

Press Release

Brainstorming Session on Comprehensive Policy for Children with Disabilities in Education and Examination

A Brainstorming Session was organized by Central Board of Secondary Education on 4th July, 2018 at ITL Public School, Dwarka to frame a **comprehensive policy for providing support to children with disabilities in their education and examination.** Representatives of different State School Education Boards, NIOS, ICSE, IGNOU, NCERT, Open Schools of different States and NGOs, Principals of various schools, Special Educators and Parents of children with different disabilities participated for wider discussion in preparing a comprehensive policy. A sign language interpreter was present for the convenience of speech and hearing impaired participants.

In her keynote address, Ms. Anita Karwal, IAS, Chairperson CBSE apprised the participants with the facilities and exemptions provided by the Board for the benefit of the children with special needs. She informed about the specific work done in the field of inclusion by CBSE like mandatory provision of Special Educators in schools, National awards for Special Educators, Sports Competitions for special children, Mainstreaming of Health and Physical Education with special focus on inclusion in schools, provision of Vocational Subjects, provision of alternative questions and many other facilities and relaxations provided to CWSN. She told the gathering that CBSE has been sensitizing schools towards the plight of these children and goading schools to implement special provisions for alleviating their hardships. She encouraged participating school Boards and experts to share their best practices so as to evolve an all-encompassing and comprehensive policy. She conveyed the gathering that Boards should not think about the value such children will add to society rather focus on adding value to their lives. She shared that CBSE has gone beyond existing norms to permit a terminally sick child to use the facilities of amanuensis. Therefore, all the participating Boards should think out of the box and avoid red-tapism for coming up with workable recommendations for formulating a Comprehensive Policy for the good of these children.

Dr. Sanyam Bhardwaj, Director (Academics) acquainted the participants with the facilities and exemptions extended by CBSE to the children with disabilities in details. They were apprised about the provision of scribe and adult prompter, use of screen reading software for visually impaired candidates, use of computer or typewriter for writing answers in examinations, exemptions in the choice of languages, separate question papers in enlarged print, alternative questions.

Ms. Ira Singhal, SDM, Alipur Delhi a special invitee is a differently abled person who topped UPSC examination in the year 2015. She strongly recommended that whatever policy is being framed should help the children with disabilities to come to par with the

normal children and help them in their later life as well. She emphasized that this policy should not come as a charity to them. She insisted on the use of technology for teaching and assessing these children.

Later on the participants were divided into 06 working groups wherein they discussed disability specific support plan on curriculum adaptations, pedagogies, physical environment, methods of assessment, technological interventions, assistive devices and accommodations or exemptions in Board examinations. All the disabilities as defined in the RPWD Act 2016 were covered in this brainstorming session. Each group was assigned different disabilities as defined in RPWD Act 2016.

Group I was assigned Locomotor disability, Leprosy cured persons and Cerebral Palsy. **Group II** was given the responsibility to brainstorm on Dwarfism, Muscular Dystrophy and Acid Attack Victim. **Group III** worked upon Blindness, Low Vision, Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Speech and Language. **Group IV** was assigned Specific Learning Disabilities, Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Mental Illness. **Group V** focused on Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Haemophilia, Thalassemia, Sickle Cell Disease and Multiple Disabilities. **Group VI** discussed about the role of technology in education of children with disability. The groups also brainstormed on curtailing the prevalence of malpractices in the name of inclusion.

All the groups made their presentations on the work done by them during the brainstorming session. They came up with need based specific recommendations for different disabilities. The recommendations of all the groups were summarized and presented before the participants. The recommendations would be detailed in the final report to be compiled and some of the general recommendations are *focused attention to specific disabilities as per the RPWD Act 2016 as they demand specialized accommodations to overcome different limitations; provision of an accessible and equitable environment by sensitization of stakeholders; assessment of students in the early years for the purpose of identification of various disabilities; development of a Management Information System/ Database on students with special needs by all Boards in order to provide need based support to such children.*





