



Disability and RTE: UNESCO Report

The [The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) (UNESCO) and the **Tata Institute of Social Sciences** have released a report titled '**State of the Education Report for India 2019: Children with Disabilities**'.

- The report states that in India, 75% of five-year-olds with disabilities and a quarter (more than one in four) of children with disabilities (in the age group of 5 to 19 years) do not attend any educational institution.
 - The report is in synchronization with the [Sustainable Development Goal-4](#) which aims to ensure "**inclusive and equitable quality education**" and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Key Findings

- There are more than **78 lakh** children with disabilities in India between **5-19 years**.
 - Only **61%** of them were attending an educational institution.
 - About **12%** had **dropped out**, while **27%** had **never been** to school at all.
- There are **fewer girls** with **disabilities** in schools than boys but when it comes to school enrollment , more girls with disabilities get left behind than boys.
- According to UNESCO, India is home to **8 million children with disabilities**, and 45% of them fail to attain literacy. Globally 15% of people are disabled.
- There are also differences among various types of disabilities like:
 - **20%** of children with **visual** and **hearing impairments** had never been in school.
 - The percentage of children attending schools is the lowest among those with **multiple disabilities**, mental illnesses, and mental retardation. (**more than 50%** do not attend school).
- A large number of children with disabilities do not go to regular schools but are enrolled at the **National Institute of Open Schooling** (NIOS).
 - enrolment figures at NIOS shows a decline for most categories of disabilities between 2009 and 2015.

National Institute of Open Schooling

- NIOS is "Open School" to cater to the needs of a heterogeneous group of learners up to pre-degree level.
- It was started as a project by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
- **The National Policy on Education** suggested strengthening of Open School System for extending open learning facilities at secondary level all over the country as an independent system with its own curriculum and examination leading to certification.

Challenges

- The [Right to Education Act](#) mandates **enrolment**, but not the provision of **resources** needed for the actual education of a child with disabilities.
- In many parts of rural India, if a parent opts for **home-based education**, the child may not be getting an education at all.
- Laws relating to right to education and disabilities have certain ambiguities in terms of:
 - Where children with disabilities should study.
 - Who should teach them.
 - Gaps in terms of appropriate **norms and standards** applicable to all educational institutions.
- lack of accessible physical **infrastructure, assistive technologies**, information and communication **technology**, and **devices** aggravates the situation of school dropout among disabled children.
- Inadequate **allocations, delays** in releasing funds and **under-utilization** of allocation are key challenges in **financing education** for children with disabilities.

Recommendations

- Amendments to the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), so that it can be aligned with the [Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016](#).
- Need for **structural, funding and attitudinal** changes to ensure that no child is left out of the right to education.
- There should be concentrated **campaigns** and large scale **awareness drives** which can improve the attitude towards children with disabilities in the classroom and beyond.
- Transformation of **teaching practices** is the need of the hour to aid the inclusion of diverse learners.
- Establish a coordinating mechanism under the Ministry of Human Resource Development for effective **convergence of all education programs** of children with disabilities,

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