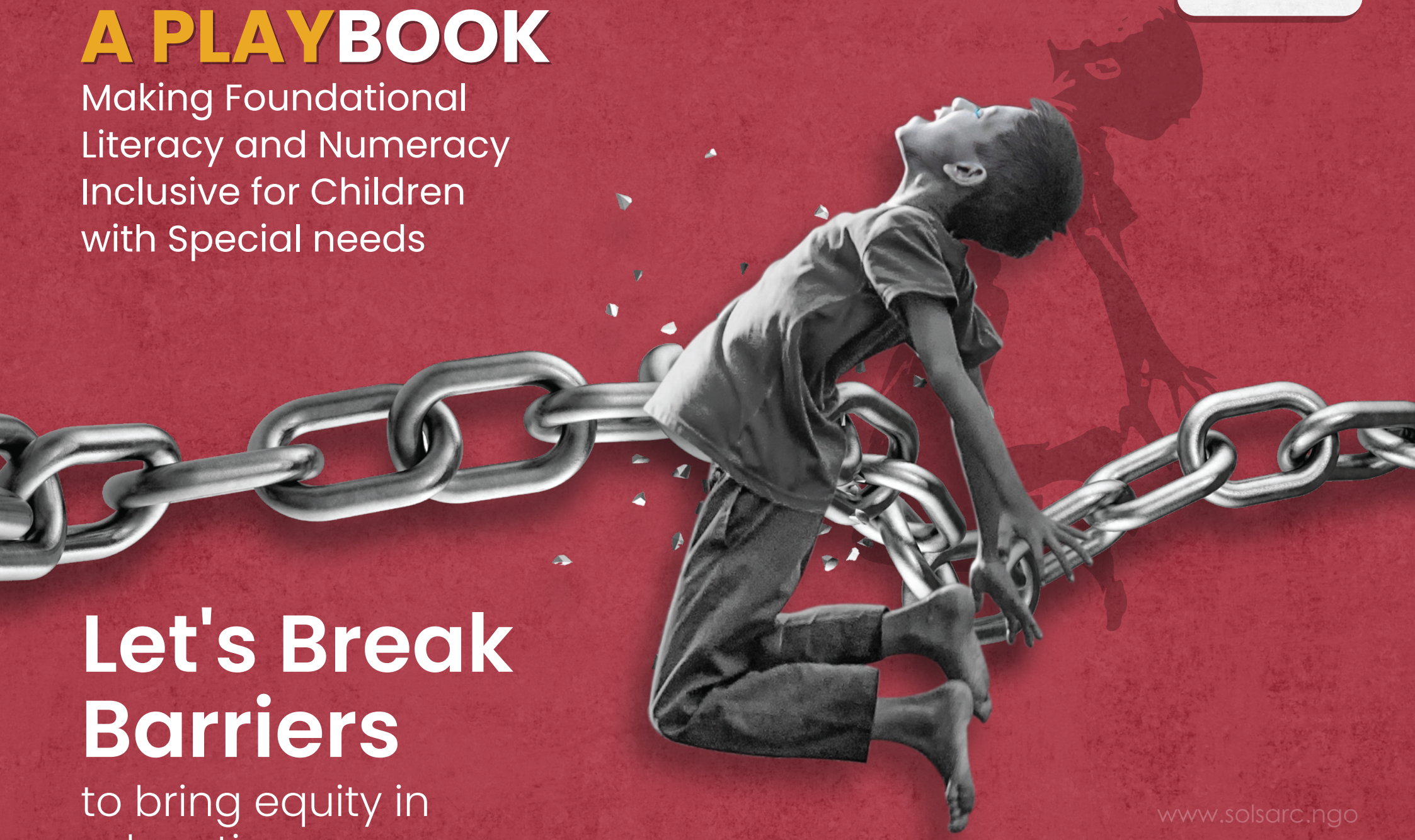
A PLAYBOOK

Making Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Inclusive for Children with Special needs



Let's Break Barriers

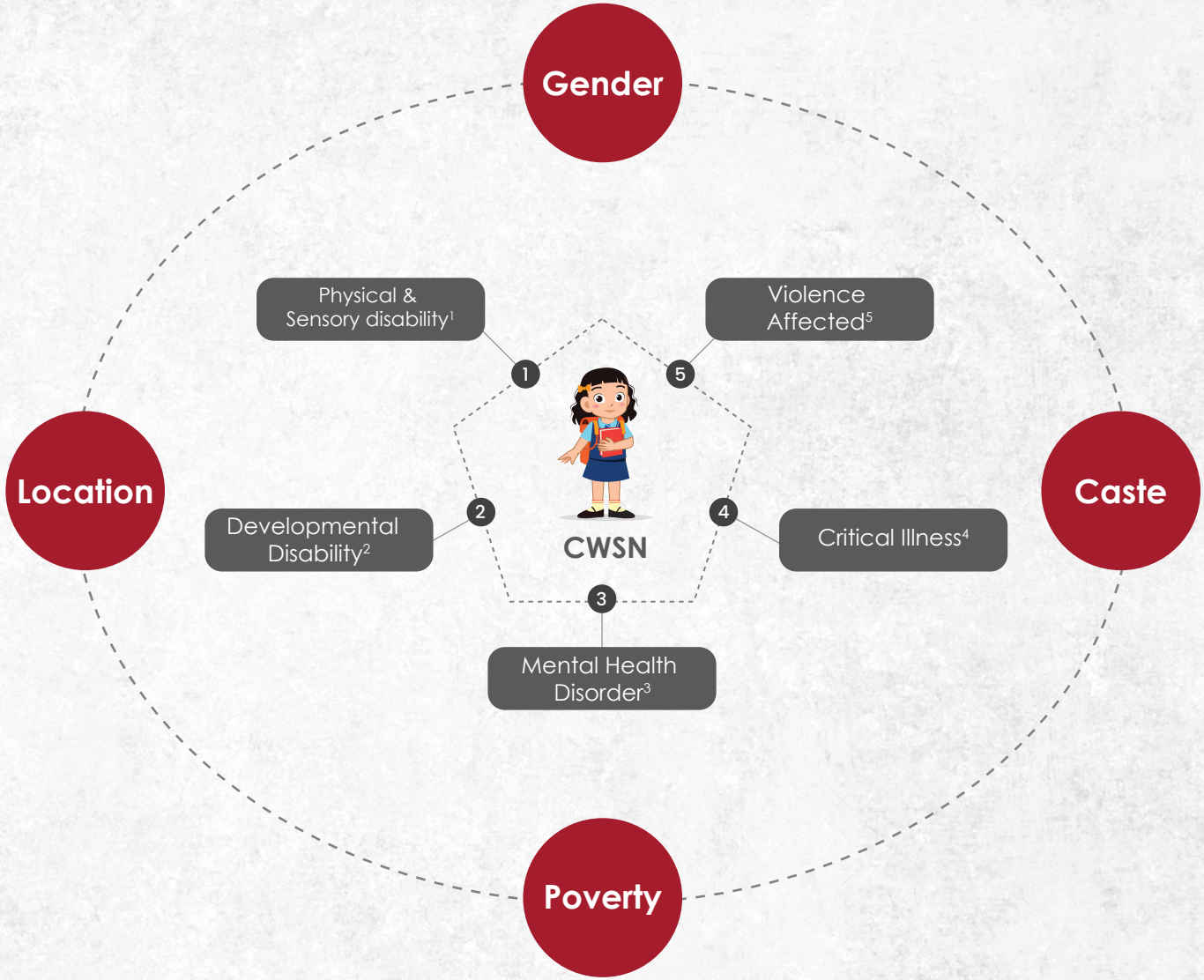
to bring equity in education

Sol's ARC | Dalberg

www.solsarc.ngo

1 | 1 in 6 children have special needs

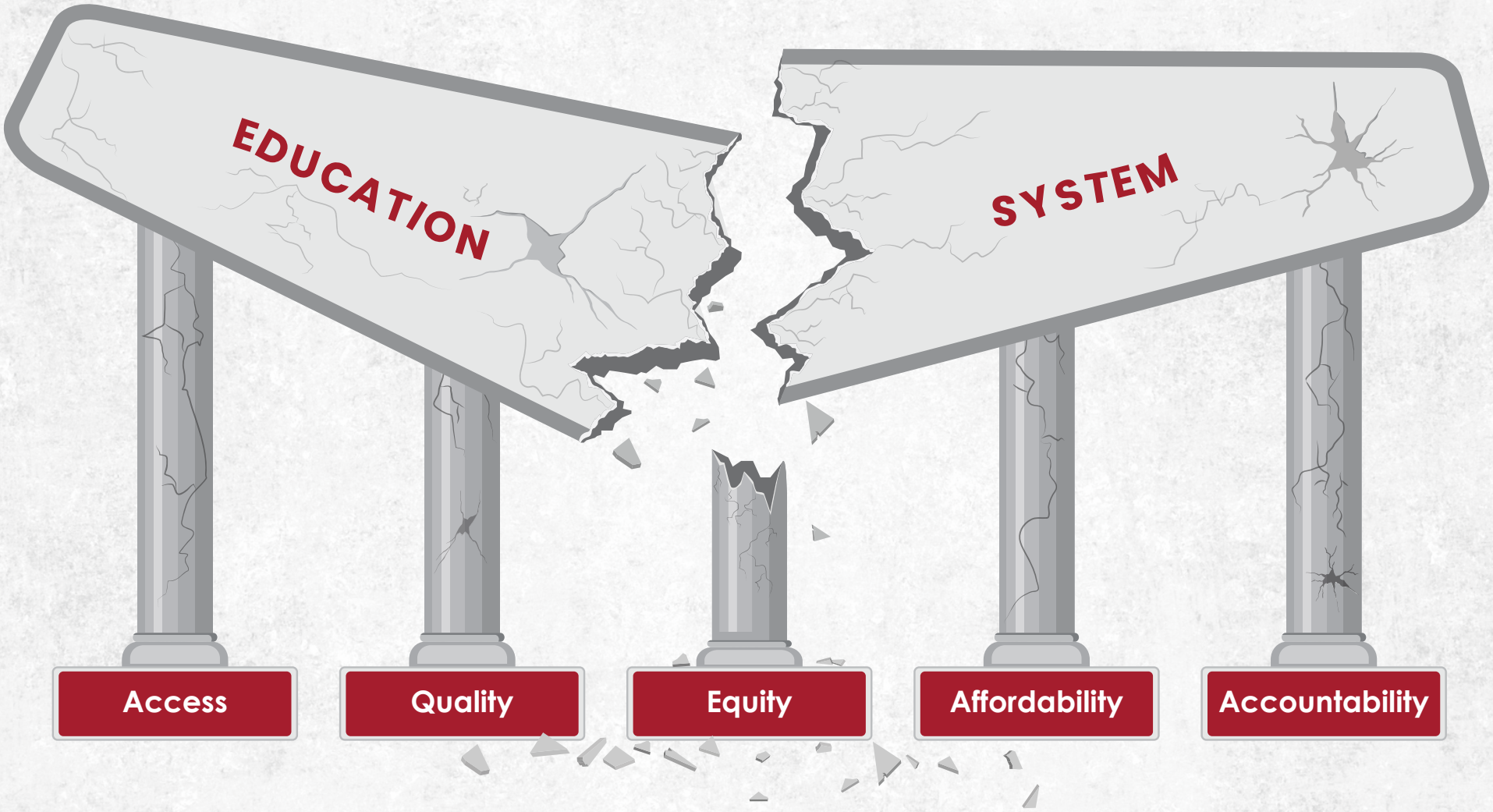
Vulnerability of CwSN increases with the intersectional complexity of **gender**, **poverty**, **caste** & **demographic** risks.



Source; *Physical and Sensory disabilities include blindness, low-vision; deaf and hard of hearing, locomotor disability, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy, speech and language disability, leprosy cured,cerebral palsy,multiple disabilities 2. Developmental disabilities include intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder, and specific learning disabilities*
3. Mental health disorder also called as mental illness referred to a wide range of mental condition that affects person's mood, thinking and behaviour.
4.Critical illness chronic neurological conditions, thalassemia, hemophilia, sickle cell disease ,Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis
6.Violence affected includes Acid attack victims

Educational Equity remains unaddressed

Children with special needs remain excluded from education leading to educational inequity.



Five Pillars Of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Aarti's Journey

Aarti is one of the many CwSN who is out of mainstream education due to various challenges she faces.

Aarti's story

Aarti[1], an enthusiastic 10-year-old girl in rural Tamil Nadu was enrolled in school when she was five years old but she faced learning challenges in school.

Aarti's parents hoped that being around other children at school would help her develop social skills and concentration.

Her teachers agreed, expecting her to adjust to the classroom setting like any other child but they they also didn't feel empowered enough to include her in classroom.

"I want my child to study in a normal school just like every other child but she doesn't want to go to school anymore as she cannot read and write like her friends can. "

- Aarti's mother

LACK OF EARLY SCREENING

For the first seven years of her life, Aarti went undiagnosed, and grappled with challenges in social interactions and academic performance.

NON INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENTS

While Aarti went to school, the classroom practices & assessments remained non-inclusive, thus making it difficult for Aarti to achieve basic FLN skills.

LACK OF INCLUSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE & RESOURCES

The learning content provided to her did not meet her needs which widened the gaps as she moved from grade to grade.

LOW CAPACITY OF STAKEHOLDERS

The teacher did not have the skill or resources to include Aarti in classroom learning and left it to special educator to teach her but she lacked the knowledge to teach her FLN skills.

NON INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ECOSYSTEM

Also as peers and teachers were unaware of how to involve Aarti in sports, cultural and extra curricular activities, this made her feel more alone and excluded.

Note: *1. Name changed to maintain anonymity.*

Aarti is not alone 55 million children have special needs[1].

And therefore do not achieve even Foundational Literacy and Numeracy skills.

More than of CwSN remain excluded from mainstream education.

(1) UNICEF, Fact sheet – The World's nearly 240 million children living with disabilities are being denied basic rights, 2021.

Sol's ARC | Dalberg

Source: *1. Ministry of Education, National Education Policy, 2020.*

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
Children with special needs (CwSN) are left behind in education.

WHAT
What is the state of inclusive education in India?

WHY
Why is it crucial to address inclusive FLN for children with special needs?

HOW
How can state governments integrate inclusive FLN at a systems level?

ANNEXURE
Additional detail on state of inclusive education in India; state of FLN; detailed checklists, glossary

Acknowledgements

The playbook on Making FLN inclusive for CwSN represents a collaborative endeavor between Sol's ARC and Dalberg.

We express our sincere gratitude to the Tamil Nadu School Education Department, State Project Director and State Coordinator for Inclusive Education, as well as numerous other experts from educational and governmental bodies, for their valuable inputs and guidance throughout this engagement.

We would also like to sincerely thank Safeena Husain (Founder, Educate Girls), Paresh Parasnis (Former Head, Piramal Foundation), Nita Aggarwal (Senior Programme Manager, Asia, Porticus), Nathan Koblintz (Challenge Lead – Children on the Margin, Porticus) and Gayatri Nair Lobo (CEO, ATE Chandra Foundation), Poornima Garg (Country Director, Room to Read), Noopur Jhunjhunwala (Trustee and Co-Founder, ChangeInkk), Dhir Jhingran (Founder Director, LLF), Gayatri Vaidya (Associate Vice President, Ei-Shiksha, Educational Initiatives), Deepti Gubbi (Education Head, Jai Vakeel Foundation), Sunisha Ahuja (Education Specialist (FLN),UNICEF) for sharing their expertise with us and helping nuance our recommendations for the intended audience.

Finally, and most importantly, we extend our gratitude to the teachers, special educators, parents of Children With Special Needs (CwSN), district officials and block-level officials, for their generous time and honest reflections, which have played a significant role in shaping this playbook.

Introduction

Importance of this study

The recent National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores the importance of providing universal access to Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) for all children and reaffirms the provisions in the RPWD Act regarding inclusive education to foster an equitable and just society. States have made commendable progress, but a segment of children are left behind – Children with Special Needs (CwSN).

Approximately 6.3 million (1.7%) children in India aged 3-17 years have special needs as per the UDISE+ 2021-22 report. However, there are likely ~55 million (15%) children with special needs in India as per global estimates.[1] Of these, a staggering 75% are excluded from mainstream education systems.[2] Without addressing their needs, India will never achieve its Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) objectives.

FLN serves as the bedrock for all subsequent learning, knowledge acquisition, and higher-order skill development. It holds an even greater significance for CwSN, who if deprived of such foundational learning, cannot catch up unlike their peers. Nevertheless, effective measures and interventions to improve learning outcomes for CwSN are inconsistent across most states. This playbook primarily addresses interventions with high impact and feasibility for most CwSN, but the underlying practices such as scaffolded curriculum and use of Universal Design for Learning principles benefit a broad spectrum of children in the classroom experiencing learning lags, potentially impacting over 79%[4] of children.

This playbook serves as a resource to understand the scale of the issue and advocate for investment in inclusive education. It spotlights best practices and proposes opportunities for integrating inclusive FLN into systemic frameworks. Timely and essential, this playbook offers actionable recommendations for states to embark on their journey towards inclusivity for all learners.

Audience

This playbook focuses on building inclusive FLN practices for CwSN for education systems. The playbook is intended for:

State governments to assess the status of inclusive education in their states, understand what it takes to make their education systems more inclusive, and get started on the journey of serving CwSN tailored to their context.

Funders (e.g., philanthropies, CSRs, multi- and bi-lateral donors) who are supporting states and organizations, to understand the opportunity and impact potential of inclusive education interventions that are working well in the country.

Implementers (e.g., non-profit organisations and education partners) who are supporting states in the education space to understand why taking an inclusion lens is critical, generate momentum for action in the ecosystem, showcase interventions that have been worked, and support the states in this journey.

In addition, this playbook also provides useful guidance and design principles for the broader ecosystem and allies for inclusive education ecosystem.

Source: 1. RPWD Act – Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016; 2. UNICEF, Fact sheet – The World's nearly 240 million children living with disabilities are being denied basic rights, 2021; 3. IDR, How to build inclusive schools, 2023; 3. 4. On an average only 21% of all students can perform basic division, ASER report 2022

Objective of the Playbook

This playbook focuses on the ways to make FLN inclusive for CwSN in mainstream classrooms.

Whom do we aim to serve?

Children with Special Needs[1, 2] (CwSN), but many solutions/principles are applicable to a wider set of marginalized or slower learners.

Children with Special Needs
Children with Special Needs (i.e. the 21 disabilities)[1, 2]

All children on the margins or with learning lags
Struggling learners from socially and economically disadvantaged groups, e.g. children affected by disability, violence, mental illness, critical illness

Where will our interventions be?

Classroom-based interventions are an entry point for the education system to have quick impact, but CwSN need holistic support including at home and communities.

Inside the classroom
Making curriculum inclusive and equipping teachers to implement

Outside the classroom
Healthcare support, therapies, screening and parental support

What do we hope to solve for?

Foundational numeracy and literacy (FLN) forms a building block for all learning, especially for CwSN[2].

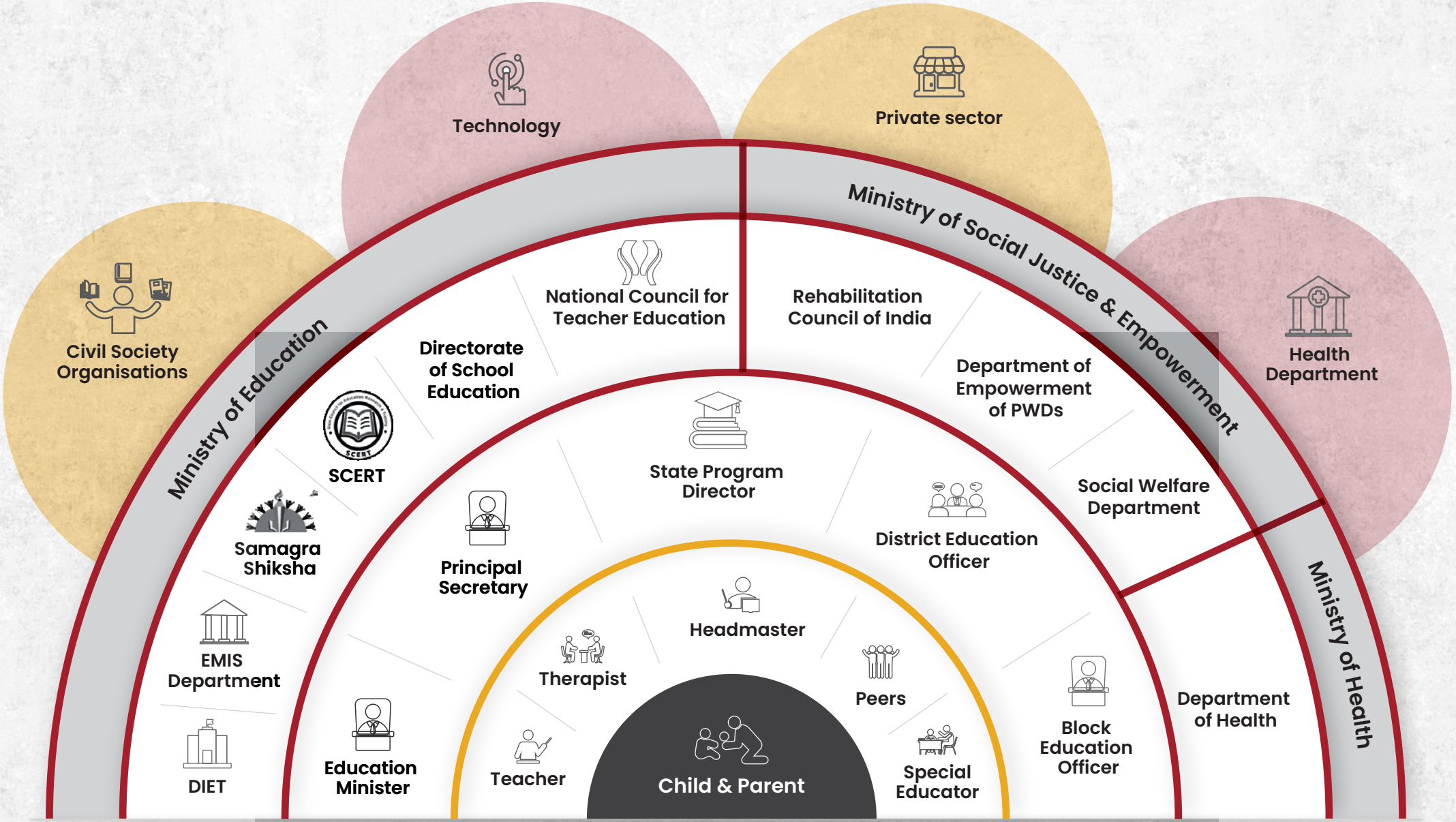
Foundational learning
Focusing on FLN as the first step towards inclusive education

Employment readiness
Skilling and transition programs to support employment

Note: *1. Children with Special Needs are those who have long-term impairments in physical, mental, intellectual, sensory abilities which in interaction with barriers that hinder one's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others, as per NCERT, Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs, National Guidelines and Implementation Framework on Equitable and Inclusive Education, 2021-2030. 2. For some disabilities, students may require additional interventions, assistive technology and therapies to support their learning.*

Ecosystem Stakeholders

Each stakeholder plays a critical role and needs to take ownership to enable inclusion of CwSN.



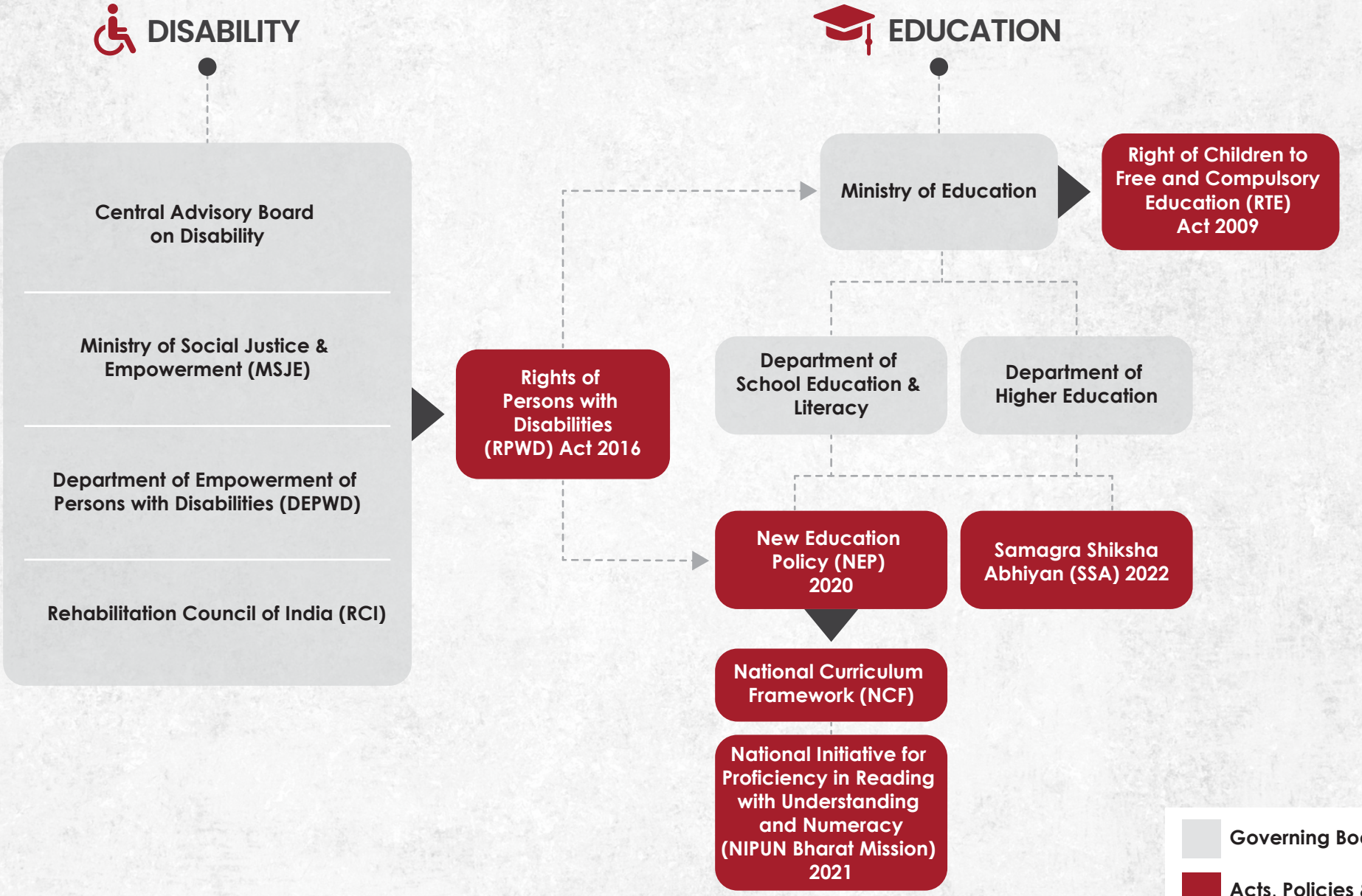
Source: 1. Click here to get a detailed understanding of the role of different stakeholders, Administrative structure, functions and processes at the district/sub-district level; 2. DIETs – District Institute of Educational Training; 3. EMS – Educational Management System; 4. PWD – Persons with Disabilities

WHAT...

What is the state of inclusive education in India?

Governing Bodies & Policies

India has various governing bodies and policies to ensure the needs of CwSN are met.



Source: *1. Samagra Shiksha, Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs.*

Key Education Policies

India has made significant strides towards equal and inclusive education through key policies.

2006 — National Policy for PWDs

- Aims to provide equal opportunities and rehabilitation for PWDs and recognises the unique needs of individuals with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities.
- Outlines procedures for the appointment of guardians / trustees to protect the interest of PWDs.[1]

2009 — Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act

- Ensures free and compulsory education for all children.
- Ensures CwSN receive free textbooks and an annual allowance of INR 3000; those with severe or profound disabilities receive INR 10000 for home-based education.[2]

2016 — Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act

- Directs educational institutions to admit and teach CwSN without discrimination, offer individualized support and accessible infrastructure.
- Mandates regular screening, free learning materials until age 18, and monitoring of CwSN progress.[3]

2020 — National Education Policy (NEP)

- Ensures inclusion and equal participation of children, particularly Children with Disabilities in ECCE and the schooling system.[4]
- Promotes barrier-free access to education for all children by providing accessible infrastructure in schools, accessible learning materials, etc.[5]

2021 — NIPUN Bharat Mission

- Prioritizes universal acquisition of FLN skills by Grade 3 by 2026-27.
- Ensures early identification of learning gaps for all, early intervention by specialists and representation of diversity in educational materials.[6]

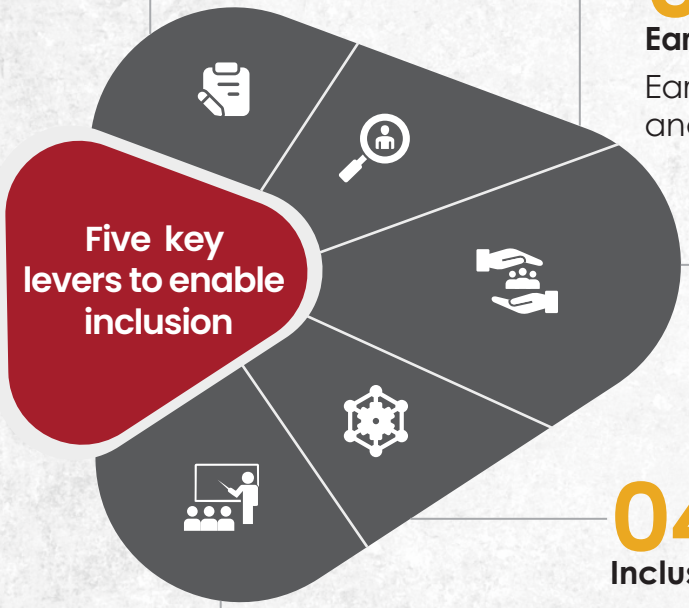
2022 — Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

- Enables training support for special educators (on cross-disability) and teachers (on curriculum adaptation).
- Mandates individualized support plan for CwSN, community participation and sensitization of SMCs/SMDCs.[7,8]

Source: *1. Government of India, The National Trust Act, 1999; 2. Government of India, The Right to Education Act, 2006; 3. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016; 4. ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education; 5. Ministry of Human Resource Development, National Education Policy, 2020; 6. Ministry of Education, NIPUN Bharat, 2021; 7. Ministry of Education, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan; 8. SMC – School Management Committee, SMDC – School Management and Development Committee*

Levers of Inclusion

All relevant policies under the Ministry of Education focus on 5 key levers to enable inclusion of CwSN.



01
Enrollment

CwSN cannot be denied admission to any school and are entitled to free and compulsory education

02
Early Screening

Early screening and identification of learning gaps and disabilities for early intervention

03
Inclusive Curriculum & Assessments

Development of instructional materials, curriculum adaptation and individualized support[1]

04
Inclusive Infrastructure and Resources

Physical infrastructure (e.g. Accessible toilets, assistive technology)

05
Capacity Building

Mandatory training for development of specialized teaching and inclusive learning pedagogy[2]

Our Learnings and Reflections...

My thoughts after reading this section.....

My experience tells me.....

What I would like to do.....

Policy: Expectations v/s Reality

While the intent of the policies is great, the reality is very different.

Enrolment

The RTE Act includes the words 'free' and 'compulsory' 'elementary education' for **'every child'** within the age group of 6-14 years.
The 3 Schooling options for CwSN are **mainstream classrooms, home based schooling & special schools.**

Expectations

- child from any disadvantaged group
- including a child with Disability
- to get a 25% reservation

Reality

- absence of legal norms and standards for determining correct placement
- CwSN spend more time out of the classroom
- CwSN pushed into home based schooling without clear definition

Identification

The RPWD Act mandates to conduct survey of school going children every 5 years, for **identifying** children with disabilities and assessing their special needs.
The NIPUN Bharat mission, under the NEP 2020, mentions **using IT for early detection of all children** for identification of disability.

Expectations

- to provide early and necessary identification & support to ensure inclusion
- different authorities to converge and align to the priority

Reality

- screening of only certain students with visible disabilities
- no significant rise in the identification data for students
- no convergence in most states

Policy: Expectations v/s Reality

While the intent of the policies is great, the reality is very different.

Inclusive Curriculum

The RTE aligns to RPWD in making suitable **modifications in the curriculum** to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
NIPUN Bharat Mission aligning to the **NCF** states that the **learning environment** should be designed according to the varied **learning needs of learners.**

Expectations

to make suitable modifications in curriculum for CwSN

to ensure curriculum promotes and embraces children across abilities

Reality

Pedagogy does not cater to multigrade classrooms or to learners at different level and pace of learning

No modified content available for CwSN aligned to FLN goals

Inclusive Assessments

The RPWD directs to **monitor participation, progress in attainment levels and completion** of education in respect of every CwSN.
The NEP has developed **PARAKH** to facilitate an inclusive and holistic approach to assess ALL students.

Expectations

to use different modes to conduct assessment based on the needs of students

to track and measure progress of all students

Reality

Learning outcomes for CwSN are not measured or tracked in state assessments

Formative and summative Assessments in FLN are not adapted to the needs of CwSN

Policy: Expectations v/s Reality

While the intent of the policies is great, the reality is very different.

Accessible Infrastructure & Resources

The RPWD act suggests to provide **accessible books, learning materials** assistive devices, to students with benchmark disabilities.
Under Samagra Shiksha, up to ₹ **3500** per CwSN, per year,is given for **aids and appliances, teaching learning material, etc.**
NEP 2020 directs all buildings and facilities to be **wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly.**

Expectations

to provide assistive devices for learning

to make accessible ramps & other provisions

Reality

assistive devices are unavailable in classrooms

not all ramps are built as per the guidelines

Teacher & Special Educator Capacity Building

According to RPWD act **skilled and trained teachers** should be employed in teaching students with different disabilities.
The RTE act emphasizes to equip **in-service teachers** through **short term certificate courses** and trainings.
The NEP recommends **online courses on NISHTHA and DIKSHA** platform in order to build knowledge and awareness of teachers towards inclusion.

Expectations

teachers, special educators and other staff trained for inclusive education

to attend and complete trainings and transfer their learnings to class

Reality

trainings are technical and miss connection to daily classroom practices

trainings are 'one-time' with no support or information when needed

WHY

Why is it crucial to address inclusive FLN for children with special needs?

Sustainable Development Goals

Exclusion from Education leads to inequity leaving PwD* behind across multiple SDGs.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

"ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL."

Goal 1: No Poverty

PwD are ~2X more likely to live in poverty than those without disabilities[1];
Education empowers CwSN to break the cycle of poverty.

Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being

CwSN face a 25% and 35% higher risk of being wasted[6] and stunted;
Inclusive education improves well-being through access to support service.[2]

Goal 5: Gender Equality

Only 23% of disabled women work, compared to 47% of disabled men[3]; Sexual violence against disabled women is twice as prevalent[4];
Education empowers women with the tools and confidence to fight these barriers.

Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Only 36% of PwD work in India[3], with just 23.8% participating in the labor force[5];
Education enables employability and economic growth.

Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

CwSN are 41% more likely to be and discriminated against[2]; PwDs are underpaid;
Inclusive education helps bridge these inequalities.

Source: *United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015- 1. Ending poverty and hunger for all persons with disabilities, UN; 2. The world's nearly 240m children with disabilities are denied basic right, UNICEF, 2021; 3. Office of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment; 4. Violence against women and girls with disabilities, UN Women; 5. Press release Persons with Disabilities in India NSS 76th Round, 2019;*
Note: *6. Wasting is defined as low weight for height for an individual.*

PwD - Persons with disabilities

Education to Livelihood

FLN forms the building block for life-long empowerment from childhood to adulthood.

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Building block of further learning throughout a student's academic life[1]

SCHOOL COMPLETION

Better year-on-year class competition and lowers school drop-outs[2]

SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

Access skilling programs and employment more easily in adulthood[3]

Improved self-worth, confidence and communication
Empowered, independent members of society

Sources: *1. 2. NIPUN Bharat, 2020. 2. UNICEF, Commitment to Action on Foundational Learning, 2022. 3. Dalberg expert interview with Sol's ARC.*

Impact: Child, Family and Country

The exclusion of CwSN in education and employment has a direct and far-reaching impact on the child, their families and the country.

INDIVIDUAL

Impact on educational, social and economic well-being

Globally, CwSN are 42% less likely to have FLN skills, 51% more likely to face discrimination, are more likely to be unemployed than peers[1] and more than 82% will land up in the cycle of poverty.

FAMILY

Impact on livelihoods of caregivers

Caregiving responsibilities directly impact family's livelihood, resulting in either a loss of income (USD 666/year) or time off work (USD 222/year)[2].

COUNTRY

Impact on social well-being index and the economy

More than 85% primary-age CwSN do not attend school[3] leading to low FLN levels, unemployment and a potential loss of up to ~3%-7% of GDP[4]

> "My son has Intellectual Disabilities, he was asked to discontinue from the school. He's currently in a special education centre where he is supported by therapist but the focus is not on academics. It's been 3 years since he studied in a mainstream classroom with other students."

-CwSN Parent

> "For the past 6 years, I've been the primary caregiver for my child affected by physical disability due to which I had quit my job . We are struggling financially as a family."

-CwSN Parent

> "Decent work is one of ILOs primary goal for everyone, including persons with disability. When we promote rights and dignity of persons with disability, we are empowering individuals, strengthening economic security and enriching society at large."

-Juan Somavia,
International Labor Organization (ILO) Director General

Source: *1. The world's nearly 240m children with disabilities are denied basic right, UNICEF, 2021; 2. Yourstory, This non-profit is helping people with disabilities, 2023; 3. Global Public Health Journal, The economic burden incurred by families caring for a young child with developmental disability in Uganda, 2023; 4. UNICEF, Combatting the costs of exclusion for children with disabilities and their families, 2021; 5. Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development, A Social Business Case for Disability Inclusion in Development, Link; A study by ILO of ten LMICs calculated the economic losses related to disability and the underlying factors are: a disability environment, unemployment and inactivity. The equation focuses on accumulated productivity losses related to different forms of exclusion. It multiplies the average productivity (P) of a person in the given country with the number of people of working age that have a disability (ni) with the disability level (i) and a productivity adjustment factor (γi) for that disability level. Building this product for all available disability levels i and adding them up yields the economic losses related to disability (L);*

Systemic Challenges

Inclusion of CwSN in FLN needs to be solved at a systemic level.

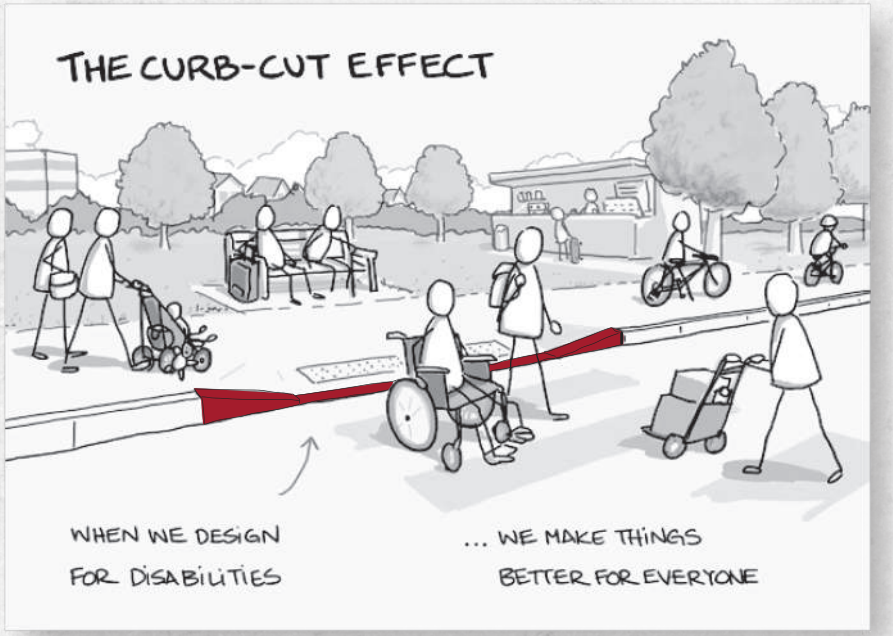
While all the relevant policies exist at the system level the challenges in implementation are driven by-

These challenges can be solved only at Systemic level.

A systemic transformation will lead to a scalable and sustainable solution that will help shift the starting point for children with special needs.

The Curb- Curt effect

An inclusive education system benefits ALL children.



The curb cut effect

is the phenomenon of disability-friendly features being used and appreciated by a larger group than the people they were designed for.
Eg the curb (raised pathway) not only helps people on wheelchairs but is also used by pregnant mothers, people carrying a load, senior citizens etc.

Inclusive education means all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools. It means real learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded – not only children with disabilities, but also all children belonging to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDG's).

The NEP 2020 focuses on targeted interventions to address the needs of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged groups (SEDGs)*.

By designing for the most vulnerable child we will build more inclusive classrooms that will address the needs of learning who are lagging behind due to various demographic and socio economic risks they face.

NEP 2020- (SEDGs) can be broadly categorized based on gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor).

The Curb-Cut Effect: Bright spots

Bright spots for understanding how inclusion benefits ALL children.

educate girls

Mobilizes ***communities for girls' education*** *in India's rural and educationally backward areas*

Educate Girls partnered with Sol's ARC to increase the learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy for children from Grades 3 to 5

- Developed **inclusive learning content called 'Gyaan Ka Pitara',** used in 3000 schools by over 1 lakh children, regardless of whether they have a disability or not.
- **Started measuring learning data** for CwSN, comparing across similar performance levels to gauge improvement.

79% **Learning gains in literacy and numeracy** (against control group by 3rd party RCT), **equivalent of one year of additional learning.**

2 Lakh Scaled to over 2 lakh **children in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.**

TEACHFORINDIA

Focuses on ***empowering individuals to transform lives of children by teaching*** *in under-resourced schools and promotes educational equity*

Teach For India partnered with Sol's ARC to make their curriculum inclusive for all learners

- Developed FLN **content for grades 1-3 and bridge content for all students with learning lags, which prevented the need for segregated remedial programs.**
- Designed baseline, mid-line and end line **assessments for all students** in the TFI classrooms.

1 lakh **Students evaluated** using Sol's ARC's assessments; **97% TFI teachers use the bridge content** in their classroom for not just CwSN but all students.

74% Students **achieve proficiency in grade level math** assessment; **35% surpassed 60% mastery** level.

74% TFI Fellows **attributed improved lesson planning** and execution to the **bridge curriculum/resources.**

Source: *Sol's ARC's Annual Report 2018-19*

Tamil Nadu: A Bright Spot

Tamil Nadu is systemically transforming the ecosystem in the state to make learning inclusive for CwSN.

Tamil Nadu

has been a flagbearer in embedding inclusion in education at a systems level, to ensure that no child is left behind.

Tamil Nadu Government ensured **Universal Screening** of **ALL** children and those identified were tagged to provide intervention support.

The state has developed **adapted books** for children with **Intellectual and Developmental disabilities** in grades **1 to 5** as part of Inclusive Education, Samagra Shiksha to ensure achievement of basic **literacy and numeracy** skills.

To support Children with Special Needs in schools, **capacity building of teachers** of grades **1 to 5** on **Universal health screening** and inclusive learning was conducted.

To address **stigma** at a systems level, the state undertook various **mass awareness** drives to build **awareness to educate parents and community.**

"**Sol's ARC** coming in as a PMU has brought in technical expertise to be more inclusive of Children with Special Needs (CwSN). They have revamped the screening tool, supported in building a scaffolded curriculum and TLM materials to ensure Basic Literacy and Numeracy for Children with Special Needs in grades 1 to 3."

-Inclusive Education, Samagra Shiksha, Tamil Nadu

The pledge to

leave no one behind

is a fundamental principle underlying all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

If CwSN are left behind, we will not be able to meet the National Education Policy goal for "**Universal FLN** in primary school by 2025[1]."

No goal is considered to be met unless it is met for everyone.

Let's have a conversation

sol's.arc@solsarc.ngo

Source: 1. National Education Policy, 2020.

Our Learnings and Reflections...

My thoughts after reading this section.....

My experience tells me.....

What I would like to do.....

HOW

How can state governments integrate inclusive FLN at a systems level?

Roadmap to Inclusion

As we focus on systemic transformation, we need to place the child at the centre of all our efforts towards inclusive FLN journey.

I AM SEEN

when you help identify my challenges and provide support, I love coming to school.

I LEARN

when you give me books and tests that I can access and understand, I learn.

I AM UNDERSTOOD

when my teacher knows my challenges and along with the special educators support me.

I AM ACCEPTED

when everyone is aware and see my abilities instead of disabilities.

Stakeholders

Abbreviations and Acronyms.

COM	Commissioner
SPD	State Project Director
IE	Inclusive Education Department
HD	Health Department
SED	State Education Department
EC	Expert Committee
SMC	School Management Committee
EMIS	Electronic Management Information System
SRG	State Resource Group
DRG	District Reasource Group
SCERT	State Council for Education Reserarch & Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DIET	District Institute of Educational Training
DC	District Cordinator
RP	Resource Person

Sol's ARC
EVERY CHILD LEARNS, EVERY ADULT EARNS
Dalberg

I am Seen

I Learn

I am Understood

I am Accepted

I am Seen

Ensuring periodic universal screening for timely diagnosis is critical to ensure proactive medical and educational support

I am seen

when you help identify my challenges and provide support, I love coming to school.

Why is this important?

Identifying at-risk children in a timely manner is the **first step to ensure proactive medical support and tailored educational support.**[1]

Despite progress, standardized screening is lacking,[2] highlighting the need for **mandated universal screening** and protocols such as NIPUN's FLN for CwSN teacher training modules.

Roles of stakeholders

- **State tech team (EMIS):** Design and iterate on application
- **Teachers:** Screen ALL students within the classroom
- **Special educators:** Diagnosis and ongoing support
- **Health Department:** Health and nutrition Screening

What is the current level[3] of enrolment and early diagnosis in your state?

Enrolment

- Do all schools have **clear guidelines on admission** of CwSN?
- Are the CwSN **marked separately in the Out of School Survey**?
- Are there any specific efforts made **to reduce drop** out of CwSN?

Early diagnosis

- Is there a **tech solution** for screening children at risk?
- Are **ALL** children **universally screened** for health risk, and disability risk?
- Are the identified children **tagged (referred)** for screening to **respective departments**?
- Is the **UDID registration** done as soon as screening is positive?

Sources: *1. Ministry of Education, NIPUN Bharat, 2021; 3. Sol's ARC expert interview. 3. Read the comprehensive checklist in annex*

I am Seen

Enrolment and Attendance

STEP 01

SED

Set clear guidelines for enrollment in home based or school education

STEP 02

IE
SED

Sensitize headmasters, teachers and **School Management Committee (SMC)**

STEP 03

SED

Run **parent awareness** initiatives for improving enrollment and attendance

STEP 04

EMIS

Integrate monitoring parameters in **teacher's attendance app**

STEP 05

IE
SMC

Monitor attendance separately for school & home-based education

STEP 06

SED

Modify attendance guidelines for children with critical illness

STEP 07

SED

Implement special initiatives for improving enrollment and attendance

1: School Management committee, 2: Inclusive Education , 3; Children with Special needs, 4: Information technology

I am Seen

Identification for Disability, Health and Nutrition

STEP 01
C
SPD
Set up a committee of experts for development and validation of screening questions.

STEP 02
IE
SED
Facilitate interministerial convergence between health and education ministry for seamless data flow and screening.

STEP 03
IE
Develop a state-wide universal screening app and tag them to health and special education department

STEP 04
IE
Train teachers and special educators on app usage, provide technical support

STEP 05
IE
HD
Trigger UDID[3] registration & hold diagnostic camps within one year of screening

STEP 06
IE
EC
Integrate indicators for monitoring of identified and diagnosed children through centralised dashboard

STEP 07
IE
Integrate required support services & relevant schemes

STEP 08
IE
Establish renewal process for UDID and Disability certifications

1: State Program Director 2: Inclusive Education 3: Unique Disability Identification

I am Seen

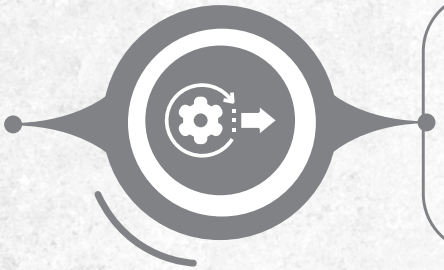
As enrolment and screening interventions are developed, it is important to track key indicators for success

Key indicators to track for enrolment and screening:

INPUTS
6–12 months

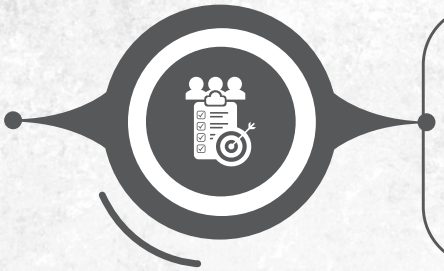
Enrollment
- **Developed and activated tech solution** for at risk, in accordance with PWD[1]Act
- **All children screened** across the 21 disabilities, health and nutrition
- **Guidelines implemented for CwSN enrolment** in appropriate setting in mainstream schools
- **Spot checking** of attendance records

OUTPUTS
1–4 years



- % of **students screened for disabilities, health and nutrition**
- % of students **referred** for further diagnosis to respective departments
- # of students identified and issued **UDID cards[2]**
- # of **OOSC[3]** CwSN enroled in school

OUTCOME
4 years and beyond



- % increase in CwSN with **regular attendence**
- % increase in CwSN **retained** in mainstream school
- % increase of CwSN getting **schemes** and **UDID**

Note: *1. PWD – Persons with Disability; 2. UDID – Unique Disability ID card; 3. OOSC – Out Of School Children – Children who are not enroled in the school system are categorised as OOSC NCERT;*

I am Seen

Identification for Disability, Health and Nutrition.

Enrolment: Initiatives to enrol CwSN in mainstream schools are showing success

A **3.3% increase in enrolment** of children with special needs (CwSN) in financial year 2022 (22.7 lakhs) compared to the previous financial year (21.9 lakhs in 2021).[1]

Samagra Shiksha is currently covering 18.5 lakh children with special needs from preprimary to class XII.[2]

Samarth app, Uttar Pradesh is used by teachers to screen students at risk for disability.[5]

Screening: Apps for screening have been created by both central and state governments

Central Education Ministry's android app **PRASHAST** has been used by over 7 lakh users to screen CwSN.[3]

Tamil Nadu State Govt has used the "Nalam Naadi" app to screen ALL students - for health, disability and nutrition across the state and there is data transfer across health and education department

States have screening tools, but they can be made more comprehensive. We need to enable different government departments to come together to ensure information is shared across the board with all the relevant departments".

- Funder of inclusive education interventions

Sources: *1. Financial Express, Increase in school enrolment ratio in FY22, steady decline in dropout rate: Economic Survey 2022-23, 2023; 2. Economic Times Government, Stamagra Shiksha scheme aligned with NEP to be continued till 2025-26 with Rs 2.9L Cr, 2024; 3. GoIMinistry of Education, Year End Review – Department of School Education & Literacy, 2024; 4. SOURCE TO BE UPDATED; 5. News18,_Samarth App, 2020.*

Sol's ARC
EVERY CHILD LEARNS, EVERY ADULT EARNS
Dalberg

I am Seen

I Learn

I am Understood

I am Accepted

I Learn: Birght Spots

Adapted classroom learning materials, data integration and accessible infrastructure are imperative to support CwSN's education.

I Learn

when you give me books and tests that I can access and understand, I learn.

Why is this important?

The current curriculum is not inclusive, highlighting need for better implementation strategies like NIPUN's guidelines to adapt content to be accessible for CwSN.

The FLN assessments are not adapted for CwSN,[1] and CwSN are not monitored through assessments, which makes it difficult to provide tailored academic support.

Despite progress, more than 70% of schools in India still lack accessible infrastructure such as CwSN-friendly toilets or ramps with handrails.[2]

Roles of stakeholders

- **State SCERT team:** Adapt the curriculum and learning materials; Design adaptive formative and baseline assessments.
- **Teachers:** Teach students using inclusive classroom teaching practices, and track and monitor student learning outcomes for CwSN
- **Special educators:** Provide classroom teaching support and create Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for CwSN for FLN
- **Headmasters:** Ensure that schools haveaccessible infrastructure .

What is the current status[3] of inclusive classroom learning, data integration and infrastructure in your state?

Classroom learning

- Is there a budget allocation for CwSN (for creating, printing and distributing accessible FLN learning materials and TLM) within the existing budget structure?
- Are the teachers and special educators trained on inclusive classroom practices for inclusion of CwSN in FLN?

Learning data integration

- Are FLN baseline and formative assessments adapted for CwSN?
- Are CwSN monitored and tracked in FLN baseline and formative assessments along with non-CwSN students?

Accessible infrastructure and resources

- Are all the accessibility guidelines followed in the school infrastructure?
- Do CwSN have access to age-appropriate aids and appliances & assistive devices?

Sources: 1. Expert interviews; 2. Ministry of Education, UDISE+ Report, 2021-22; 3. Read the comprehensive checklist in the annex

I Learn

Classroom learning.

STEP 01
IE
SCERT
Set-up an expert committee with subject experts from SCERT and Special Educators

STEP 02
IE
SCERT
NGO
If needed Partner with an NGO for content creation and get approvals from expert committee

STEP 03
IE
SCERT
Build a framework and guidelines for content adaptation according to National Curriculum Framework (NCF)

STEP 04
STC
IE
Design, Print and Distribute the adapted books and Teacher Handbooks

STEP 05
IE
Allocate budgets for adaptive and accessible TLM's & learning material.

STEP 06
SRG
DRG
DIET
Train Teachers to improve inclusive classroom teaching practices

STEP 07
IE
Activate Block Level Committee (BLC) to distribute the adapted textbooks

STEP 08
SRG
DRG
DIET
Provide orientation to DEOs[7] and BEOs for classroom observations and program monitoring

STEP 09
SRG
DRG
DIET
Train Special Educators to support classrooms and integrate FLN goals into their IEPs

STEP 10
IE
SED
Review and update all examination concessions across disabilities

I Learn

Learning data integration.

STEP 01

IE
SCERT

Adapt and validate FLN Baseline, Midline and Endline assessments with an expert committee.

STEP 02

Train teachers and special educators to conduct baseline and endline assessments

IE
DIET

STEP 03

IE

Adapt Formative & Summative Assessments for CwSN

STEP 04

Integrate learning data into the state FLN dashboard and Holistic Progress card

EMIS

STEP 05

IE

Train teachers to assess and input data using the state app.

STEP 06

Integrate assessment scores into the EMIS system to track learning outcomes

IE
EMIS

STEP 07

IE

Train FLN monitoring teams to verify data through spot assessments

STEP 08

Provide inputs to respective stakeholders through data driven analysis

IE
EMIS

I Learn

Accessible Infrastructure and Support Services.

STEP 01

IE

Ensure accessibility guidelines are integrated into the school audit

STEP 02

IE

Ensure all school infrastructure guidelines are implemented

STEP 03

IE

Provide assistive devices and age-appropriate aids & appliances, therapy

STEP 04

IE

Train teachers to appropriately use and maintain assistive devices & aids

STEP 05

IE

Identify and train local technicians to service and maintain the aids and appliances

I Learn

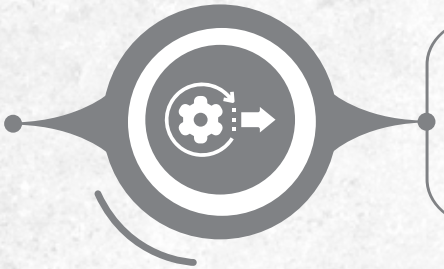
As inclusive curriculum, data integration and infrastructure are developed, it is important to track key metrics for success.

Key indicators to track for inclusive curriculum and pedagogy:

INPUTS
6-12 months

- **Accessible and adapted materials** developed and validated aligned to FLN
- **Inclusive education budget** allocated to create, print and distribute materials
- **Adapt baseline and formative assessments** across disabilities
- Conduct **Accessibility Audits**

OUTPUTS
1-4 years



- # of CWSN receiving accessible resources **at state/district/block level**
- # of **teachers/special educators trained** on inclusive pedagogy
- # of schools with **accessible infrastructure**
- # of CwSN with access to age-appropriate **aids, appliances and assistive devices**

OUTCOME
4 years and beyond

- % improvement in **FLN learning outcomes**
- % reduction in **learning gap** of CwSN
- % Increase in **enrollment** of CwSN

I Learn

Several initiatives at a state and ecosystem level are looking to make curriculum and resources more inclusive Source:

Initiatives to make curriculum inclusive are showing progress

Mission Ankur in Madhya Pradesh: Developed **multi-grade multi-level FLN lesson plans and adapted textbooks** based on UDL principles for over 17 lakh students[1]

Mission Prerna, Uttar Pradesh: In the annual action plan and budget 2023 -24, **separate budgets** have been approved **for stationery and accessible worksheets** for CwSN[3]

TN has adapted FLN assessments and tracking for CwSN

Naanum Velven, Tamil Nadu: The baseline, endline and formative state **FLN evaluations are adapted for CwSN.** The data is integrated on the Teacher App and **progress is being consistently monitored and tracked.**[2]

Naanum Velven, Tamil Nadu: Provides **adapted learning materials for CwSN with cognitive challenges for Grade 1, 2, 3**[2].

Initiatives are undertaken to make infrastructure/resources accessible

Priya the accessibility warrior: A guide developed under the Accessible India Campaign for all to **understand how schools in India are being made accessible**[4].

Barkha: A reading series for 'All' is developed by NCERT which **provides accessible reading books.**[5]

Source: *1. Sol's ARC, Mission Ankur in Madhya Pradesh; 2. Sol's ARC's Project Samavesh, website; 3. SOURCE TO BE UPDATED; 4. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Priya – The Accessibility Warrior; 5. Department of Elementary Education, Barkha Series.*

Sol's ARC
EVERY CHILD LEARNS, EVERY ADULT EARNS
Dalberg

I am Seen

I Learn

I am Understood

I am Accepted

I am Understood

Training teachers is an essential step in ensuring classrooms are a nurturing and safe space for CwSN.

I am Understood

when my teacher knows my challenges and along with the special educators support me.

Why is this important?

Equipping educators with inclusive pedagogy **not only benefits CwSN but also supports other lagging learners** in the classroom.[1]

Despite NIPUN's requirements to include CwSN identification and support in FLN trainings, the current trainings do not include classroom management strategies to cater to CwSN.[2]

The SCERT and DIETS do not have a inclusion speciliast in their team and therefore the trainings and contnet are non inclusive.

Roles of stakeholders

- **SCERT & DIET:** validate and approve adapted content
- **Master trainers:** train teachers through a cascaded training model
- **Teachers:** use teaching and learning materials, inclusive classroom teaching practices, conduct assessments and update scores in monitoring system
- **Special educators:** help teachers support CwSN in classrooms

What is the current status[3] of capacity building in your state?

- Are teachers trained in awareness of **21 disabilities**?
- Do trainings for disabilities include **specific FLN strategies for CwSN**?
- Are **training or awareness materials available** to teachers/special educators at all times?
- Do **classroom observations** for monitoring FLN include questions for observation of CwSN?
- Is the **headmaster, block officer** and **district officer** trained in inclusive education?

Note: *1. Marginalized learners include students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and other slow learners in a classroom; 3. Read the comprehensive checklist in the annex*
Source: *2. UNICEF, Disability-inclusive Education Practices in India, 2021*

I am Understood

Capacity building.

STEP 01

IE

Orient teachers & special educators on their role in inclusive FLN programme

STEP 02

IE

Integrate inclusive practices across all department trainings including FLN, SMC, Sports, etc.

STEP 03

DIET
SCERT

Train Master Trainers across departments

STEP 04

RP

Train Teachers and special educators through existing cascade cadres and ensure continuous monitoring

STEP 05

DC

Integrate Teacher handbook, FLN book, training resources in Diksha platform for ease of access

STEP 06

DC

Periodically track shifts in knowledge, attitudes and inclusive practices

STEP 07

IE

Build a common vision & awareness for inclusive education across district & block level cadres

I am Understood

As inclusive teacher and special educator training modules are implemented, it is important to track indicators for success.

Key indicators to track for teacher capacity building:

INPUTS
6-12 months

- % of **Master Trainers** trained in inclusive education
- **Roll out of classroom observations/feedback** form including question on inclusive teacher practices
- % of **teachers trained on screening**, inclusive classroom management strategies
- % of **teachers provided with inclusive teaching materials**, and handbooks

OUTPUTS
1-4 years

- Ratio of **enroled CwSN to special Educators**
- % of teachers following universal screening and inclusive classroom practices as observed by Master Trainers during observation visits
- % increase in teacher knowledge,skills and practices

OUTCOME
4 years and beyond

- % **improvement in CwSN learning outcomes** based on baseline and formative assessments at each stage of foundational learnings in mainstream classrooms due to increased teacher capacity

I am Understood

States recognize the criticality of these trainings, and several have already instituted such programs.

NaanumVelven project, Tamil Nadu, has trained teachers, special educators and created adapted handbooks

To support CwSN in school, Tamil Nadu **trained**[1] teachers and special educators.

A **teacher handbook** created under the government has integrated signs and symptoms of 21 disabilities which are available to teachers throughout the year.[2]

Samagra Shiksha, Uttar Pradesh, has trained HMs and plans to train teachers as well going forward[3]

Uttar Pradesh **sensitized school headmasters (HMs)** on inclusive education through a **90-day online training**.

Uttar Pradesh also announced plans to train **65,000 general teachers to** be equipped through a 90-day cross-disability training program across 75 districts to deliver specialized education to over **3 lakh CwSN.**[3]

The teacher trainings on CwSN helped me learn how to screen students for disabilities using the government screening app. It also taught me how to be more patient with students with disabilities.

-Multigrade Class Teacher in Tamil Nadu

Source: *1. Sol's ARC brochure 2023-24. 2. Dalberg primary research expert interview with Tamil Nadu and Sol's ARC. 3. Outlook, Uttar Pradesh Deploys 65,000Teachers For Special Education To Differently-Abled Children, 2024.*

I am Seen

I Learn

I am Understood

I am Accepted

I am Accepted

Addressing deep-rooted social stigma across the entire ecosystem of a CwSN is crucial to ensure complete inclusion.

I am Accepted

when everyone is aware and see my abilities instead of disabilities.

Why is this important?

Addressing **deep-rooted social stigma** is essential for **removing barriers of access and retention** in education for CwSN.[1]

Initiatives like **Samagra Shiksha** encourage community involvement, but integrating inclusion into SMC agendas and statewide awareness are crucial for lasting change.

Roles of stakeholders

- **District/block officials:** organize district/block level mass awareness campaigns
- **Head Master:** build awareness among teachers on government schemes, inclusive education; conduct awareness campaigns for parents/community; ensure a parent of CwSN is part of the SMC[2]
- **Parents:** spread awareness in the community; participate in SMCs

What is the current level[3] of community a wareness in your state?

- Is there representation of a **parent of a CwSN in the SMC?**
- Are the **SMC's directed to monitor enrolment of CwSN** and ensure participation and completion of elementary education?
- Are inclusion-related agendas raised in SMC meetings?
- Are there **annual mass awareness activities** for community acceptance?
- Are all stakeholders **aware of schemes** and provisions for CwSN?

Source: 1. Sol's ARC expert interview; 2. SMC – School Management Committee; 3. Read the comprehensive checklist in the annex

I am Accepted

Enriching school ecosystems and community awareness.

STEP 01

IE

Integrate inclusion related issues in SMC agendas

STEP 02

IE

Train SMC members in inclusion of CwSN in the school through state cascade training

STEP 03

IE

Ensure parents of CwSN are represented in School level committees

STEP 04

IE

Ensure SMCs monitor the identification and enrolments of CwSN

STEP 05

IE

Evaluate awareness of inclusion within all school-level committees (POCSO, Child Protection, Admission, etc.

STEP 06

IE

Ensure anti-bullying policies are institutionalized in all schools

STEP 07

IE

Ensure inclusion agendas are integrated into the School development plan.

STEP 08

IE

Conduct inclusion related mass awareness activities across school, community, block, district and state-level.

STEP 09

IE

Appoint community resource person to monitor village level awareness activities

I am Accepted

While community awareness will be an ongoing effort, there are a few key indicators to track its success.

Key indicators to track for community awareness:

INPUTS
6-12 months

- Budget allocated for community awareness campaigns
- State directives on having a parent of CwSN as a representative in the SMC
- State directives on conducting awareness campaigns

OUTPUTS
1-4 years

- % of schools with parent of CwSN in SMCs
- # of awareness campaigns, sensitization workshops conducted at state/district/block level

OUTCOME
4 years and beyond

- # of CwSN retained in mainstream school at state/district/block level
- % improvemet in attitude of community people

I am Accepted

Community awareness initiatives have led to greater pull and acceptance from communities.

NIPUN indicates a need for inclusive representation within teaching learning materials

NIPUN indicates that teaching tools such as stories, rhymes, songs, activities and facilitation aids should depict girls and boys, including some with special needs.[2]

It also includes preschool homework outcomes that are aimed at guiding general students to demonstrate sensitivity and acceptability towards CwSN.[2]

Tamil Nadu has held rallies and sports days to raise awareness and support for CWSN

Tamil Nadu has held rallies to **raise awareness** on the needs of CwSN among parents and community members.[1]

They have also held **sporting events** that are inclusive for CwSN to allow CwSN to express themselves beyond academics.[1]

Earlier – about 9-10 years ago – we only had 10 students at our Early Intervention centre for CwSN; now we have 421 across grade levels.Through awareness drives and repeated medical camps, we have been able to reduce the stigma and raise awareness to that CWSN can come to access therapies and other care.

- Special Educator, Tamil Nadu

Source: *1. Sol's ARC brochure 2023-24. 2. Dalberg primary research expert interview with Tamil Nadu and Sol's ARC.*

What can we all do to make this vision a reality?

Government

- Commit to building inclusive system through strong top-down commitment.
- Redirect budget allocations to prioritize educational right of CwSN over charitable schemes.
- Incentivize officials at the district, block and school level to drive awareness for behavioral changes.
- Measure and track progress of CwSN learning outcomes.

Funders

- Embed inclusion lens and track CwSN outcomes across portfolios.
- Invest in systemic initiatives through government partnership.
- Advocate to make the inclusion agenda central to priorities of government, implementers and funders.
- Share insights, bright spots, pitfalls from existing interventions with the larger ecosystem.

Implementers

- Advocate inclusion with state governments that you work with.
- Embed inclusivity principles in the design and implementation of existing programs.
- Work collaboratively with inclusive education organisations to fulfill education goals for all.

Appendix 1

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

I AM SEEN

1. Enrolment	
Do all schools have clear guidelines for admission of CwSN students as per the norms of RTE (Right to Education) Act?	☐
Do all schools have clear guidelines for outreach for enrolment of CwSN?	☐
Is there a clear guideline to provide home based education instead of mainstream school admissions?	☐
Are the teachers and HMs sensitised for enrolment of CwSN in mainstream classrooms?	☐
Are parent awareness initiatives conducted for increasing enrolment of CwSN?	☐
2. Attendance	
Are the attendance monitoring parameters for CwSN included in the teacher attendance app?	☐
Is the attendance tracked separately for classroom attendance and home based students?	☐
Are the CwSN marked separately in the Out of School Survey?	☐
Are children with critical illness given attendance concessions?	☐
Are any specific efforts to improve attendance and reduce drop out of CwSN?	☐

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

I AM SEEN

3. Screening & Identification	
Is there a tech based solution available for survey of children at risk for disability, health and nutrition?	☐
Are ALL children universally screened for disability, health and nutrition risks?	☐
Is there a Health and Education ministry convergence for screening, identification and support services?	☐
Are the roles of the stakeholders clearly defined for screening of CwSN?	☐
Is there a committee of disability, health & nutrition experts for validation of screening questions?	☐
Are the monitoring indicators for disability, health and nutrition integrated in the EMIS system?	☐
Are the teachers and special educators trained for usage of the APP?	☐
Are the screened children tagged (referred) for identification & diagnosis to respective departments through a tech based system?	☐
Is the UDID registration done as soon as screening is positive?	☐
Are the diagnostic camps held once the screening process is completed?	☐
Do the respective departments conduct diagnostic assessments within one year of the child being identified?	☐
Are the disability certificates and UDID cards provided to the child in a stipulated time?	☐
Are the parents counselled for child's screening and diagnostics?	☐
Is the renewal for disability certificates and UDID cards completed before expiry?	☐

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

I AM SEEN

4. Schemes & Provisions	
Are all stakeholders aware of the schemes and provisions for CwSN?	☐
Are the schemes mapped against each CwSN's eligibility?	☐
Is the scheme data targeted and tracked for CwSN?	☐
Is there a ministry convergence for schemes across different vulnerabilities e.g. If the CwSN is a girl from SC/ST community are the schemes for SC/ST also given?	☐
5. Support Services	
Are the aids and appliances provided and updated as per age and stage requirements?	☐
Are the targets set for the number of therapy sessions for each identified CwSN?	☐
Are the number of therapy sessions given measured against this target?	☐
Is the quality of therapy provided to the CwSN measured and tracked?	☐
Do the teachers and special educators have common goals for classroom learning of a CwSN?	☐
Do the IE centres have clear protocols for all services to be provided to a CwSN?	☐
Are FLN outcomes a part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the CwSN?	☐

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

I LEARN

1. Classroom Learning	
Is there a separate budget allocation for creating, printing and distributing accessible FLN learning materials for CwSN and inclusive TLMs (Teaching Learning Materials) for teachers.	☐
Does the SCERT have an expert on inclusion who is involved when creating state level learning materials?	☐
Are the needs of CwSN kept in mind when creating the mainstream FLN materials?	☐
Is the adapted FLN material being mapped according to the guidelines & goals of NCF (National Curriculum Framework)?	☐
Do the current mainstream FLN materials have representation of children with disabilities?	☐
Are the mainstream FLN materials made accessible for children with visual impairments?	☐
Is the FLN material adapted for children with cognitive impairments?	☐
Has the state partnered with an expert/ CSO for development of adaptive FLN content for CwSN?	☐
Are there proper guidelines mentioned for printing & distribution of adapted learning materials?	☐
Are the examination accommodations and concessions revised and updated for all disabilities?	☐
Are the teachers trained for usage of adaptive TLMs, THBs and inclusive classroom materials?	☐
Are the DEO and BEO doing regular classroom observations for monitoring of CwSN?	☐
Do the classroom observations for monitoring FLN include questions for observation of CwSN students?	☐

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

I LEARN

2. Support Services	
Are the special educators trained in FLN to provide classroom support to teachers and integrate FLN goals in their IEP?	☐
Are the required therapists (Speech therapists, Physiotherapist, Counselors) provided for CwSN as per their need?	☐
Are the targets set and measured against the assigned number of therapy sessions for each identified CwSN?	☐
Is the quality of therapy provided to the CwSN measured and tracked?	☐
Do the Inclusive Education centres have clear protocols for all services to be provided to a CwSN?	☐
3. Learning Data Integration	
Are the FLN baseline, midline and endline assessments being adapted to needs of CwSN in different categories?	☐
Does the SCERT have an expert for adapting the existing FLN assessments for CwSN?	☐
Are the teachers and special educators trained to conduct assessments for CwSN?	☐
Are the FLN formative/ summative assessments adapted to the needs of CwSN in different categories?	☐
Are the assessment scores integrated into the EMIS system for tracking of learning outcomes?	☐
Does the Holistic Progress Card (HPC) as mentioned in the NIPUN Bharat Mission indicate the progress of CwSN students?	☐
Is the assessment data verified by FLN monitoring teams through spot assessments?	☐

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

Is the CwSN data measured in state evaluations like the NAS (National Achievement Survey)?	☐
Is there learning outcomes data available for CwSN children across the state across all grades?	☐
4. Accessible infrastructure Aids Appliances & Assistive Devices	
Are the schools adhering to basic accessible infrastructure guidelines?	☐
Do the school audit guidelines specify accessibility features such as ramps, accessible toilets, etc. as per the guidelines?	☐
Is there a budget allocated for assistive devices, age appropriate aids-appliances & therapy for all required disabilities?	☐
Are the aids and appliances provided to CwSN renewed as per age and stage needs of CwSN?	☐
Are the teachers being trained for usage & maintenance of assistive devices?	☐

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

I AM UNDERSTOOD

1. Capacity Building	
Are the teachers and special educators aware of their roles for inclusion of CwSN?	☐
Are all teachers trained in awareness of 21 disabilities?	☐
Are all special educators trained in awareness of 21 disabilities?	☐
Does the training for disabilities include specific FLN strategies?	☐
Are inclusive education trainings integrated across various existing capacity building programs that the state is conducting for FLN?	☐
Are the changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices tracked after training?	☐
Are these training or awareness materials available to teachers/special educators at all times?	☐
Are sports, dance, music and drama teachers trained in working with children with special needs?	☐
Are the District and Block officers trained in components of Inclusive Education?	☐
Are the teachers and special educators recognised/celebrated for their efforts in inclusion of CwSN?	☐

State Readiness Checklist

Checklist for state governments to assess readiness for inclusion of CwSN

I AM ACCEPTED

1. Enriching School Ecosystems	
Is there a representation of a parent of CwSN in the school level committees (SMC) as mandated by the RTE Act?	☐
Is there a representation of a parent of CwSN in various other school level committees? (POCSO, Child Protection, Admission committee, etc.)?	☐
Are the SMCs directed to monitor enrolment of CwSN as well as ensure participation and completion of elementary education?	☐
Are inclusion related agendas included in the school development plans?	☐
Are there any peer activities conducted for awareness of disabilities to ensure acceptance?	☐
Are there any anti-bullying policies institutionalised and followed in all schools?	☐
Is there a community resource person for monitoring school related activities for inclusion of CwSN?	☐
Are there mass awareness activities for community awareness and acceptance conducted at school,community,district and state level?	☐

Appendix 2

Reimagined Roles and Responsibilities

This document aims to redefine and align the roles across departments and stakeholders for effective implementation of current policies for inclusion to ensure CwSN receive equal opportunities to learn and thrive.

Reimagined Roles and Responsibilities

Parent of CwSN

1) Be aware of your child's rights
2) Be an advocate for your child's rights
3) Get the right diagnosis as early as possible
4) Understand and accept your child's differences and focus on abilities
5) Admit the child in mainstream school
6) Send the child to school regularly
7) Voice out your child's needs in SMC and other school committee meetings
8) Work together with the teachers, special educators and therapists
9) Apply for applicable schemes
10) Spread awareness and acceptance of disability in your community.

Peers

1) Be aware of the differences and respect them
2) Learn from their strengths
3) Learn to communicate and include them when you play
4) Support friends who need help in certain activities
5) Report if anyone is bullying them

Teacher

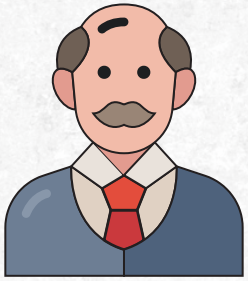
1) Observe children for any red flags
2) Screen students to understand their risks
3) Understand their differences and accept them
4) Believe in their abilities and include them in classroom learning
5) Understand the best ways to communicate with them
6) Use inclusive classroom practices and materials
7) Counsel parents and peers
8) Work with the special educators on common goals
9) Assess CwSN regularly through adapted tests
10) Provide accommodations, modifications and exam concessions where needed

Reimagined Roles and Responsibilities

Special Educator & Therapist

1) Support in availing documents and schemes
2) Support in screening and holding diagnostic camps
3) Support teachers in managing behaviour challenges of CwSN if needed
4) Include FLN skills when preparing IEPs (Individualised Education Plans)
5) Assist students in using adaptive technology & resources
6) Support teachers by demonstrating whole class inclusive teaching practices
7) Counsel students, peers & parents as per need
8) Regularly assess and monitor CwSN progress aligned to classroom goals
9) Prepare and support students to ensure they do not drop out of school

Peers



1) Ensuring CwSN enrolment and regular attendence
2) Increase parent involvement of a CwSN through regular SMC meetings
2) Make the school infrastructure accessible
4) Make inclusive resources & assistive technology available in school
5) Sensitize & build capacity of teaching & non-teaching staff
6) Advocate for Inclusive practices in school

State Coordinator
(Inclusive Education Department)

1) Develop vision for IE department for state.
2) Ensure inclusion of IE agendas across all departments in Samagra
3) Facilitate permissions, directives and budget sanctioning for all IE activities
4) Correspond and provide direction to all District officials
5) Monitor & evaluate IE activities through dashboards and field visits
6) Escalate any cases where CwSN are being excluded
7) Revise state programs and policies as per implementation needs
8) Highlight best inclusive practices across schools

Reimagined Roles and Responsibilities

District Coordinators

1) Actively participate in the Block Level Committees for CwSN agendas
2) Monitor data of CwSN at block level
3) Build awareness and disseminate all IE initiatives
4) Ensure smooth distribution of books at school level
5) Conveying state level correspondence to HMs and Teachers
6) Managing escalation of CwSN cases for non inclusion

Block Coordinator
(Special Educator)

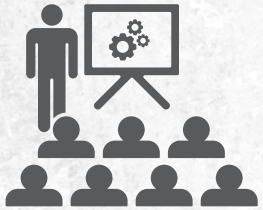
1) Ensure activation of Block level committees (BLC) for IE activities
2) Ensure distribution of books and Teacher handbook to CwSN.
3) Conduct classroom observations to track progress of inclusion initiatives
4) Resolve escalations for non-inclusion of CwSN

SCERT

1) Build internal capacity for creating inclusive learning materials across grades.
2) Work with IE departments to provide learning materials appropriate for CwSN
3)Ensure representation of diverse children including CwSN in mainstream materials.
4) Integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) when creating materials for ALL children.

Reimagined Roles and Responsibilities

DIET



1) Build internal capacity by training teachers for inclusion of CwSN
2) Integrate Inclusion related frameworks and practices when designing trainings for teachers.
3) Create a cadre of trainers for training teachers in inclusive practices.
4) Ensure monitoring of classroom practices for inclusion of CwSN.
5) Share best practices for inclusion across schools

EMIS

1) Integrate CwSN parameters in all existing monitoring and tracking applications
2) Integrate CwSN data across all dashboards
3) Develop an end to end App for screening, identification and support
4) Provide data driven analysis related to CwSN to relevant stakeholders

Directorate of School education

1) Integrate and align Inclusion initiatives in autonomous statutory bodies eg. CBSE, KVS.
2) Build capacity of SCERTs in Inclusive education through the NCERTs
3) Provide actionable SOPs for inclusion of CwSN across all education programs
4) Direct all education departments for data integration across all dashboards.

Reimagined Roles and Responsibilities

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

1) Ensuring inclusion agendas are integrated across all mainstream programs
2) Redefine role of existing departments and cadre to adopt a cohesive vision of inclusive education
3) Allocate appropriate resources and budgets across all education programs for inclusion initiatives
4)Ensure accessible infrastructure and resources
5) Facilitate inter-ministry convergence for optimisation of resources
6) Issue directives and monitor to improve and efficiency of processes

Rehabilitation Council of India

भारतीय पुनर्वास परिषद्

1) Segregate mandate and certification for teachers and special educators for inclusive education
2) Integrate trainings across DIETs and State trainings
3) Provide flexible training modes like DIKSHA/state training platforms
4) Provide inclusive education trainings for Government officials
5) Make the certification renewals simpler and include implementation parameters

Department of Empowerment of People with Disabilities

सत्यमेव जयते
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

1) Facilitate convergence with Education ministry to optimize resources and build a common vision.
2) Facilitate convergence with Health ministry to ease and expedite the disability certification as well as UDID card process.
3) Facilitate convergence across ministries to ensure data flow is enabled.
4) Facilitate convergence across ministries to create a single window for schemes and grievances
5) Work with Niti Ayog and states to create live dashboards monitoring outcome data across ministries
6) Redefine roles of National Institutes to play a more active role in mainstream State initiatives

Appendix 3

Glossary

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BLC	Block Level Committees
BLO	Block Level Officer
BRC	Block Resource Centre
CLO	Cluster Level Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CwD	Children with Disabilities
CwSN	Children with Special Needs
DEO	District Education Officer
FLN	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
GoI	Government of India
ID	Intellectual Disability
IEC	Inclusive Education Centre
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
NEP	National Education Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIPUN	National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy
PMU	Project Management Unit
PwD	People with Disabilities
RPWD	Rights for People with Disabilities
RTE	Right to Education
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SEDGs	Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups
SMC	School Management Committee
SRP	School Readiness Programme
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
UDID	Unique Disability ID card
UDISE+	Unified District Information System for Education
UDL	Universal Design Learning

Appendix 4

FLN

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

FLN refers to basic skills in reading and arithmetic operations. It is the ability to read and understand a basic text, write and perform simple mathematical operations.[1]

CwD/CwSN[3]

Children with Disabilities/ Children with Special Needs

CwD/CwSN include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis.[4]

SEDGs

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups

Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) can be broadly categorized based on gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), sociocultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), and socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low-income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor).[4]

Source: *1. Government of India, Understanding Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, 2023; 2. Sol's ARC, Children on Margins, 2023; 4. UNICEF, Children with Disabilities, 2023; 5. Government of India, Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam Report on Session 4: Equitable and Inclusive Education: Issues of Social-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), 2023;*

Note: *3. In India, the latest government directive (NEP, NIPUN) uses CWSN as the preferred acronym to refer to Children with the 21 Disabilities as listed in the RPWD Act of 2016*

Appendix 5

Additional resources

Sr. No.	Document	Link	Authored by
1	National Education Policy 2020	Link	Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India
2	National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat Mission	Link	Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India
3	The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act)	Link	Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India
4	The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016	Link	Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India
5	Educational Rights of Children with Special Needs FAQ	Link	National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
6	Disabled Children's Right to Education, 2012	Link	UNICEF India
7	Prashast App	Link	National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
8	State of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in India	Link	Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) of India and Institute for Competitiveness (IFC)
9	Barkha: Reading Series for All	Link	Department of Elementary Education
10	How to build inclusive schools, 2023	Link	Sonali Saini, on idronline.org
11	G20 India: Ensuring Foundational Literacy & Numeracy	Link	G20 Brasil on YouTube

"No goal is met **unless it is met for** everyone"

Sol's ARC
EVERY CHILD LEARNS, EVERY ADULT EARNS
Dalberg