

The National Initiative for School Heads’ and Teachers’ Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA)-Equitable and Inclusive Education

(Capacity Building Programme on Equitable and Inclusive Education for Teachers)

Approach paper

Introduction

The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education launched a National Mission to improve learning outcomes at the Elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme called **NISHTHA – National Initiative for School Heads’ and Teachers’ Holistic Advancement** on 21st August, 2019. The aim of this integrated teacher training programme was to build the capacities of around 42 lakh elementary teachers and Heads of Schools, faculty members of SCERTs and DIETs and Block Resource Coordinators and Cluster Resource Coordinators in order to motivate and equip teachers for encouraging and fostering critical thinking in students, handle diverse situations and act as first level counsellors.

In view of the COVID pandemic, NISHTHA-Online was launched on 06th October, 2020 and the remaining training of NISHTHA at elementary level was conducted online by the NCERT on the DIKSHA platform. NISHTHA (Secondary Level) –online on DIKSHA for secondary/senior secondary level teachers was launched with an aim to cover around 10 lakh Teacher and School Heads at Secondary level across all States and UTs.

NISHTHA Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in online mode on DIKSHA platform for teachers and school heads of pre-primary to class V was launched on 7th September, 2021. The NISHTHA – NIPUN Bharat envisions covering nearly 25 lakh Teachers and School Heads at Pre-Primary and Primary Level across all states and UTs. The previous NISHTHA training programs have covered aspects on inclusion in the classroom.

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 recommends that, “Ensuring the inclusion and equal participation of children with disabilities in ECCE and the schooling system will also be accorded the highest priority.” In order to achieve full equity and inclusion within the school system, it is important to focus on the inclusive education of

children with disabilities, so that they are able to thrive within the school ecosystem. Para 6.10 of the NEP-2020 states that, the “Policy is in complete consonance with the provisions of the RPWD Act 2016 and endorses all its recommendations with regard to school education.”

Present Scenario

Number of Schools

Schools	Govt.	Govt. Aided	Total (Govt.+ Govt. Aided)
Class I to XII	1022386	82480	1104866
Pre-Pry- XII	877665	42897	920562

Source: UDISE+ 2021-22

Enrollment Figures

Enrollment	Govt.	Govt. Aided	Total (Govt.+ Govt. Aided)	%
CwSN	1738636	287635	2026271	1.18
Total	143240480	27039457	170279937	

Source: UDISE+ 2021-22(Pre-primary to Sr. Secondary)

Presently, as per UDISE+ 2021-22, there are 20.26 lakh children with disabilities (CwDs) enrolled across 11.04 lakh schools and CwDs constitute 1.18 percent of the total enrollment of students (upto class XII).

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 was enacted on 28.12.2016 and came into force from 19.04.2017. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is the nodal Department to coordinate all matters relating to implementation of the Act and its provisions. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 has schooled 21 disabilities (which include broadly physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, mental illness, chronic neurological conditions, blood disorders and multiple disabilities etc.).

The RPwD Act stipulates inclusive education for all children with disabilities and the right to free education in a neighbourhood school, or in a special school for every child (as per her/his choice) with benchmark disability between the age of six to eighteen years. In addition, measures to ensure capacity building of all relevant stakeholders have also been specified. Section 17 (d) of the Act states that-

“The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take the following measures for the purpose of section 16, namely:—

(d) to train professionals and staff to support inclusive education at all levels of school education;”

Thus, dedicated and focused orientation and training program at the National level through like the NISHTHA training model have been considered.

The support for CwDs as per the schedule of disabilities specified in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 was introduced for the first time under Samagra Shiksha from the year 2018-19 onwards. While States & UTs have been undertaking training programs for general teachers on various aspects of disability and inclusive education from time to time, however a National level training program for school heads and general teachers on disabilities as per provisions of RPwD Act, 2016 and teaching strategies for CwDs in schools from foundational stage to secondary stage is required to be undertaken.

Objective:

To sensitize and train teachers and other functionaries of general schools to address the learning needs of children with disabilities and children belonging to disadvantaged groups enrolled in general schools.

Target Group

- All general teachers not having any qualifications in special/inclusive education from foundational stage to Secondary stage.
- The target group will comprised of mostly general teachers from Govt. Schools and Govt. Aided schools, schools under CBSE, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, Eklavya Model Residential Schools. The trained participants will be the Key Resource Persons (KRPs)/Master Trainers of their own state/UTs/Organizations and will further train the teachers of schools of their own states/UTs/ Sangathan/organizations.

Number of participants:

80 in-service teachers in each capacity building programmes (50-60 from the Govt. Schools and Govt added schools and 20-30 from the schools under CBSE, KVS, NVS, KGBVs, EMRs of respective region).

Proposed Coverage

Number of Teachers			
Teacher Profile	Govt.	Govt. Aided	Total (Govt.+ Govt. Aided)
Teachers	4882446	796631	5679077

Source: UDISE+ 2021-22

As per UDISE+ 2021-22, there are 56.79 lakh teachers in government and government aided schools. Complete coverage may be considered or undertaken phase wise so as to address disability specific teaching-learning concerns as per RPwD Act, 2016.

Training Partner

The NCERT has been assigned as the nodal organization for NISHTHA training program and NCERT may conduct the program in collaboration with DEPwD, M/o Social Justice & Empowerment for disability specific technical inputs and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) as RCI is the nodal organization for teacher education programs of special educators.

Methodology

Phase-I : Five-Regional level Capacity Building Programmes on Equitable & Inclusive

Education for Teachers will be conducted through the RIEs of NCERT.

Phase-II : State/District/Block level follow-up capacity building programmes for school teachers

through state-KRPs will be conducted by the respective states functionaries (Samagra Shiksha,

SCERTs/SIEs/DIETs) during 2024-25 onwards through their Annual Work Plan and Budget

under supervision of RIEs, NCERT.

Mode of Implementation

- The process may be initiated through a training needs assessment and analysis on various aspects of disability, equity and inclusion.
- This training program may be considered as part of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as per NEP recommendations.
- Training program may be conducted in face-to-face mode or hybrid mode with a significant training period designated for hands-on teaching practice across each

module of training, so as to familiarize general teachers with strategies, adaptations and modifications to be undertaken for CwDs & SEDGs in general classrooms.

- A pre-test and post-test may be conducted for assessment.

Training Materials

NISHTHA- Equitable and Inclusive Education Training Package (ie. In-service Training of General Teachers Package) developed by Rehabilitation Council of India will be used. Materials will be provided to the participants.

National Resource Persons

NRPs will be the experts from NCERT including its Constituents, National Institutes on Disabilities (DoEPwDs, MSJE), Universities and other institutions working in the field.

State Resource Persons

The trained teachers will be the Key Resource Persons (KRPs) of their own state/UTs/organizations and will be the resource persons of their states/UTs and Sangathan/organizations.

Expected outcomes

- The participating teachers will be trained to function as state key resource persons/master trainers on different aspects of equitable and inclusive education. They will be able to identify learning needs of CwDs and children belonging to SEDGs, and plan appropriate strategies and mobilize adequate resources to create a conducive and enabling learning environment for CwDs in schools accordingly.
- **The participating teachers will further organize similar capacity building programme, called NISHTHA-Equitable and Inclusive Education at State/District/Block level/organization. Follow-up capacity building programmes for school teachers and other school functionaries will be conducted.**
- The participating teachers (Phase-I) and further trained teachers (phase-II) will be able to do screening of children to identify disability at school level that will further be helpful in proper identification of CwDs, their enrollment, learning, assessment providing support services towards successful completion of subsequent stages schooling.
