

Inclusive School Guidelines – Samagra Shiksha, Gujarat

Background

Inclusive education is as a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. The objective of the inclusive education is to support education as a right for all, with special emphasis on removing barriers to participation and learning for disadvantaged groups, girls and women, children with disabilities and out-of-school children. The overall goal is a school where all children are participating and treated equally.

The National Policy of Education (NPE), 1986 in the section on “Education for Equality” has emphasized the need for removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity by attending the specific needs of those who had been denied so far. For achieving this especially in the case of children with disabilities many legislations and schemes have been enacted as mentioned below for the benefit of Children with Special Needs (CwSN). All stakeholders such as School Staff, Parents of CwSN etc. should be aware of these provisions to avail the benefits for CwSN.

- 1) Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Education (1992)**
- 2) Centrally Sponsored Scheme of SSA (2001)**
- 3) Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS), 2009**
- 4) Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016**
- 5) Integrated Scheme on School Education, 2018**

In 2018, MHRD, GoI has launched Integrated Scheme on School Education under Samagra Shiksha subsuming the erstwhile schemes of IED-SSA and IEDSS-RMSA. It aims to look at the education of all children including children with Special Needs (CwSN) in a continuum from pre-nursery to Class XII. The scheme covers all CwSN with one or more disabilities as mentioned in the schedule of disabilities of the RPwD Act, 2016 studying in Government, Government-aided and Local body schools and benefit the CwSN by converging with different line Departments like Health Department for Assessment & Surgery, GCERT for Academic support, Social Justice & Empowerment Department for appliances, etc.

Key Objectives of the Scheme for Inclusive Education:

- To Identify children with disabilities at school level and assess their educational needs.
- To provide aids and appliances, and assistive devices to CwSN as per requirement.
- To ensure barrier-free access in schools for CwSN
- To provide appropriate teaching-learning materials, guidance and counselling services and

therapeutic services to CwSN as per their requirement.

- To sensitize and train general school teachers to facilitate, involve and ensure learning of CwSN in the general classroom.
- To provide additional support to CwSN through Special Educators (SEs).

In the light of the above-mentioned scheme and its objectives, Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs (IE-CwSN) branch under Samagra Shiksha, Gujarat is aiming to transform all Government Elementary and Secondary Schools into fully evolved Inclusive Schools in a phased manner by creating a barrier-free environment. To achieve this, Samagra Shiksha is focusing on the key components of Inclusive School as detailed below.

The Inclusive School Model

An Inclusive School is an educational setting in which all students with disabilities have opportunities to participate and receive support in all aspects of school life alongside peers. These are designed with a vision and principle that believe in the culture of rights, social justice and equity. It believes that all children learn in different ways and accepts diversity as a strength rather than a problem.

For the regular school to fully transform into an inclusive school, it is important that the barriers CwSN face should be addressed in a systematic manner. These barriers need streamlined actions addressing them so that the actual conditions for inclusion are created. The following are the barriers that the CwSN face in accessing a regular school-

- a. Physical barriers- This includes the barriers related to infrastructure that make it difficult for CwSN to access the regular school. Some of these barriers are lack of ramp, railings, signages, CwSN friendly toilets, insufficient lighting in the classroom etc.
- b. Attitudinal barriers- Even if the school minimizes the physical barriers, the attitude of the community and peers towards the ability of CwSN and mainly the attitude of the teachers towards the inclusion in the classroom.
- c. Instructional barriers- These are the barriers that the students with special needs face in understanding the teachers' instruction. For example, a child with total blindness cannot access the regular books and the students with hearing impairment cannot understand the oral instructions of the teachers.

So, the inclusive schools must resolve to address these barriers so that the CwSN can achieve the educational objectives at par with the other students (*to the best of their potential*)

Interventions to make a School Inclusive

1. CwSN-friendly Physical Environment at School

- Creation of special facilities such as ramps, rails, signages, tactile boards, lighting, ventilation, special toilets, drinking water and make other necessary changes to suit the special needs of disabled persons.
- Provide a print-rich environment and need-based furniture in the class
- Ensure that the classroom seating arrangement is clear and specific so that each CwSN can move and seat and reach their place easily.
- Keep the school premises as a hazard-free environment (no broken window panes, broken steps, broken fixture and furniture, unsafe ceilings, etc).

2. In-School Resource / Therapy Support Centre

CwSN needs additional interventions so that they can be facilitated to learn and gain more autonomy and independence. For this, In-school resource/therapy support centres are to be created to provide therapy support and additional educational inputs to facilitate CwSN's overall learning.

Hence, all the inclusive schools are supposed to have an additional room for setting up a resource room with basic equipment such as Group Hearing System for Hearing Impaired, Braille, large print books, magnifying lens, therapy appliances etc. Therapy services such as psychological, speech, braille, physio and occupational etc. shall be provided 4 days a week at the resource room to the CwSN with respective disabilities. Special Educators should use this space for providing specific inputs like teaching students braille, sign language, etc.

3. Curriculum Adaptation by the Teachers:

To ensure that CwSN is facilitated to learn equally with their peers, the teacher needs to learn ways in which they can address the needs of different students in the same classroom. For this, all the teachers will be provided with an orientation training on how to teach CwSN in an inclusive environment, additional literature like guidebooks, TLMs and handholding support by the Special Educators. The teachers will also be provided continuous support through technology-based training programmes and through SETCOM to gain understanding and skills to teach CwSN.

The schools will have flexible assessments so that the actual learning levels, progress and need of the CwSN can be assessed and supported accordingly. Giving CwSN more time to complete the test, conducting assessments as per their actual learning levels, providing tools in braille, etc., are some of the ways that the teachers need to follow during the assessment.

4. Teaching Learning Material (TLM) and Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Support:

TLMs and ICT can be effectively used to support the CwSN to learn in an inclusive setting. For that, disability wise appropriate TLMs and special software tools will be provided to the schools. These materials will be provided to address the specific needs

of the students as per their disabilities.

5. Additional Support by Special Educator (SE):

The SE will be positioned at the inclusive school to ensure that the CwSN are properly facilitated in the regular classes (should not withdrawal or pull-out CwSN from regular class) and provided with the additional support as per their educational objectives. The SE will mainly co-teach with the regular teachers and will plan separate classes (In-school resource room) as per the need of the CwSN. These classes will not exceed more than one hour on any day. SE in collaboration with the teacher will prepare an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that clearly articulates the specific goals and teaching strategies that the teacher plans for CwSN. SE in the presence of IED District Coordinator and with the support of Principal / HT will conduct IEP review meeting once in every quarter with the parents/guardians of CwSNs and Class Teacher to share the plan, progress and the needs of CwSN.

6. Peer sensitization, Institutionalization of Buddy System and Collaborative Learning-

To ensure that the CwSN are not bullied or laughed at and to ensure that they are well supported, the peers of the classes where CwSN are enrolled will be properly sensitized using a range of activities. Some strategies like assigning buddies to the CwSN would support CwSN to make the best of their time in the classrooms. The teachers will assign and delegate some of the roles to the peers so that the CwSN can learn well.

7. Parental Counselling

The SEs stationed at the inclusive school will collaborate with the other regular teachers to ensure that the parents of CwSN are properly counselled on the stages of child development, their role in the academic development of the child, the importance of regular therapy support and Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

8. Strengthening of SMC and Community Mobilization

School Management Committee (SMC) should be oriented on the goal and objectives of the inclusive school. If the school have CwSN students, then it is mandatory that one or two parents of the CwSN are the member of the SMC. During the monthly meetings the committee should discuss the process of identification and enrol of CwSN, their overall progress, need etc. and should work towards achieving the goal of the inclusion.

The school should regularly conduct awareness campaign/rallies in the communities highlighting the importance and benefit of enrolling the CwSN in the nearby inclusive school. They can utilize the Multi-media and Mass media for awareness and mobilizing the community.

Roles of different stakeholders for creating an Inclusive School

For a school to transform from a regular school to an inclusive school, different stakeholders need to come together and contribute collectively so that the CwSN not just get enrolled in the

school but also grow to the best of their potential.

Role of Head Teacher / Principal:

- Shall ensure that none of CwSN is denied admission and enrolled in an age-appropriate class. In the case of profound disability, a committee comprises of Head of Teacher / Principal, SE, Expert of concern Disability, District IE-CwSN Coordinator will decide.
- Shall facilitate CwSN be registered for Unique Disability ID (UDID) and disability certificate.
- Shall ensure that every CwSN take part in every activity of the school and there should not be any kind of discrimination.
- Shall supervise, facilitate and extend all possible help to SE, Class Teacher and Therapist for the overall development of CwSN. (*use data of CwSN attendance and learning level to monitor the progress, make classroom observations to observe whether CwSN is participating and learning or not.*)
- Shall ensure that the school building is rich with paintings and endeavour to use and leverage BaLA (Building as Learning Aid)
- Shall inspire and motivate the Class Teacher regularly.
- Shall facilitate the awareness and capacity building programme for Class Teacher, Parents, SMC members and other stakeholders.
- Shall ensure that the school is free from Physical barrier (*properly functional ramp, signages, CwSN friendly toilets, lighting, etc. are ensured*)
- Shall be responsible to bring to the notice of SE and sought solutions when faced any challenges at the school/Community level. If still, the problem persists, then it should be escalated to the concerned authorities at block/district level (Helpline number: **18002337965**)

Role of Class Teacher in Inclusive School:

For teaching in an inclusive classroom, a teacher needs to possess competencies that help her/him to plan and implement strategies that provide CwSN wider access to the regular curriculum. The teachers in an inclusive classroom:

- Shall identify the CwSN within the classroom and refer them to experts for further examination and treatment.
- Shall create a conducive learning environment by developing a positive attitude between normal and disabled children.
- Shall make the sitting arrangements in the classroom as per the need of CwSN
- Shall ensure that the CwSN joins the activities of the class together with normal students.
- Shall assign 2 or 3 buddies to each CwSN on a rotation basis so that these buddies will be responsible to assist CwSN in a group or individual activities and in daily life activities such as accessing toilet, drinking water, etc.
- Shall collaborate with SE and Therapist in developing Individualized Education

Plan (IEP)

- Shall accommodate student's different learning styles and rates of learning by employing a range of teaching methods, including cooperative group learning, peer tutoring, team teaching and individualised instruction;
- Shall make a suitable adaptation in the curriculum transaction so that every CwSN will learn according to their ability.
- Shall provide extra time and support (persisting with progressively more scaffolding until the child understands correctly) to CwSN to complete the activity.
- Shall develop the assessment portfolio of a child with special needs
- Shall analyse the data and share the progress of the CwSN to parents, SE, Head Teacher / Principal and Therapist
- Shall organize continuous and periodic parent meetings, counselling sessions and public awareness programme through school activities in coordination with SE

Role of Special Educator (SE):

- The Special Educator (SE) will be responsible for creating the physical, curricular and attitudinal barrier-free environment.
- SE shall address Administrative & Academic needs of CwSN students in the allocated schools by coordinating with School Head, Class Teacher, Therapist and IE-CwSN District Coordinator
- SE shall sensitize peer, build awareness on inclusive education to SMC and Community.
- The SE shall work in itinerant mode and will be stationed at the Inclusive Schools with In-School Resource Room or Block-level Resource Room for a specific number of days in a week. Besides this, the SE will also visit all the other schools of the cluster having CwSN students during the remaining days of the month.

Currently, the work area of SE will be Cluster, however, this may change based on the scheme requirements in future. (**Note:** *Detailed job chart of SE is documented in a separate document.*)

Role of BRCC / CRCC:

- Shall observe the record maintained by SE regarding the number of CwSN identified and enrolled in the block/cluster level schools.
- Shall guide the SE to ensure that all CwSN in the block/cluster have access to education at Inclusive school and Home-based
- Shall identify the need and provide support to Inclusive schools and teachers through teacher training and teacher mentoring.
- Shall observe the class while the teacher teaches and record the observations in the CRC mobile application.
- Shall analyse the recorded data and observations and provide onsite guidance to the teacher for the improvement of teaching and learning process in inclusive schools

- Shall monitor whether all-inclusive schools in the block/cluster are barrier-free and disabled friendly
- Shall evaluate the IE-CwSN program from time to time in their respective blocks/clusters and provide information to the respective IE-CwSN District Coordinator and District Project Office.

Role of IE-CwSN District Coordinator:

The District Coordinator acts as a bridge between the State OIC-IE-CwSN, BRC/CRC and SEs and follow all the guidelines or any work for implementation of IE-CwSN under Samagra Shiksha as directed by State Project Office from time to time. In a nutshell, role of District Coordinator is a mixed set of academic, supervisory, managerial, networking and creative activities. It goes beyond routine monitoring and supervision work as it encompasses providing support to Inclusive schools, SEs and teachers through training by coordinating with training institutes like DIET. They will also be mentoring to SEs for their professional growth, strengthen community school linkage, provide resource support and carry out action research in inclusive education. (**Note:** *Detailed job chart of IE-CwSN District Coordinator is documented in a separate document.*)

Monitoring of the Inclusive schools

Ongoing monitoring and support to the schools are fundamental to ensure that they become functionally inclusive schools. For this, monitoring at the school level by the Principals/ Headteachers, CRCs, BRCs and the district education officers along with District coordinators and SEs must be ensured.

Proper formats should be used by the Principals/ HTs to monitor the extent of inclusion in their schools. Indicators to positively supervise the teaching-learning of the CwSN has been included in the monitoring form of the CRCs. The district and state-level officials should use the data collated using the newly developed SE Monitoring app named Divyan.

DIVYAN – Application for Monitoring of Inclusive Education

It is a monitoring application with Geo-tagging feature to monitor the outcomes achieved by District Coordinators, SE at Block, Cluster and School level working in pursuit of their roles and responsibilities. The app will streamline school visits by SE, report attendance and keep a tab on enrolment, UD-ID certification and education learning outcomes for each identified CwSN Student of the state.

- Progress on identification and enrolment for CwSN
- Progress on the provision of UD-ID certifications of CwSN
- Attendance, Home Visits
- Aids & Appliances distribution
- Progress on the achievement of learning outcomes by CwSN
- Status of allocation of benefits to CwSN (such as girls' stipend, transport and

escort allowance, etc)

References:

- 1) *UNESCO 2005, Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*
- 2) *Integrated Scheme of School Education, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Ministry of Human Resource Development of School Education and Literacy, 2018, GoI*