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Educational, Vocational and Extra-Curricular Achievement of Children with Disabilities studying in Special Schools in Odisha

Expression of Intent

The Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSCPCR) invites proposals from empanelled experts to undertake a study on 'Educational, Vocational and Extra-Curricular Achievement of Children with Disabilities studying in Special Schools in Odisha'

Background

Importance of primary education for any school age child cannot be over emphasized by any means. India has shown its commitment to education of children with disabilities since independence when the Ministry of Education set up special unit to look into education of children with disabilities in 1947. From the day Indian Constitution became operative, the successive Governments at centre and the states, left no stone unturned, at least in their sincere intention, to arrange universal free and compulsory education for all children. By the adjective 'all' we understand that not only the normal children but also the disabled were also to be covered by the programmes of universalisation. The plight of the disabled can be easily imagined. In 1993, N.K. Jangira, a member of the Task Force appointed by the MHRD to recommend the modus operandi to implement the NPE (1986) in the case of disabled, wrote that by any means only 5% of the visually impaired children get some kind of primary education. With the advent of 21st century the condition improved substantially which further improved when the SarvaShikshaAbhijan was launched in 2001. But the gap between demand and provision still remained so wide that it can swallow the entire population of the many smaller nations of the west.

Special schools for children with disabilities were started in 1800s. But these schools remained fewer and confined within the big cities. Rural people remained into the darkness of ignorance; common schools in general, remained indifferent towards their disabled citizens. Only some NGOS came forward in some parts of the country to offer

some kind of primary education for the children with disabilities. It was only in 1974 with Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) the road from special schools to education in regular school settings opened up. The National Policy on Education (1986) brought the fundamental issue of equality for CWSN to the forefront. By the mid-1990s, GoI initiated the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and its subcomponent known as the Integrated Education of the Disabled (IED). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989 declared the rights of disabled children to enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions that promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community. The Salamanca Declaration (1994) emphasized that the regular classroom is the best place to safeguard the right of education for children with special educational needs.

The Persons With Disabilities Act 1995 was an important intervening policy development in education. Its position on a rights-based entitlement to basic education was clear, but its guidance on modalities for ensuring realization of the right was less so, with all options for delivery of education for CWSN allowed. Just as importantly, it gave no guidance on who should take the decisions on the most appropriate form of education delivery for a specific child with a disability: administrative channels, more locally representative bodies such as PRIs or VECs, parents of the CWSN, or the role of the CWSN themselves in taking such decisions. This was followed by another important legislation, The National Trust Act 1999 which prioritized the needs of the more disadvantaged group among CWSN i.e children with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities.

When the concept of Integrated Education was introduced in early 1970's, the scope of educating children with disabilities increased manifold. With the introduction of the concept of Inclusive education, which is different from all other earlier concepts because it pledges to include elementary education in the list of fundamental rights, a new acceleration in this field was expected. But now it is known to all that we are yet to accept inclusive education in its true sense, we are yet to take any significant and effective step still now. The reason is, most likely, lack of any comprehensive planning.

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UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 2007 - Article 24 of the Convention very clearly recognizes the rights of CWSN to inclusive education. The key provisions are as follows:

“States Parties shall ensure that:

- a. persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;
- b. persons with disabilities can access and inclusive, quality and free primary education and second education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
- c. reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
- d. persons with disabilities receive the support required with the general education system to facilitate their effective education;
- e. effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 - It states every child of the age of six to fourteen years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education. While the original RTE Act passed in April 1, 2010 specifically mentions children with disability, the Amendment passed in 2012 resulted in an expanded definition of children with disability and other enabling measures. This broader definition now includes:

- ▶ A child with 'disability' as defined in 1995 Persons with Disabilities Act
- ▶ A child with 'disability' and 'severe disability' as defined in National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999.
- ▶ A child with disability is to be included in the Act's definition of children belonging to a 'disadvantaged group'.

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Tools

Tools would be prepared by the expert with reference to the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Provisions need to be made to analyze data quantitatively as well qualitatively. While the quantitative analysis will present a quick overview of the program impact, the qualitative analysis would direct implementer's attention to (i) the quality classroom process, (ii) the perception of important stakeholders, the best practices to learn from and (iii) gaps, if any, to be bridged in future.

Time Duration

The study report should be made available to the OSCPCR Office by the end of January, 2014. As per the order of the Government, the agency completing the study would present the findings before a Committee consisting of the Chairperson and member OSCPCR, SENIOR representatives from Department of School and Mass Education AND Women and Child Development Department, Director, Disability, Commissioner Disability and experts.

Budget


Since the time line is of about 3-month duration, the organization would prepare a budget without becoming too ambitious or compromising with respect to the quality of the study. The financial bid may be submitted with the technical bid.

Funding and Disbursement

The study would be funded and disbursement of grant would be done as per rules of the Government of Odisha.

Expectations from the Expert

- The expert would develop a quality proposal outlining the objectives, design, sample, tools, data gathering procedure, data processing and analysis, and the expected applied significance of the study.

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- The expert would employ genuine and competent investigators.
 - The expert would submit a quality report of national standard.
 - The expert would stick to the time line as no request for further allowance would be entertained as per the order of the Government.
 - The expert would conform to the guidelines laid down by the government with respect to submission of reports and disbursement of funds.
 - Breach of agreement by the expert would not hold the government responsible for carrying out full-length transaction with the organization.
 - When the study is completed, we should have the information/knowledge at least in respect of the following:
 - ⇒ What is the achievement level of students in special schools in curricular and co-curricular areas compared to their peers from inclusive schools?
 - ⇒ Compared to inclusive schools, is more proportion of children enrolled in and attend special schools? Is the student retention better?
 - ⇒ Are the equity and quality concerns of education are better met in special schools? Are special schools imparting better education, vocational and extra curricular activities? Are they better equipped in terms of supportive devices, aids and teachers?
 - ⇒ Are special schools preparing children with disabilities for a better future, to earn and support their families? Are special schools helping children with disabilities to better integrate in society?
 - ⇒ Do the teachers/parents/community prefer children with disabilities to attend special schools?
 - ⇒ What more can be done to make the special schools effective and beneficial for children? Or should the emphasis be on moving all children to inclusive schools?

Deadline for submission of Proposal

Proposals should be submitted by the organization on or before 23rd October, 2014.