligations to the Government of India. It broadly includes the prevention and early detection of disabilities, education, employment, social security, research and manpower development, barrier-free access and the priorities and facilities that are available to such individuals and which are necessary to avoid any discrimination. The primary health care centers have been trained to detect and prevent disabilities. Treatment facilities available at the Trauma Center for the purchase of the disabled, soft shoes are being provided to all the disabled, proper treatment and rehabilitation facilities are available for the disabled after their primary screening. All children have been screened to identify risks under school health programs. Awareness programs are being conducted by 07 SHGs to create awareness on health, sanitation and hygiene. Free education for children with disabilities is available in the state. Strict instructions have been issued not to deny admission to PwDs in common schools and government aided special schools are running in the state. The Social Welfare Department in many states is providing scholarships to students with disabilities defect (v) locomotor disability (vi) mental retardation (vii) mental illness.

Literacy status of PwD population in India is shown in Table 1. Literacy rate among disabled population was recorded much below as compared to literacy rate of General population. Literacy rate among PwD population was found significant in the states of Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu where more than 60 per

cent disabled were found literate. Literacy rate among PwD population was recorded low in Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh (less than 50 per cent).

Table 1: Literacy Status of PwD Population in India

State / UT	Literate	Illiterate	Total Disabled	% Literates To Total Disabled	Literacy Rate - Population
India	14618353	12196641	26814994	54.52	74.04
Kerala	539303	222540	761843	70.79	93.91
Maharashtra	2004543	958849	2963392	67.64	82.91
Delhi	153420	81462	234882	65.32	86.34
Gujarat	686443	405859	1092302	62.84	79.31
Tamil Nadu	715822	464141	1179963	60.66	80.33
Karnataka	787286	536919	1324205	59.45	75.6
West Bengal	1156786	860620	2017406	57.34	77.08
Punjab	370324	283739	654063	56.62	76.68
Himachal Pradesh	86923	68393	155316	55.97	83.78
Uttarakhand	102995	82277	185272	55.59	79.63
Haryana	297826	248548	546374	54.51	76.64
Odisha	661598	582804	1244402	53.17	73.45
Madhya Pradesh	815379	736552	1551931	52.54	70.63
U. P.	2166693	1990821	4157514	52.12	69.72
Chhattisgarh	303264	321673	624937	48.53	71.04
Andhra Pradesh	1095529	1171078	2266607	48.33	67.66
Bihar	1102503	1228506	2331009	47.3	63.82
Jharkhand	361343	408637	769980	46.93	67.63
Jammu & Kashmir	150959	210194	361153	41.8	68.74
Rajasthan	627935	935759	1563694	40.16	67.06

Source: Census, 2011

Top ten states share in children with disability in India is shown in Table 2. Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh Dadra Nagar Haveli, Jharkhand, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Assam constituted most of the children with disability in India.

Table 2: Top Ten States Share in Children with Disability in India

State	Percentage
Bihar	12.48
Meghalaya	11.41
Uttar Pradesh	9.98
Dadra Nagar Haveli	9.74
Jharkhand	9.51
Manipur	8.88
Arunachal Pradesh	7.94
Jammu and Kashmir	7.74
Madhya Pradesh	7.59
Assam	7.45

Source: Census, 2011

Children with disability not attending educational institutions is shown in Table 3. More than 1/4th disabled children are not attending educational institutions. This was found more pronouncing in Nagaland (39 per cent) followed by Assam (36 per cent), Meghalaya (35 per cent), Daman and Diu (34 per cent), Bihar (34 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (33 per cent). About 29 per cent disabled children are not attending educational institutions in Uttar Pradesh.

Table 3: Children with Disability Not Attending Educational Institutions

State	Percentage
Bihar	34
Delhi	32
Jammu and Kashmir	32
Jharkhand	31
Rajasthan	31

Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in India

West Bengal	29
Uttar Pradesh	29
Chhattisgarh	27
Punjab	27
Andhra Pradesh	26
Haryana	26
Uttarakhand	26
India	27

Source: Census, 2011

Under the Scheme of National Scholarships for Persons with Disabilities, every year 500 new scholarships are awarded for pursuing post matric professional and technical courses of duration more than one year. However, in respect of students with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, multiple disabilities and profound or severe hearing impairment, scholarship are awarded for pursuing studies from IX Std. onwards. Advertisements inviting applications for scholarships are given in leading national/regional newspapers in the month of June and also placed on the website of the Ministry. State Government/ UT Administrations are also requested to give wide publicity to the scheme. Student with 40 percent or more disability whose monthly family income is less than Rs. 15,000/- is eligible for scholarship. A scholarship of Rs. 700/- per month to day scholars and Rs. 1,000/- per month to hostellers is provided to the students pursuing Graduate and Post Graduate level technical or professional courses. A scholarship of Rs. 400/- per month to day scholars and Rs. 700/- per month to hostellers is provided for pursuing diploma and certificate level professional courses. In addition to the scholarship, the students are reimbursed the course fee subject to a ceiling of Rs. 10,000/- per year. Financial assistance under the scheme is also given for computer with editing software for blind/ deaf graduate and postgraduate students pursuing professional courses and for support access software for cerebral palsied students. National Fellowship for students with Disabilities Scheme was launched during the financial year 2012-13 to increase opportunities to students with disabilities for pursuing higher

education leading to degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. in any University recognized by University Grants Commission(UGC). Pre-Matric Scholarship and Post-Matric Scholarship for Students with Disabilities with the objectives of the schemes are to provide financial assistance to the students with disabilities for studying in the pre-matric level (class IX and X) and post-matric level (Classes XI, XII and up to Post graduate degree/ diploma level). These two schemes have been launched by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities during the Financial Year 2014-15. The financial assistance includes scholarship, book grant, escort/reader allowance, etc. Number of scholarships to be granted every year is 46,000 for pre-matric level and 16,650 for post-matric level. Selection of the beneficiaries under these two scholarship schemes is done on the basis of merit after the recommendation of the State Governments/ Union Territory Administration. The scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for Students with Disabilities has been launched with the objectives of providing financial assistance to the students with disabilities for pursuing studies abroad at the level of Masters' Degree and Ph.D. Twenty (20) scholarships are to be awarded every year out of which six are reserved for women candidates. The scholarship amount includes Maintenance Allowance, Contingency Allowance, Tuition Fees, and Cost of Air Passage etc. Parental income ceiling is Rs.6.00 lakh per annum. The Scheme aims at recognizing and promoting quality education amongst Students with Disabilities by providing full financial support. The scheme will cover Students with Disabilities (SwDs) for pursuing studies at the level of Post Graduate Degree or Diploma in any discipline. The scheme will operate in all institutions notified by the Department .Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment as institutions of excellence.

Budgetary allocation under scholarship scheme in India is shown in Table 4. The budgetary allocation has significantly increased for pre-matric scholarship scheme, post-matric scholarship scheme and national fellowship for PwDs during the period of 2014-15 to 2017-18. However, budgetary allocations under free coaching for students with disabilities have declined over the corresponding period.

Table 4: Budgetary Allocation Under Scholarship Schemes in India (Rs. In Crore)

Name of Scheme	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Growth
Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme	1.0	5.0	6.0	10.0	900.0
Post Matric Scholarship Scheme	2.0	10.0	10.0	16.0	700.0
National Fellowship for PwD	10.0	20.57	23.62	36.41	264.10
Top Class Scholarship Scheme	1.0	0.5	1.0	1.0	-
National Overseas Scholarship Scheme	1.0	0.5	1.0	2.0	100.0
Free Coaching for Students with Disabilities	3.0	0.5	1.0	2.0	-33.3

Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, 2018

Beneficiaries covered under scholarship schemes in India are shown in Table 5. There has been remarkable growth in the number of beneficiaries covered under pre-matric scholarship scheme, top class scholarship scheme and post-matric scholarship scheme over the period of 2015-16 to 2017-18.

Table 5: Beneficiaries Covered Under Scholarship Schemes in India

Name of Scheme	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Growth
Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme	2368	7927	12593	731.80
Post Matric Scholarship Scheme	3565	6281	7657	114.78
National Fellowship for PwD	527	589	666	26.37
Top Class Scholarship Scheme	14	42	37	164.29
National Overseas Scholarship Scheme		2	3	50.0
Free Coaching for Students with Disabilities			250	-

Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, 2018

Beneficiaries and funds released for skill training programme in India are shown in Table 6. There has been major emphasis on skill

training and therefore, amount released for skill training programme has shown an increase of more than 8 times while number of beneficiaries increased by more than 6 times during the period of 2014-15 to 2017-18.

Table 6: Beneficiaries and Funds Released for Skill Training Programme in India (Rs. In Crore)

Year	Amount Released	Number of Beneficiaries
2014-15	10.23	9000
2015-16	22.04	28042
2016-17	32.99	44276
2017-18	81.85	58210

Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, 2018

CONCLUSION

The persons with disability have enough potential to contribute to the society and its development provided they are allowed to fully participate through recognition of their rights and dignity. The legislations meant for safeguarding the persons with disabilities and the various policies / schemes / programmes must be able to address the issues of alarming rate of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty among the persons with disabilities. The issue of accessibility correlates the issue of education and employment and economic development of a country. Therefore to incorporate provisions regarding accessibility in legislations and to execute them is the need of the hour, including the removal of discriminatory provisions that are still prevalent in some legislation. However, laws and policies alone may not be enough. Public perception, attitude and awareness have significant role to play. There is a need for social change through public awareness. There should be endeavor for attitudinal changes in the sense of bringing culture of belonging. The public in general may be empowered and educated to take action and advocate the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities.

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