

## 2. A Study of Inclusiveness of Schools at the Elementary Level

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3	Topic of Research:	A Study of Inclusiveness of Schools at the Elementary Level
4	Name And Address of The Investigator(s) (with E-mail) :	Prof Anita Julka(Retd. Professor) Department of Education of Groups with special Needs (DEGSN), NCERT, Sri AurobindoMarg,New Delhi Email:headdegsn@gmail.com,
5	Institution where the Research was Conducted:	Department of Education of Groups with special Needs (DEGSN), NCERT, Sri AurobindoMarg,New Delhi
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### ABSTRACT

An index for inclusion has been developed by the NCERT that would impact the development of inclusive schools through self-reflection by teachers and educational administrators. Keeping that as criteria for exploring the effectiveness of inclusive schools, this study was undertaken to study the teachers beliefs, collaborative efforts and teaching methods for inclusion of children in education, to analyze the planning, management strategies and barriers faced in implementing inclusive education and to suggest guidelines to develop schools to be more inclusive. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 10 schools from different states from the different regions and visited in the initial phase. Care was exercised to cover those States/UTs that were showing literacy rate higher than the National Average and those showing literacy rate below average. Out of ten schools visited, 6 schools from the States/UT of Kerala (2 schools), Madhya Pradesh (1), Himachal Pradesh (1), Chandigarh (1), Maharashtra (1) were selected for in-depth case study. These particular schools were selected on the basis of willingness of the school to participate in the research and the diverse profile of disabilities admitted to the schools. Based on Index for Inclusion, research tools in the form of semi structured interview schedules and a checklist for observing the available resources were prepared for teachers, Headmasters (HMs and State and IED Coordinators. Data were collected through visiting the selected schools, observation and interactions with teachers, Headmasters (HMs and State and IED Coordinators, also through Focus Group Discussions with teachers and parents and from secondary sources for validating the primary data. Qualitative analysis of the data was carried out. Results reflected that there were poor collaboration between the schools and administrative machinery, poor resource support, poor infrastructure and negative attitudes. There were definitely labelling and identification of Children with Disabilities (CwDs). The teachers had feeling that CwDs were slow learners as the teachers didn't understood their needs and ignore them in the class. They reflected that CwDs should study only in special schools. They also felt incapable of teaching

them in regular classrooms. The study clearly stated that Inclusion is far from reality. It is conceptualized from the perspective of CwDs by the stakeholders and no whole school approach was adopted. If inclusion has to be implemented seriously then there should be better planning, better communication amongst the stake holders, better resources, training both at pre service and in service levels and significant commitment of administration to support the schools. At present, inclusion is happening in a haphazard manner. If inclusive education has to be implemented as envisaged in the RPWD Act, 2016, then more formal planning and efforts need to be initiated to turn a non-beneficial inclusive environment to a better learning place for all.