

**A Study of Elementary Schools of Delhi,  
India from an Equity and Access Perspective  
of Students with Disabilities**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Education)**

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**Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi**

**2007**

## **ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS**

This study focused on the efficacy of elementary schools (Private and Government) admitting students with disabilities in New Delhi, India. The key questions, the researcher analysed, was whether Government and Private Schools in Delhi are adequately prepared to address social and academic needs of students with disabilities. The study was undertaken to study the prevalent policies and practices of the schools from the perspective of key stakeholders- students with disabilities, teachers, principals, parents, siblings and peers.

The study covered one hundred and six students with disabilities enrolled in classes IV-VIII of ten Government and ten Private Schools who were interviewed along with seventy-five teachers, seventy seven parents and caretakers, sixteen siblings and twenty principals. Five interview schedules were developed to get information regarding prevailing attitudes and practices regarding students with disabilities and awareness regarding Government policies as well as their implementation on the ground. In order to gain insight into prevailing social relationships with peers, sociometric technique was utilised in the seventy five classes that the students with disabilities were studying in, for peer feedback from a total of two thousand two hundred and twenty eight students studying in classes IV- VIII. An adapted version of the Psychological Sense of School Membership (Goodenow, 1993a) was translated into Hindi and results analysed for sense of belongingness prevalent in the one hundred and six students with disabilities enrolled in the twenty schools. Classroom observations were conducted in seventy five classes, using an observation schedule developed for the study. These observations provided vital information in examining practices prevalent in the sampled schools.

The analysis of data indicates that majority of the students with disabilities did not face stigmatisation due to their disability and many of them had positive social relationships, due to positive attitudes prevailing in the schools.

The academic performance of the students presented a challenging trend, with six students in Government and fifteen students in Private Schools repeating their class. This was reflective of the abysmal pedagogical practices in seventeen of the twenty schools

chosen for the study, and the complete absence of accommodations for students with disabilities.

Policy implementation of Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) was found to be totally ineffective with only 3.2% of Government School children accessing the scheme. Schools in Delhi were far from being '*inclusive*'- at best they seemed to be at the phase of '*integration*', where students with disabilities were enrolled but remained on the margins, like many other excluded peers.

Three themes emerge from this study as the basis of providing the roadmap for '*inclusive schools*'- creating *access* through differentiation of tasks, building *culture* in order to create an enabling environment and supporting *practices* for responding to student diversity.

In the light of India's commitment to realisation of Universalisation of Elementary Education, it is vital that the lacunae in the educational system and schools per se be taken into consideration.

This research is only representative of schools in Delhi and therefore the findings cannot be generalised to the situation across the country.