

Research Paper

Forging Inclusive Nation Builders: Empowering Teachers for Specific Learning Disabilities Post NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

Education For All, being a subject of policy discussions for a considerable period, real progress in classrooms has been uneven. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes inclusive education, with the goal of ensuring that every child, regardless of their background or abilities, can access high-quality learning opportunities. This paper, grounded in a comprehensive review, explores inclusive framework of NEP 2020 with focus on teacher preparedness focusing on early identification, individualized instruction, as well as continuous professional development keeping in view the learning disabilities. The review synthesizes international teaching strategies globally designed to support children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), providing teacher training initiatives to prioritize early detection, research-backed interventions, and ongoing professional development to foster equitable learning environments that promote both academic success and long-term achievement for students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs). The review emphasizes the essential role of thorough teacher training in preparing educators with the expertise and assurance to apply these strategies effectively. This may encompass specialized support programs UDL, inclusive teaching strategies as well as the integration of assistive technologies to empower teachers for children with SLD. It thus offers actionable, evidence-based teacher training programs aimed at bridging the persistent gap between policy goals and classroom realities.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, specific learning disabilities, teaching pedagogies, classroom activities, differential instructions*

Inclusion in education is acknowledged as a fundamental right and the cornerstone of a more equitable and just society nowadays. A new paradigm for educating children with a range of needs is provided by inclusive education, as opposed to earlier dual systems of regular and special education. In the contemporary interconnected world, to foster student diversity and inclusivity, educators must adapt their teaching methods and consistently enhance their expertise to effectively instruct their learners (Forlin, 2017). The practices of

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teachers are shaped by their professional insights, convictions, and surroundings. All these elements are active, dynamic, and fluid; they exert mutual influences and establish reciprocal connections and shared causation among each other (Eun, 2019). Roughly one billion people (15% of the global population) experience some form of disability. The prevalence of disabilities is notably higher in developing countries (World Bank, 2025). As per the 2011 census, India's population of individuals with disabilities is recorded at 2.68 Crore (Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 2015). India aims to transform into a developed nation by 2047, but this aspiration can only be realized through effective management of disabilities within its population. It is especially vital to tackle disabilities in the youth demographic (ages 0-18; particularly 0-6 years) since the success of this initiative heavily depends on the availability of its relatively young population (Kumar, 2025). The Indian government introduced "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act - 2016," which acknowledges 21 categories of disabilities, including learning disabilities. A learning disability is a neurologically-based challenge that affects psychological processes related to the comprehension or usage of language, whether spoken or written, which impedes a learner's capabilities in reading, speaking, listening, thinking, remembering, and executing mathematical tasks. The domain of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) in India is growing swiftly. SLD typically manifests in a child's early years and tends to last into adulthood. Even while preschoolers may experience some of the early signs of learning disabilities (such as difficulty learning letters or numbering objects), the diagnosis of SLD is more accurate once formal education has started. According to Tully et al. (2004), SLD continues to be "one of the least understood and most debated conditions that affect children" worldwide. Among various disabilities, learning disabilities demand immediate attention as they often become apparent early in human growth. Learning disabilities are frequently concealed. Specific learning disorders (SLDs) act as an overarching term (Wang & Chung, 2021) for a wide array of developmental disorders (Kulkarni et al., 2001) characterized by significant, unexpected, specific, and persistent difficulties in acquiring and employing effective reading (dyslexia, phonological processes, orthographic-phonological connections, and/or fluency—rate, automaticity, or executive coordination) (Berninger, 2001), writing (dysgraphia), or mathematical skills (dyscalculia) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). SLDs encompass challenges in listening, speaking, reading, spelling, or executing mathematical calculations. Mastery of reading, writing, and mathematics are vital academic capabilities (Azizi et al., 2018) that provide the foundation for further academic progress (Abdelraouf et al., 2018). To address this, extensive quality research in the field of learning disabilities is essential. Disabilities within the human population pose a significant challenge and barrier to achieving the status of a developed nation by 2047, and this issue must be handled thoughtfully by the nation as a whole. NCFSE (2000) similarly asserts, "Equality in Education requires individualized pedagogy and a comprehensive assessment of individual abilities". Some research suggests that the combined prevalence of learning disabilities is approximately 8% (Scaria LM, Bhaskaran, D and George, B, 2023). The high prevalence of SLDs in Indian students highlights the significance of educating parents and educators. Early detection and improved access to remedial education programs will be facilitated by the implementation of community sensitization activities. Unfortunately, compared to rich nations, there are far fewer resources available for this problem. In particular, general teachers must now be able to meet the academic and social demands of the most diverse student populations in regular classroom settings. Tackling SLD is crucial for realizing the NEP 2020 vision, which requires empowering educators through comprehensive preparation. This calls for a multifaceted approach that encompasses teacher education, instructional technology, increased use of information and communication

technology (ICT), application of assistive technology, continuous professional development for teachers, policy-oriented initiatives, and financial resources aimed at fostering more equitable learning settings (Kumar & Singh, 2022). The current study examines India's vision of inclusivity post NEP 2020, particularly with regard to learning disabilities in terms of teacher preparedness and global perspectives, while keeping the “education for all slogan” in mind.

Exploring transformative vision of NEP 2020 addressing inclusive education in context to teacher preparedness specifically for Specific Learning Disability.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 articulates a groundbreaking vision for the educational framework in India by emphasizing inclusive education and recognizing the need to support diverse learners, including children with disabilities, individuals from socio-economically challenged backgrounds, and those belonging to marginalized communities. Its blueprint seeks to overhaul educational systems, making them more inclusive, fair, and learner-focused (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2020; Kumar & Singh, 2022). Central to this policy is the principle of inclusive education. By integrating assistive technologies, enhancing teacher training, and implementing flexible curricula, the NEP aims to create classrooms that are accessible and welcoming for students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) (Saifullah 2024). Hurdles such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of specialized teacher training, and persistent societal attitudes towards disability and marginalization impede progress. However, research initiatives highlight the significance of enhancing teacher capabilities, encouraging community engagement, and committing long-term to policy in surmounting these challenges and fulfilling the inclusive vision of NEP 2020. Findings suggest that successful policy implementation requires the participation of various stakeholders to establish a more inclusive and accessible educational framework in India (Subhajit 2024). Under the New Education Policy, all teacher training programs will include instruction on teaching children with specific disabilities. This represents a crucial step towards integrating divyangjan into mainstream education. The NEP emphasizes reforms in teacher training programs, ensuring that all educational initiatives for teachers encompass strategies for effectively teaching students with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities (National Association of Special Education Teachers, 2025). The NEP assures that teacher training, resource availability, and stakeholder attitudes will work together to support the inclusion of divyangjan (Singh, S. K., & Dixit, M. P. 2024). With a focus on inclusivity, NEP 2020 advocates for an interdisciplinary educational approach. It recognizes that practical knowledge transcends rigid subject divisions, stressing the need for interconnected learning experiences (Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2020). The Department of Education for Groups with Special Needs at the Central Institute of Educational Technology-National Council of Educational Research and Training (CIET-NCERT) has created a screening tool called ‘PRASHAST’ to assist regular teachers and special educators in identifying and tentatively classifying children into the 21 different disability categories specified in the RPwD Act (2016) at the school level and facilitate their referral to the appropriate medical boards. Regular teachers can detect children who struggle with any of these issues with the help of the PRASHAST. This tool is expected to be used by thousands of regular teachers and hundreds of special educators to screen school-age children for disabilities, including four mental disabilities: ASD, ID, SLD, and MI (CIET-NCERT, 2022). NEP 2020 focuses on infrastructure modifications like ramps, accessible lavatories, and assistive devices which are necessary to ensure both intellectual and physical access for students with disabilities. The policy supports and promotes UDL principles, the use of assistive technology is one of the most crucial instruments for supporting students

with disabilities, encouraging flexible teaching methods taking into account a variety of learning capacities. As teachers have a crucial role in implementing inclusive policies, NEP 2020 highlights how important it is to teach educators inclusive teaching strategies like individualized instruction, effective use of assistive technology, and ways to foster empathy and understanding. The NEP recognizes linguistic diversity and recommends employing multilingual materials in addition to visual, auditory, and tactile learning aids to ensure accessibility for children with learning challenges. The policy further recommends altering the curriculum to more accurately reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion. This means removing prejudices from textbooks, incorporating diversity-honouring information, and adapting teaching resources to suit various learning preferences. NEP places a strong emphasis on collaboration between schools, parents, communities, and governmental institutions in order to offer a support structure for inclusive education. Particular emphasis is placed on involving experts in disability studies and inclusive practices in the implementation of policy. The NEP strongly emphasizes early screening for developmental delays and impairments in order to give timely interventions.

This innovative approach facilitates the early integration of children with special needs into mainstream school. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an essential basis for guaranteeing that every student has access to education. NEP 2020 supports Continuous Professional Development (CPD): Teachers can acquire a variety of new professional teaching abilities and approaches through CPD. Teachers that participate in professional development courses frequently gain knowledge about how to enhance their pedagogical approaches (Modi, 2023). According to NEP2020, educators must complete 50 hours of continuing professional development annually in a range of settings, such as online courses, in-person meetings, and other activities (Ministry of Education, 2023). CPD seeks to support lifelong learning, accommodate different student groups, keep up with changing educational trends, and improve teaching skills (Sabir, M. 2024). CPD is accomplished by holding "workshops and seminars" and providing "certificate programs."

Research and Innovation backed by NEP 2020 increases the proficiency of instructors or trainee teachers at Teacher Education institutions necessitating a continuous process of acquiring new knowledge, improving existing skills, and applying novel approaches (Maseeh, 2023).

To synthesize global evidence on equitable learning environments supporting teacher preparedness in order to foster long-term achievement for students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs)

Worldwide, the population of students with special needs is increasing. To better prepare educators to address the diverse learning requirements of their students, it is becoming more essential to offer them enhanced specialized training (Cristina et al., 2022). To determine the profile and professional requirements of all parties involved in the educational process, as well as to more accurately identify knowledge deficiencies, misconceptions, and limited competencies regarding inclusive practices, assessment is a vital step in an effective teacher development process (Weegar & Romano, 2019).

Global perspective:

South Africa: The execution of inclusive education policies in mainstream schools in countries like South Africa demands qualified teachers who can cater to all students, including those facing learning challenges (Malahlela & Johnson, 2024). . In South Africa,

the demand for inclusive education remains high; however, numerous educators have not received adequate training for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in classrooms. Evaluating teacher education for inclusive practices requires an exploration of both structural and professional obstacles to training that hinder effective implementation. Furthermore, teachers indicated that limited access to appropriate resources has impeded their ability to cultivate the right attitudes, beliefs, and understanding of the needs of SpLD learners, which are essential for becoming inclusive specialists (Forlin & Sin, 2017; Nseibo et al., 2022).

Ethiopia: Research indicates that many teachers in Ethiopia lack adequate understanding of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs), highlighting the urgent need for basic training in both identification and comprehension. Educators reported that they received no instruction on SLDs during their formal education or professional development programs. The findings advocate for evidence-based actions to tackle policy and practice issues concerning SLDs in Ethiopia, reinforcing the pressing need to enhance awareness among educators, policymakers, parents, and the general community (Mekonnen, 2023).

Portugal: In Portuguese educational framework supports the inclusion of all students in mainstream schools, it has not established a coherent narrative that effectively addresses the needs of students with specific learning disabilities (SLDs). The legislative framework in Portugal misinterprets the concept, leading the Ministry of Education to categorize dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyspraxia as communication disorders (Martins, 2004). This misunderstanding exacerbates the confusion and prevents students with SLDs from accessing special education services, resulting in a prolonged struggle with academic failure. Despite multiple reforms and curricular adjustments, Portuguese schools have yet to effectively tackle the range of challenges associated with reading, writing, and mathematics, many of which may be linked to SLDs.

Australia: In Australia, a grassroots approach to developing inclusive education policies for students with disabilities has emerged, highlighting the need for region-specific teacher training.

Sweden: In order to help teachers adapt their teaching techniques, materials, and evaluations to the different requirements of students, UDL training is becoming more and more popular in many nations, such as Sweden and India. According to Dalton et al. (2023), Universal create for Learning (UDL) is a set of concepts and guidelines that create and develop flexible learning environments and curricula to suit a variety of learning requirements and variances.

Japan: A notable example of a cooperative government system/university cooperation to upskill teachers about inclusive education is the Hong Kong model.

When a long-term plan has been put in place to upskill regular class teachers in inclusive education, this model offers a practical way to deal with this problem. It starts with an off-site training program and then moves on to a school-based whole-school approach that may be of interest to many other systems. The training requirements of education aides who assist pupils in inclusive classrooms are also taken into account (Forlin 2007).

Finland: Research on Finnish students with behavioural and learning issues indicates that the goal of inclusion is still mostly unrealized. Although the number of exclusionary schools has reduced over time, Finland has some of the highest percentages of exclusionary classes and separate small groups in Europe (Saloviita, 2020a). Although we could argue that some aspects of the Finnish system are inclusive because students have relatively easy access to extra support without formal evaluation and labelling, the system's use of separate classes and a small-group pull-out model contrasts with the idea of inclusivity (Takala et al., 2009). In Finland there is a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion. Research studies are thought of as a means of combining theory, practice, and educational research. They are incorporated into the curriculum, and courses on quantitative and qualitative research methods are required for pre-service teachers. Both bachelor's and master's theses, including original research with faculty support for their master's thesis, can make use of this expertise. However, professional development is not the aim. but independent and reflective teachers that may rely on their understanding of research to solve issues inside the classroom with evidence-based instructional and behavioural techniques (Hansén et al., 2012; Toom et al., 2010)

Turkey Many training programs concentrate on specific, scientifically validated tactics. For example, the Reading Fluency and Comprehension Supplemental Education Program in Turkey has shown improvements in the reading skills of kids with SLDs, underscoring the necessity for teachers to get intervention-focused training.

Kenya: Kenyan teachers are trained to use strategies and interventions for students who have difficulty with the subject, there is a need for practical skill development in mathematics. Oloo, J. A., & Nyongesa, C. M. (2024)

China: To achieve the goal of inclusion in China, regional and local education agencies are instructed by the "Guidelines for Resource Rooms in Regular Schools" policy paper (MOE, 2016b) to strengthen their ability for inclusion. The "learning in a regular classroom" (LRC) paradigm for inclusive education was first implemented in China in the 1980s. In the late 1990s, a few major Chinese cities began implementing the resource room concept as an essential part of the LRC to improve instructional features. The agreement mandated that any school with more than five students with disabilities have at least one resource room. Langa and colleagues (2018). MOE-certified specialized teachers were to be present in resource rooms together with a variety of assessment instruments, instructional materials, and therapy equipment.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts the comprehensive review methodology to examine the present literature policy documents. Empirical research work related to the inclusion of specific learning disability in terms of teacher preparedness. This design enabled the synthesis of global as well as national perspectives. We identified studies through searches in journal databases and requests to content experts such as Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, Google Scholar, PubMed (education and psychology interface), Shodhganga (Indian theses and dissertations) Official policy documents from the Ministry of Education, Government of India. After assessing the quality of studies that met content requirements, we employed a best-evidence synthesis approach. Studies were stratified across several dimensions for evidence synthesis, with industry as the core stratification criterion. Inclusion criteria: studies were included. If they were related to specific Learning Disability, focusing on the

school and primary education, teacher education, having theoretical and empirical grounding. The language used was English.

Findings

We can see in through our review that regardless of the geographical location in which teachers practise, all teachers seem to be only partly prepared for teaching learners with SpLD. Teacher preparedness and institutional support are critical factors in the success of inclusive education. In order to enhance their teaching methods and achieve successful student results, educators should be encouraged to do action research. Numerous previous studies have shown the beneficial effects of IE teacher training interventions on participating teachers' attitudes and instructional practices, pre-service and in-service teacher training are fundamental to these reforms (Krischler et al., 2019; Tristani & Bassett-Gunter, 2020). Long, H. (2020) provides a thorough analysis of assistive technology research trends with a focus on its application for students with disabilities. They point out that AT is a dynamic tool that can be customized to meet the unique needs of students with a range of disabilities rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Assistive technology (AT) help bridge the gap between students with disabilities and their peers by providing customized support, according to Alnahdi, G. H. (2020). integration of AT into UDL frameworks helps create a more inclusive learning environment by letting students engage with the content in a way that best suits their learning preferences and skills. Courses, seminars, and practicums are just a few examples of the various training formats that may be created with objective outcomes and available resources in mind (Tristani & Bassett-Gunter, 2020). All this aligns with the broader goals of inclusive education, as expressed in the NEP.

The findings indicate that regardless of the educational environment, teachers still have problems when instructing students with particular learning impairments. One of the main issues influencing the quality of their work, according to a number of teachers, is the lack of options for specialized training in this field. Additionally, instructors felt that their lack of access to suitable materials had prevented them from cultivating the proper mindset, convictions, and comprehension of the requirements of SpLD students—all of which are essential for becoming inclusive specialists (Forlin & Sin, 2017).

Students with certain sorts of learning challenges were thought to benefit from technology-assisted online course delivery. Said, N. E. M., and Afitska, O. (2022). Nevertheless, there is still a dearth of research that explains how differentiated teaching can be applied to SpLD students and how instructors could be better assisted in putting this strategy into practice in SpLD environments (Hoover & de Bettencourt, 2018; Reddig et al., 2021). Specifically, research showed that general education teachers, who underwent pre-service and in-service training courses, were not adequately prepared for the implementation of appropriate and successful inclusive methods of instruction in classes with SpLD learners (Forlin & Sin, 2017; Gavish, 2017; Hoover & deBettencourt, 2018). Moreover, instructors felt that their lack of access to suitable materials had prevented them from cultivating the proper mindset, convictions, and comprehension of the requirements of SpLD students—all of which are essential for becoming inclusive specialists (Forlin & Sin, 2017).

DISCUSSION

Global trends in early childhood educator teacher training highlight persistent challenges such as inadequate funding, a lack of standardized training frameworks, and restricted access to continued professional development (Gopinath & Mathew, 2017). It is important that international organizations provide guidance and support to researchers, practitioners, and lawmakers to facilitate changes that will better serve students with LD throughout the world. The educators worldwide need more possibilities for lifetime learning, which is essential for the early detection and assistance of SLDs. Diversity and representation in the teaching field are crucial, as demonstrated by the experiences of educators with learning difficulties. The educators must engage in continual professional learning due to the ongoing development of knowledge regarding SLDs and advancements in teaching approaches. Compensatory and remedial educational strategies tailored to the requirements of the underprivileged, disadvantaged, and challenged individuals are vital to bringing them on par with their peers. Despite these efforts, problems like insufficient funding, inconsistent training, and limited access to continuing professional development persist globally.

CONCLUSION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 signifies a significant step in redesigning India's education landscape, notably in supporting inclusive education. The strategy, which places a strong emphasis on equity, accessibility, and flexibility, seeks to eliminate long-standing obstacles that marginalized groups—such as pupils from low-income families, children with impairments, and gender minorities—face. In order to encourage the inclusion of different pupils in mainstream educational settings, NEP 2020 proposes a more comprehensive and student-centric approach. However, there are many obstacles in the way of NEP 2020's full potential. This requires large investments in infrastructure, resource development, and teacher preparation in order to accommodate a variety of learning requirements. Administrative lethargy, sociocultural biases, and disparities in state implementation readiness all hamper the progress. All parties involved, including the government, educational institutions, educators, and civil society, must work together to overcome these obstacles. We can see in through our review that regardless of the geographical location in which teachers practise, all teachers seem to be only partly prepared for teaching learners with SpLD. Secondly, despite a lack of knowledge and professional preparation for working with SpLD learners, teachers continue to make efforts to educate these groups of learners as effectively as they can through self-education initiatives and voluntary training in SpLD instruction. and use of technology-assisted tools to effectively educate SpLD learners.

The study recommends continuous professional development programs, collaborative learning opportunities, and enhanced institutional support to strengthen teachers' abilities in managing inclusive classrooms. Specialised training and resources, as well as ongoing professional support within their educational contexts, becomes crucial in these situations.

Addressing these factors will improve the overall effectiveness of inclusive education and support the academic and social development of learners with Special Educational Needs.

The NEP's vision of inclusive classrooms is a step toward equitable education that respects and celebrates diversity. By addressing challenges through collaborative efforts, investment in resources, and leveraging technology, inclusive education can become a reality. These classrooms not only empower students with disabilities but also foster empathy and understanding, preparing all learners to contribute to a more inclusive and harmonious

society. In conclusion, NEP 2020 provides a foundational framework for enhancing teacher preparedness for learning disabilities by promoting inclusive education, integrating technology, and advocating for comprehensive teacher training. However, successful implementation hinges on overcoming existing challenges such as infrastructural gaps, ensuring adequate professional development, and fostering strong collaboration between general and special educators. A continuous evaluation of the policy's impact on academic performance, cognitive development, and stakeholder engagement will be crucial for refining strategies and ensuring that all children, especially those with learning disabilities, receive quality education

Recommendations

The educators across the world should utilize a collaborative approach when supporting students with LD, addressing learning needs of students with LD and others who struggle academically. Parents are integral to a collaborative approach and should be involved in decision-making about their child's education so that they could help reinforce the skills taught in school at home. Additionally, it is important for the school administrators to be cognizant of the collaboration required with parents and among teachers, so they can provide common planning time and resources to facilitate parent involvement. Most importantly, culturally responsive practices should be at the forefront of any decision-making and instruction of students with LD as the vast majority of countries around the world have rich and diverse populations.

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Conflict of Interest

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