Inclusion in Education
(pilot study)

Centre for Inclusive Policy,

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CONTINUUM OF COMPASSION AND CARE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Intent of the Project

While the government has shown commitment towards inclusion in education, the follow through has been inadequate. There has been little communication between the department of education and the schools on what exactly inclusion entails and what it means to include students with disabilities in mainstream schools. Anecdotal evidence shows that the situation is fragmented, with each stakeholder individually trying, what they think is required, to be inclusive.

Our past and present work with schools has shown that it is possible to create welcoming communities, combat discriminatory attitudes, build an inclusive society and achieve education for all. Snehadhara has been working with Kids' Corner School at J. P. Nagar and has been running the project, 'Snehasangiti' successfully for three years. We have been co-locating with Kids Corner, with the intent of having them partake of each other's worlds and savor the uniqueness of diverse spaces. Sharing each other's spaces and sharing experiences has shown us that they are able to establish deep links with one another and through creative expressions are able to accept everybody unconditionally and shown an improvement in the children from both our schools in the aspect of learning outcomes. The pilot project Inclusion in Education stems primarily from this work.

Purpose of the study

To do a pilot with a few schools for a gap analysis between the government policy on inclusive education and the implementation in schools in Bangalore. This would lay the foundation for a study with a larger set of schools. This would serve as a baseline to drive all future action in furthering inclusion in schools.

Introduction

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all, moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. - (The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education)

What began as special education; a way of making people feel included in society, after decades of trial, learning to understand what systems /practices children with special needs (CwSN) respond to and how best to respond to CwSN, much debate and finally being recognized as a basic human right, is now known as inclusive education. From a charitable cause to being a matter of dignity and right is a long way, however, the exploration continues. Over the last two decades, having separate education systems and schools for neurotypical children and CwSN has come in to question.

As we begin to understand better the disabilities and the kind of help that is required, the idea of having children of different abilities studying under one roof is not as bizarre to consider these days. Therefore, the discourse on inclusive education has also given rise to new developments in the thinking and practice of the education systems.

The Government of India has enacted the legislation Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act) to achieve the goal of providing access to free education in an appropriate environment to all learners with disabilities till the learner attains the age of eighteen years. The Act endeavors to promote the integration of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools by providing inclusive education (Pingle and Garg 2015).

However, the concept of inclusive education as stated by Singal (2005a) "...a concept that has been adopted from the international discourse but has not been engaged within the Indian scenario" have remained 'Millennium Development Goals'. Part of the MDGs is also enrolling all learners in mainstream schools and ensuring teacher training includes identification and education of CwSN. It also states that education must be made accessible to all children. The government has attempted to implement these goals by creating a National Policy on inclusion in Education.

As per the National policy on inclusion in education, a comprehensive list of criteria has been set for the state governments and educational institutions to adhere to, to be inclusive.

It states that

the appropriate Government and the local authorities shall make sure that every educational institution that is funded or recognized by the government should provide inclusive education to children with disabilities and shall—

16.
(i) admit them without discrimination and provide education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities equally with others;
(ii) make building, campus and various facilities accessible;
(iii) provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements;
(iv) provide necessary support individualized or otherwise in environments that maximize academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion;
(v) ensure that the education to persons who are blind or deaf or both is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication;
(vi) detect specific learning disabilities in children at the earliest and take suitable pedagogical and other measures to overcome them;
 (vii) monitor participation, progress in terms of attainment levels and completion of education in respect of every student with disability;
(viii) provide transportation facilities to the children with disabilities and also the attendant of the children with disabilities having high support needs.

17. The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take the following measures for the purpose of section 16, namely: —
(a) to conduct survey of school going children in every five years for identifying children with disabilities, ascertaining their special needs and the extent to which these are being met: Provided that the first survey shall be conducted within a period of two years from the date of commencement of this Act;
(b) to establish adequate number of teacher training institutions;
(c) to train and employ teachers, including teachers with disability who are qualified in sign language and Braille and also teachers who are trained in teaching children with intellectual disability;
(d) to train professionals and staff to support inclusive education at all levels of school education;
 (e) to establish adequate number of resources centres to support educational institutions at all levels of school education;
 (f) to promote the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes including means and formats of communication, Braille and sign language to supplement the use of one's own speech to fulfil the daily communication needs of persons with speech, communication or language disabilities and enables them to participate and contribute to their community and society;
 (g) to provide books, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities free of cost up to the age of eighteen years;

(h) to provide scholarships in appropriate cases to students with benchmark disability;

(i) to make suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities such as extra time for completion of examination paper, facility of scribe or amanuensis, exemption from second and third language courses;

(j) to promote research to improve learning; and

(k) any other measures, as may be required.

At the state level the State government has compiled a list of non-negotiable points to make the education system an inclusive one as given in the Draft Policy on Education of Children with Special Needs by the Department of Education, (2013).

1. Not providing admission to children with disabilities in regular school including aided and unaided is a violation of Human right which shall be penalized.

2. To promote Access, and Enrolment, Retention and Appropriate Education for CwSN and create facilities by developing inclusive learning environment and free education for CwSN till 18 years.

3. Zero Rejection Policy should be followed in educational institutions and hostel.

4. Providing adequate facilities for support services as mentioned in this policy for inclusive education.

5. All Pre-service and In-service teacher's trainings program should have adequate weight age for theory and practice in Inclusive Education.

6. Every school & educational institution shall have accessible and barrier free environment as mentioned in the policy.

7. Any formal school including aided and unaided shall be covered in this policy.

Implementation of the project

We are looking for a group of representative schools which will participate in a pilot project that will help us understand and create a support structure for an inclusive education. This group of schools will be the first who will implement and give inputs on the present educational policies and directives. The pilot project is an imperative part of our learning and engaging with the Department of Education and the Department of Disabilities to influence new policies and directives.

Our project will be executed in three phases.

- Our first phase will involve visiting schools, identifying and working with a subset of 15 schools to collect data on existing learning protocols and awareness of inclusion of children with developmental disabilities.

- The second phase will be an implementation of a student-centric interaction, between students from special schools and mainstream schools, facilitated by a member of the organisation/school who is trained in special needs education.

- The third phase will be bringing together the Dept. Of Education, Dept. of Disabilities, Examination boards, schools and NGOs to share and discuss how to take inclusion in mainstream education further through a conference.

Using the criteria from the national policy and state policy, we will compare it to the data that we would have collected and assess the gap that exists between the policies and implementation of them.

Methodology

- Questionnaires and interviews were conducted to collect data from various schools in Bangalore.

- The distribution of the demography of the schools ranges from government schools, to private and international schools.

- The schools cater to different socio-economic classes of students and adhere to different syllabi.

- Of the 25 schools contacted and visited, 8 schools agreed to be part of the study and responded to the questionnaire.

- The questionnaire provided to collect data from the schools for the purpose of doing the gap analysis is attached at annexure 1.

- The questionnaire was translated in Kannada as well.

<u>Findings:</u>

To understand with the various parameters that need to be looked at when we are building inclusion into the mainstream, the questionnaire looked some broad categories.

The percentages mentioned in the findings below reflect the questions answered in the questionnaire keeping in mind the existing protocols in the institutions. The remaining schools did not respond to the questions.

1. Policy Changes

1. All aided and unaided mainstream schools are obliged to provide admission to CwSN. The failure to do so is against basic Human Rights and as such is punishable.

   As per the data collected during our research and comparing it with the 'non-negotiable points of inclusion in the 'Draft Policy on Education of Children with Special Needs by the Department of Education, 2013', only 38% of the participating schools have positively affirmed having a 'zero rejection' policy at admission while 13% confirmed not admitting CwSN in their school.

Policy Changes

38%

13%

49%

■ Zero Rejection Policy for CWSN   ■ No Policy wrt CWSN   ■ No Response
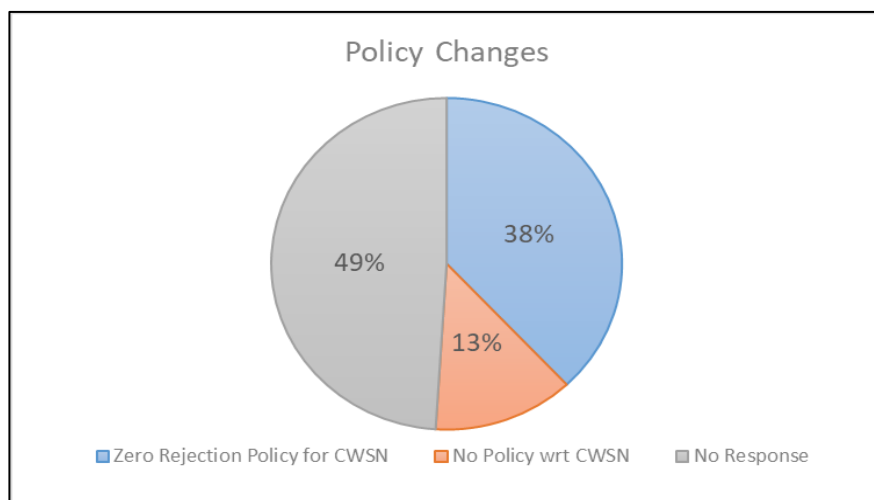
2. These schools must make accessible, free CwSN appropriate education and ensure enrolment and retention in mainstream schools, until the age of 18. This shall be done by creating an environment conducive to inclusive learning.

2. Physical Features

Every educational institution must create infra-structurally easy to use and accessible facilities.

Accessibility

31% have special infrastructure for CwSN. 13% of the schools have provided toilet facilities to accommodate CwSN. 25% of the schools confirmed that they do not have infrastructure to allow for accessibility.

Accessibility

- Accessibility Infrastructure
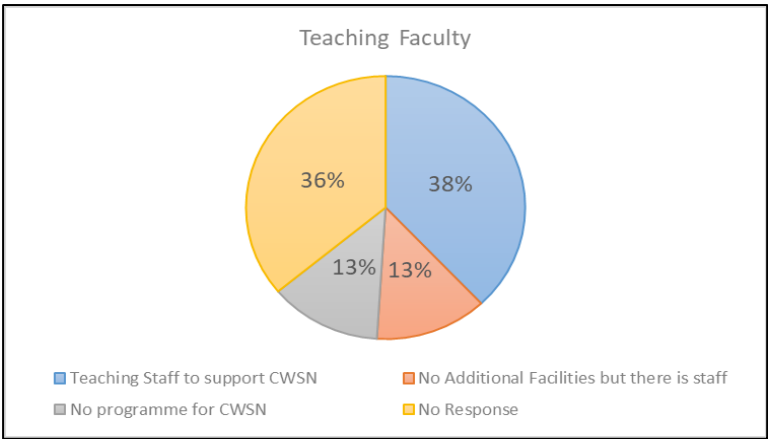- No Accessibility Infrastructure
- No response
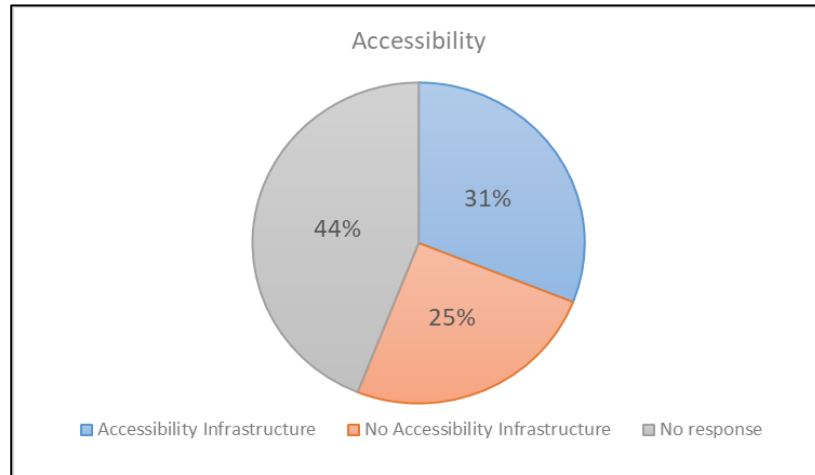
3. Inclusion Methodology

37% of the responses confirm a policy in place for admissions and examinations. 25% have an inclusive policy with regard to curriculum and only 13% have an inclusive policy for learning labs.

Policy for Inclusiveness in Admissions and Evaluation

- Policy for Inclusiveness in Admissions and Examinations
- No Policy for Inclusiveness in Admissions and Examinations

Policy for Inclusiveness in Curriculum

- Policy for Inclusiveness in Curriculum
- No Policy for Inclusiveness in Curriculum
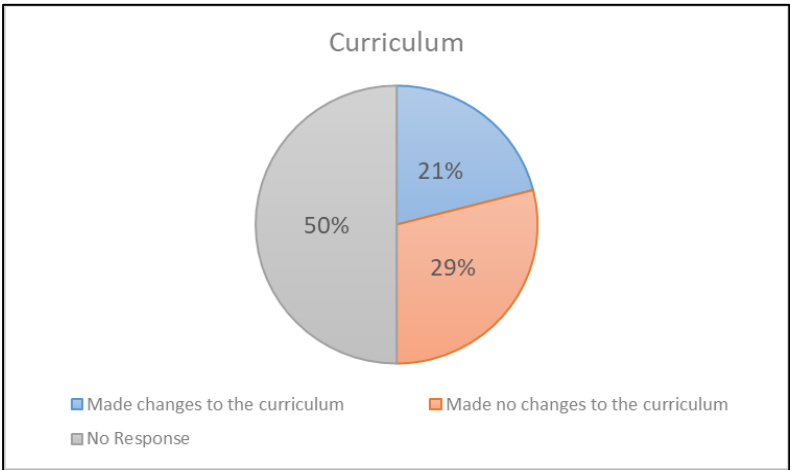
4. Governance Structure

50% of the schools had the recommended staff to facilitate and support CwSN. 38% had the facilities for special needs education (learning centres). 13% have affirmed that they do not have any resources allocated to support CwSN.
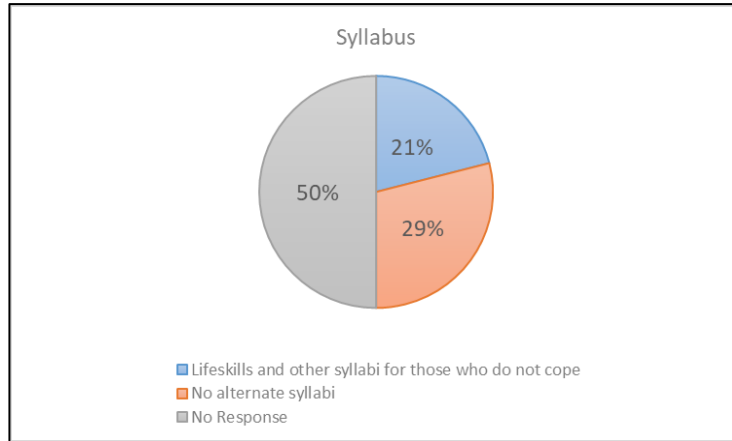

Teaching Faculty

- 38% — Teaching Staff to support CWSN
- 13% — No Additional Facilities but there is staff
- 13% — No programme for CWSN
- 36% — No Response
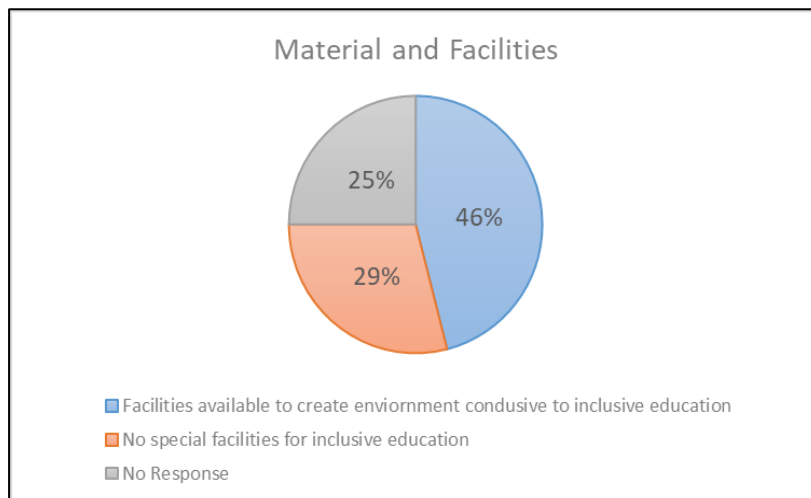
5. Enablement

Curriculum

21% of the schools have confirmed that they have made changes to their curriculum to make accessible appropriate education to the CwSN population. 29% of the schools confirmed having made no changes to their existing curriculum.

Curriculum

- 21% — Made changes to the curriculum
- 29% — Made no changes to the curriculum
- 50% — No Response

Syllabus

21%

29%

50%

- Lifeskills and other syllabi for those who do not cope
- No alternate syllabi
- No Response

Resource Material and Facilities

46% have the facilities to create an environment conducive for inclusive education by way of resource centres and learning labs. Some have also procured resource materials to facilitate different learning styles. 29% confirmed that they have no special facilities that will allow for inclusive education.

Material and Facilities

25%

46%

29%

- Facilities available to create enviornment condusive to inclusive education
- No special facilities for inclusive education
- No Response

Syllabus

21% confirmed providing life skills and occupational training and offering other syllabi to students who cannot cope with the mainstream curriculum. 29% of the schools confirmed having made no changes or adopting any other syllabi by which learners with difficulties could be taught.

Extracurricular activities

25% have provided the infrastructure to be inclusive in extracurricular activities as well as other infrastructural facilities.
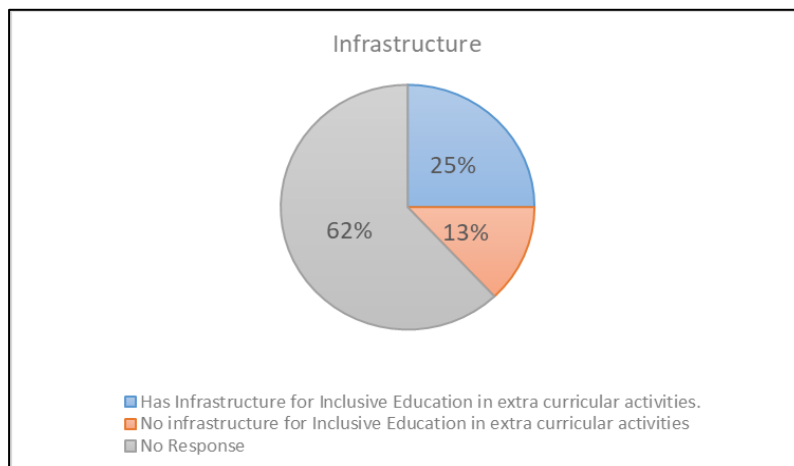
Teaching Methodologies

88% of the schools use audio-visual aids to facilitate learning in the classroom. 38% use aids to allow for tactile and kinesthetic learning while only 13% have adopted experiential learning methods.
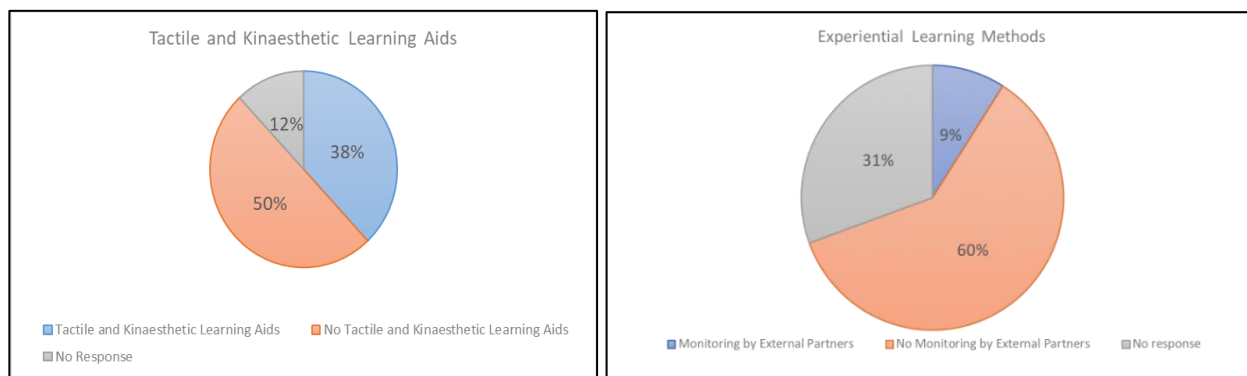
6. Cost Impact

An analysis was done on how easy it would be to implement the different criteria of inclusion in the schools. This was based on resources required, resource person's availability, infrastructure and the cost that the school or government might have to bear to implement each of the criteria.

It was found that having counsellors, teaching life skills, infrastructure for extracurricular activities, teaching using kinesthetic/ tactile teaching methodologies, physical and academic evaluation will be the easiest to implement. Having multiple syllabi, implementing occupational training, having a resource centre, changing the classroom setup, installing elevators, implementing experiential teaching methodologies, and teacher training will the most difficult to implement.

	Weightage	ease of implementation	cost
Curriculum			
multiple syllabi	1	1	1
lifeskills	3	3	3
occupational training	1	1	1
Resource material and faculty			
counsellors	3	3	3
special educators	2	2	2
Resource centre/learning lab	1	1	1
Infrastructure			
classroom setup	1	1	1
Ramps/elevators	1	1	1
Extra curricular activities	3	3	3
Toilet facilities	2	2	2
Teaching methodologies			
audio-visual	2.5	3	2
tactile/kinaesthetic	3	3	3
experiential	1	1	1
Evaluation			
psychoeducational	2	2	2
physical	3	3	3
Academic	3	3	3
Emotional	3	3	3
Government and other agency support			
Teacher training	1	1	1
resource materials	2	2	2
regular visits to make sure setup is in place and working	1.5	1	2

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

This section considers rejection at both, the admissions level as well as the level of evaluation. This is because it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that students are learning and progressing.

Evaluation

While 100% of the schools evaluate students academically, only 13% confirmed evaluating their students by other measures namely psychoeducational, emotional and physical.
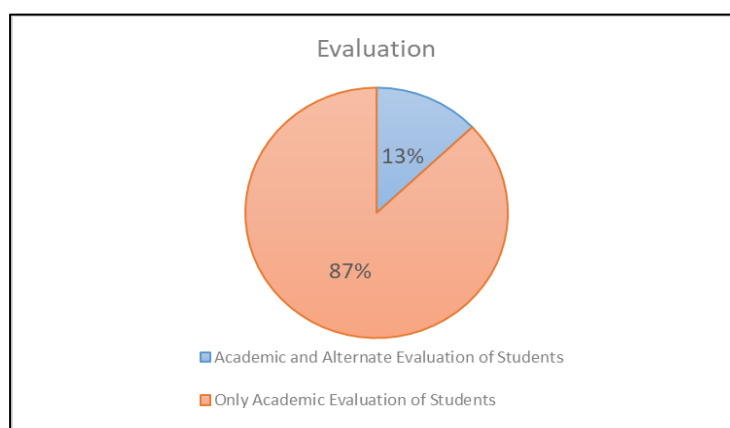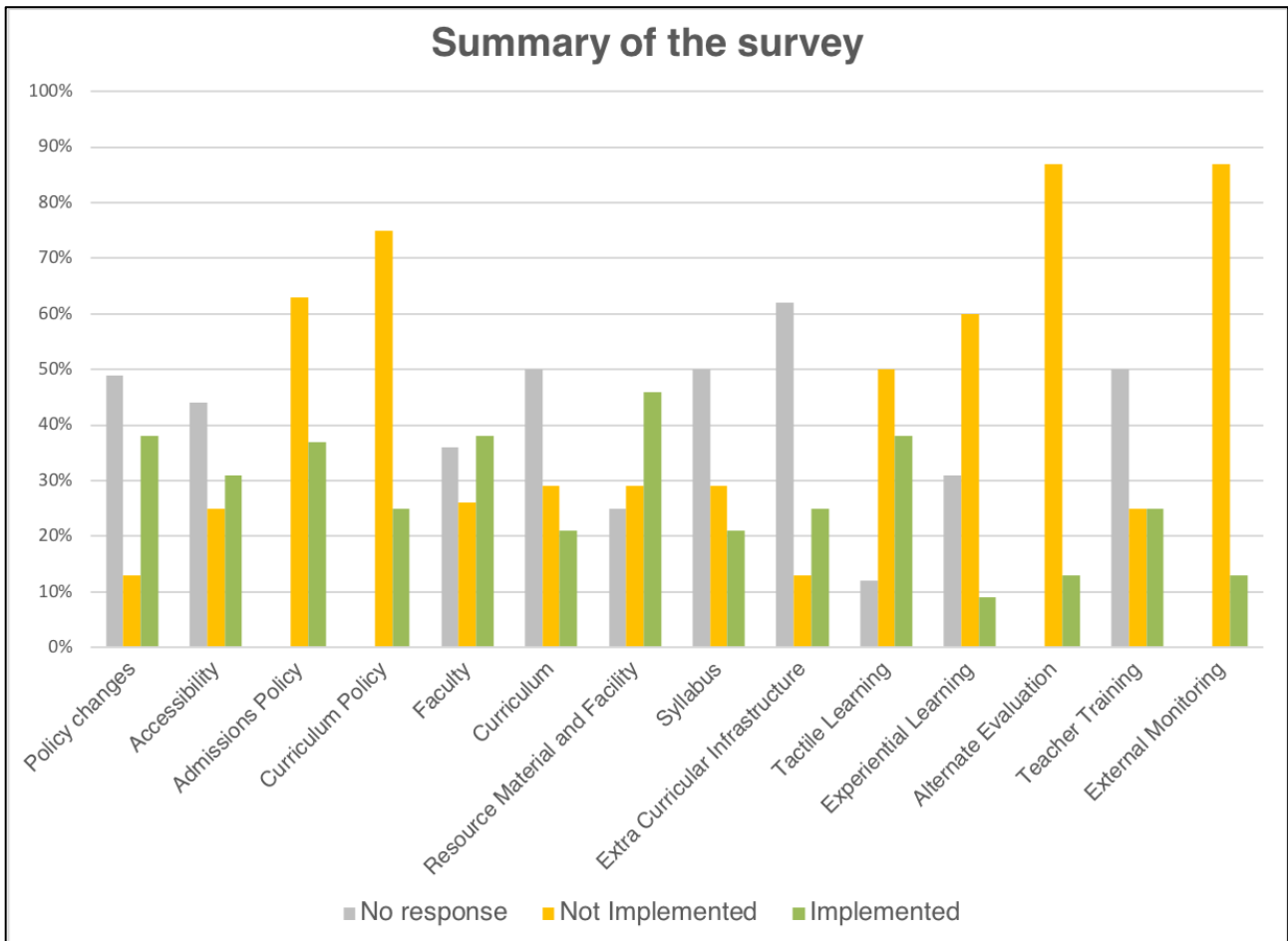

Assistance and External Support

25% use outside agency support for special needs training of teachers. 25% have no special needs training for teachers. Only 13% use outside agencies to monitor their setup and progress. The government school amongst others get no government assistance in support of inclusive education.
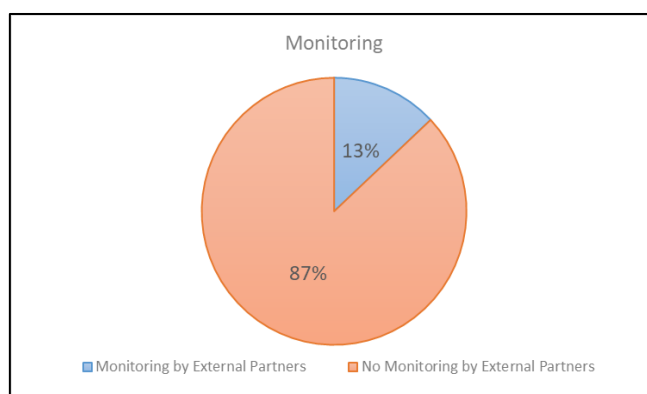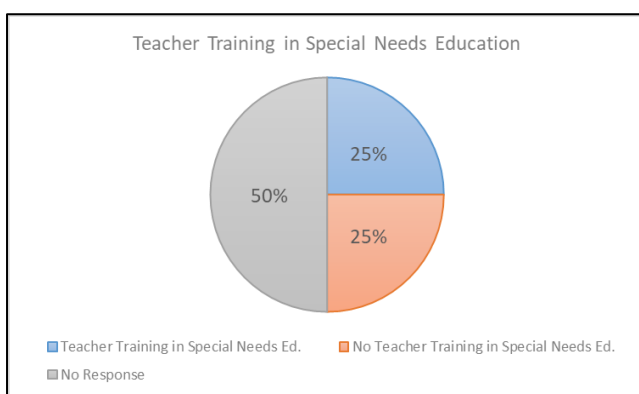
Result Summary of the survey:

- Even in a survey of a small number of schools considered progressive, the extent of implementation is very low.

- Accessibility is a function of one-time investment and does not affect any other resource or demand ongoing upgradation. Even on this front, less than a third have made changes.

- If we deem no response as lack of awareness, that factor is high in this survey.

- While Resource Material and Facilities has seen the maximum change, it has not been backed by change in allied factors like faculty and learning methods which need to progress in tandem to achieve outcomes.

- While it is an established fact that extra-curricular activities lead to much better learning outcomes, the exclusion in that space is significantly high.

- While admissions have seen change, evaluation methods have not. This would most likely defeat the purpose by delaying the progress of the child with the age-appropriate group.

Recommendations:

The government must create a community driven stakeholder council in every block wherein all schools should enroll at the block level and a committee of the member schools, members of the local community, subject experts and NGOs working in this area headed by the BEO. This committee will then monitor the progress and setup of all schools in the block. It is recommended that the committee have a tenure of two years at the beginning of which the committee shall undergo training on inclusive education, arranged by the department of disabilities.

1. As per our findings there are schools that are not admitting CwSN. There needs to be a monitoring system in place at the level of the Block Education Officer to ensure that schools are providing admission to any learner who applies for admission in the school. Awareness programmes on inclusive education and the state policy on admissions will help address this issue.

2. A large percentage of the schools are not able to keep up with making accessible the appropriate education for CwSN and creating a conducive environment for inclusive education due to clearly identified constraints of finances, space and resources. Two of the three constraining factors have been addressed by section 17 (e), (g) and (h) of the National Policy. It is recommended that actioning the support stipulated in the above-mentioned sections should be done by the department, on priority.

3. Most of the evaluation is based on Standardized Achievement Tests (SAT) which excludes a large portion of the learners from being evaluated as per their abilities. Research presents several different teaching strategies to cater to different learning styles being more effectively child centric. The State government should, in consultation with subject experts in the community, make available alternate options for schools to adopt in their teaching and evaluation methods.

4. The facilities and support provided by the schools must be recommended and monitored at the block level, by the committee proposed above.

5. It should be mandatory for teachers joining schools or within the first three months of joining to do a training that includes inclusive education. This is addressed in section 17 (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the National Policy.

6. At the block level the committee must create a list of mandatory infrastructural requirements and ensure that all schools in the block adhere to it for inclusive education.

Special Mention:

While most of the recommendations mentioned above are structural and thus deal a lot
with the government, the primary stakeholder – the school and its management must adopt an attitude and willingness to become inclusive. No amount of structural legislation can supplant change from within the system and its significant stakeholders. Such a move will create a teutonic shift that will augur well for education systems and make India the torchbearer for the developing world to follow.

Conclusion:

This was a pilot project with a very small sample group. The purpose of the pilot project was to have an indicative measure of the gap between the Government Policy on Inclusiveness in Education and Implementation, examining the roles of both Government and schools.

The findings brought to light several key issues. Amongst these were:

1. A reasonably large percentage of schools are unaware or unresponsive to their obligation for inclusion in education.

2. The attempts by most schools to be inclusive is limited when compared to what is recommended by the Government Policy for Inclusiveness in Education

3. There is a significant lack of monitoring of schools for adherence to Government Policy. The Government does not have its monitoring programme in place and there is a distinct lack of support to help schools become inclusive as per policy.

4. Schools have implemented measures like audio visual content as it would be the norm for schools to keep pace with the facilities that other schools provide which will affect the admissions of even normal children.

5. It is quite clear that the extent to which changes have been made would cater to only physical disability, mild learning disabilities and would exclude speech/hearing impaired, autistics, vision impaired and intellectual disabilities even if minor.

6. While Acts and laws exist, the government machinery itself has not been able to understand inclusion well enough to be able to enforce implementation.

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ANNEXURE 1

Questionnaire

To understand with you the various parameters that need to be looked at when we are building inclusion into the mainstream, we have put down below some broad categories. We request you to go through these and help us populate this keeping in mind the existing protocols at your institution.

Background: Details of the school in terms of ages or classes that it caters to, number of students, syllabus it caters to, location or demographic information as needed

Objective/ Rationale for Inclusion: Why did the mainstream school decide to become an inclusive one. What were the key factors that drove the management towards this decision? History of inclusive practices in the school

Inclusion Implementation:

1. Policy Level: What policy changes were needed at the management and school to enable inclusion.

2. Physical Features: What changes were needed in terms of physical features of the school, classroom, resources to bring about inclusion

3. Inclusion Methodology: Details on in class inclusion, special class or NIOS, admission procedure

4. Governance Structure: Any changes to Governance structure due to inclusion at management, teachers, ancillary staff, resource teachers, counselling support

5. Enablement: Enablement done in terms of curriculum changes, teacher training, class room changes, development of Individual Education Plan, teaching strategies, steps adopted on early identification and intervention, sensitivity methods adopted , how were the differentiation in assessments and outcomes implemented, additional resource development, details of tie ups with other organizations to provide inclusion support, student interactions, criteria for successful implementation, counseling support

6. Cost Impact: Any major additional cost due to inclusion – could be due to additional resources, tie ups, changes in physical features etc.

7. Tracking progress and refinement to inclusive policies: How is inclusion being tracked and is progress happening in the right direction. How are the course corrections, if any, being implemented?

8. Best Practices on Inclusion: Share details on what went well and how other organizations can adopt the same

9. Challenges faced during inclusion: What were the challenges faced, how it was overcome and if the challenge persists, what is the alternate to it

10. Assistance: What is the help that you would need to mitigate the challenges seen in mainstreaming inclusion?

ANNEXURE 2

Consolidated Interview Responses from Schools that Participated

School	Background	Objective/Rationale for inclusion
Lawrence SSLC	1st to 10th 1300 students lower middle class	Special coaching. Extra time and attention given by the teachers and aiyas. Sits separately and has individual attention. He has been coached and is now sitting for the SSLC board exam
Lawrence ICSE	Nursery to 10th ICSE 2000+ HSR Layout	We have very stray cases, mild form of dyslexia, who are referred to our counsellors
Christ ISCSE	1st to 10th 1750 students ICSE	This is not an inclusive school. There is a special school on campus for special need children
Joseph's CBSE	The Schools has 1450 students from KG to 9th Standard.	Our school is not purely an inclusion school but we never deny for any children with special needs.
BIS	The School community comprises about 586 students and 156 staff. BIS is an inclusive school and the Special Education Needs department is called the Learning Centre (LC). BIS offers the CIE and IB curriculum along with the NIOS for students	As the SEN students grew in number, so also the need for having more professionals grew. Gradually the number of students joining the school with learning needs increased too. Professional Development programs resulted in Psychological and Psychoeducational assessments being conducted in-house by professionals within the team. Soon, examination accommodations were approved by CIE and IB. The alternate curriculum called the NIOS was also introduced for SEN students who could not cope with the CIE and IB curriculum. The school is now able to cater to individual needs of SEN students whilst including them in the school.
New Horizon	The Resource Room at NHPS caters to children from UKG level upto 5th grade. Currently there are 56 students. Ratio of Teacher : Student is 1:14, ICSE Syllabus.	It is an inclusive school. The principal is against labelling children but is acutely aware of disabilities and the support required. Principal said that the focus is not primarily on the exams but on the development of the child. The school looks at the physical, mental and academic progress of the child. Primary assessment done by class teacher, and then sent to the sp. Educator for further assessment. If the child is in need of further assessment, the parents are guided to get that done. They have an active resource room.
MVJ	CBSE Playgroup to Grade X 2.5 years to 15 years	No two special children are same. Children with High functioning Autism, Borderline Autism, Learning Disability (Milder form) and all kinds of disability in minor form benefit from a mainstream school. Lots of role modelling by peers and other extra- curricular activities, help them to be more social and learn new skills.
Puttenahalli High School	SSLC 380 students 8 teachers (there should be 19 for that many children) 8th-10th std.	Government schools should admit all children: no caste, creed, colour, blindness. It is a government directive