MIZORAM UNIVERSITY JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
A Refereed Bi-annual Journal
A Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal
ISSN(P): 2395-7352
eISSN: 2581-6780
Volume XII, Issue 1 June 2026

SEDGs: Delving Into Awareness of Trainee Teachers About NEP 2020 Recommendations

Dr. Ranita Banerjee[*]
Subrata Majumdar[†]
https://doi.org/10.22232/mzujhss.2026.12.01.11

Abstract

Education is necessary for national advancement, yet India faces significant challenges in ensuring universal access to education, particularly for marginalised communities. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is thus lower among deprived communities, whom NEP 2020 termed as SEDGs, classified into gender (Female, Transgender), socio-cultural identity (SC, ST, OBC, Minorities), geographical identity (rural, aspirational districts), and disabilities—who suffer from high dropout rates, low retention, poverty, social customs, and geographical isolation.

Objectives: Researchers investigate the awareness levels of pre-service teachers in West Bengal regarding the provisions and challenges associated with Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) as defined by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Methodology: 105 B.Ed. trainee teachers were surveyed using a 15-item questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale to assess their familiarity with NEP 2020 provisions for SEDGs, such as Early Childhood Care and

[*] Asst. Prof of Economics, Vidyasagar Teachers' Training College, Midnapore, West Bengal, India
ranita.phd.2017@gmail.com ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9195-7315
[†]Asst. Prof of History, Kamala Devi Sohanraj Singhvi Jain College of Education, Kolkata, West Bengal, India
subratamajumdar213@gmail.com ORCID ID: 0000-0000-0000-0000

Education (ECCE), inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, Special Education Zones (SEZs), bridge courses, and the Gender Inclusion Fund.

Findings: Trainees agreed about importance of quality education for SEDGs and need of teacher training, awareness levels regarding specific provisions (e.g., categories of disabilities, the SEDG concept, and enrolment differences) were often moderate.

Significance: Reveals need of enhanced teacher training and sensitization to effectively implement NEP 2020 measures and reduce educational barriers for SEDGs.

Key Words: *Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs); NEP 2020; Trainee Teachers; Inclusive Education; Educational Disparities*

Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of societal progress, economic development, and national advancement. This mandates every nation to formulate educational policies aimed at nurturing responsible citizens capable of leading their country toward a brighter future (Niazi, 2025). However, in India and many other developing countries, achieving universal access to high-quality education remains a significant challenge.

After independence, India established several education commissions to recommend measures for expanding educational access. These commissions emphasized the need to bring marginalized communities—such as women, minorities, Scheduled Castes (SCs), and Scheduled Tribes (STs)—into the educational mainstream (NEP 2020). Despite these efforts, these groups continue to face systemic barriers and underperform compared to more privileged sections of society.

Access Issues for Deprived

All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), has shown that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education in India was 27.1% in 2019–20. However, this national average conceals stark inequalities across socio-economic categories. For instance, the GER for Scheduled Castes

(SCs) stood at 23.4%, while for Scheduled Tribes (STs) it was even lower at 18%, reflecting a substantial gap in comparison to the overall average (MHRD, 2020). These statistics highlight the inequalities that are persistent in the Indian education system for the marginalized section of the population.

NEP 2020 has termed these deprived children as SEDGs which comprises of following groups (Kaur, 2025; Mushtaq, 2023)

- Gender Identities: Female and Transgender individuals
- Socio-Cultural identities: Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and Minorities, which include both linguistic and religious minorities
- Geographical Identities: Students from villages, small towns, and students from aspirational districts
- Learning disabilities person with long term physical, mental, intellectual and sensory impairment.

Soni (2023) noticed that in the U-DISE data of 2016-17, there was dropout among SEDGs where 2% decrease in Scheduled Castes (SC) at the primary level, 5% in case of Scheduled Tribes (ST) students, and three quarter reduction in case of differently abled children was noticed (1.1% to 0.25%), with female students facing greater reduction rates in all categories. A range of factors—such as inadequate access to quality education, poverty, social and cultural norms, historical disadvantages, geographic isolation, and language barriers—have significantly hindered the enrolment and retention of students from SC, ST, OBC, minority communities, and children with disabilities (Divyang) (Afroza, 2024). There are certain locational concentration of deprived groups in various states which is also responsible for educational inequalities as 72 % of rural SC population reside in the seven states with Punjab having highest population (28.9%); 70 % ST population are in seven states with highest concentration in Mizoram (94.5%); women population is concentrated in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh while Transgender population is seen in Uttar Pradesh

(28.18%) (Soy, 2021). Tribal children often perceive formal school education unaligned with their cultural and life realities whether in content or classroom transaction. Government initiatives presently in place to improve enrollment require to be strengthened (Ottoplackal & Anbu, 2022; Kumar C, 2024).

Recommendations of Commissions

National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 initiated strategies to remove educational inequalities and recommended:

- Incentive schemes for SCs, STs, and women
- Promotion of female participation in non-traditional careers and technologies
- Expansion of vocational education
- Establishment of residential schools for disadvantaged groups

NPE 1986 despite progressive policies, faced implementation issues and various socio-economic barriers. In 2015, India adopted the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, pledging to fulfil Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) in education: *"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030*"(Global Goals, 2025). Goal 4 highlights equity and inclusion as key to education reform, guaranteeing success for all learners.

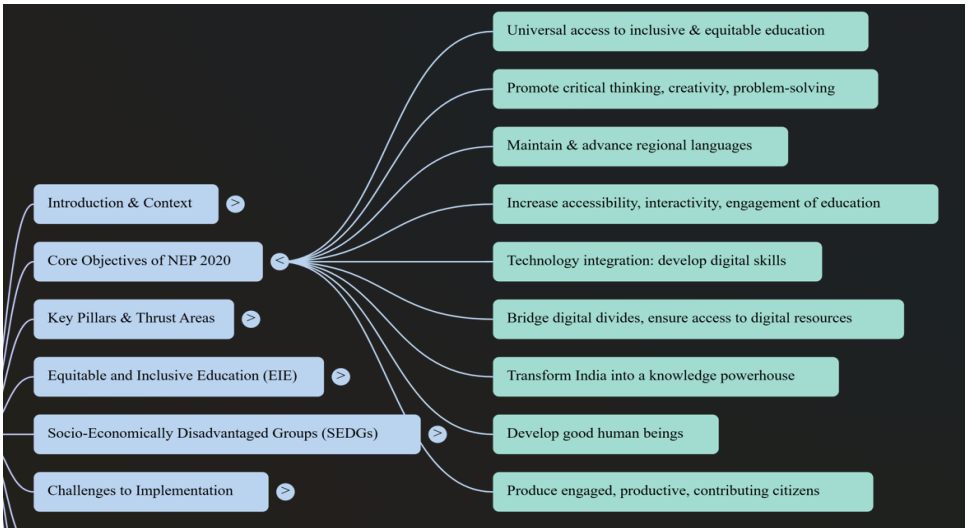

Figure 1: National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: core objectives
Source: Online Survey, 2025

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, reiterates this goal and sets its core objectives as shown in figure 1:

- Increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in schools and higher education by providing universal access to inclusive and equitable education. Increase accessibility, interactivity and engagement in education
- Promote critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving in learners
- Promote regional languages
- Developing digital skills in learners and bridge digital divide by procuring resources
- Develop an education system in India which is no less than developed nations
- Bridge socio-economic divides by empowering all learners

Thus, NEP 2020 envisions an inclusive and effective education system, aligned with democratic and developmental principles of India.

A critical aspect of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is its commitment to promoting equity in higher education by addressing disparities among various socio-economic groups. The policy advocates for the creation of Special Education Zones (SEZs) in regions with high concentrations of marginalized communities. These zones are intended to facilitate targeted interventions aimed at enhancing educational access and participation among disadvantaged populations (Singh & Mishra, 2023). Moreover, NEP 2020 underscores the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure that policy implementation remains inclusive and that the benefits effectively reach the most underserved groups.

Consequently, the National Education Policy 2020 stresses the necessity to address the issues of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs). To specially address their educational needs, NEP 2020 has clubbed gender identities, socio-cultural identities, geographical identities, disabilities, and socio-economic conditions to create a new social group called Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) It proposed that education is a great leveler for achieving economic and social equality. The policy reaffirms that proper initiatives must be taken so that all students from the marginalized sections have a greater opportunity to overcome the hurdles and excel in the educational system.

Causes of disparities

The main reason for disparities against SEDGs is due to the high dropout rate among SC, ST and other backward children. There is also the problem of low enrolment coupled with retention issues which stems from lack of access, poverty, social customs, geographical factors, language barriers, low parental education as shown in figure 2.

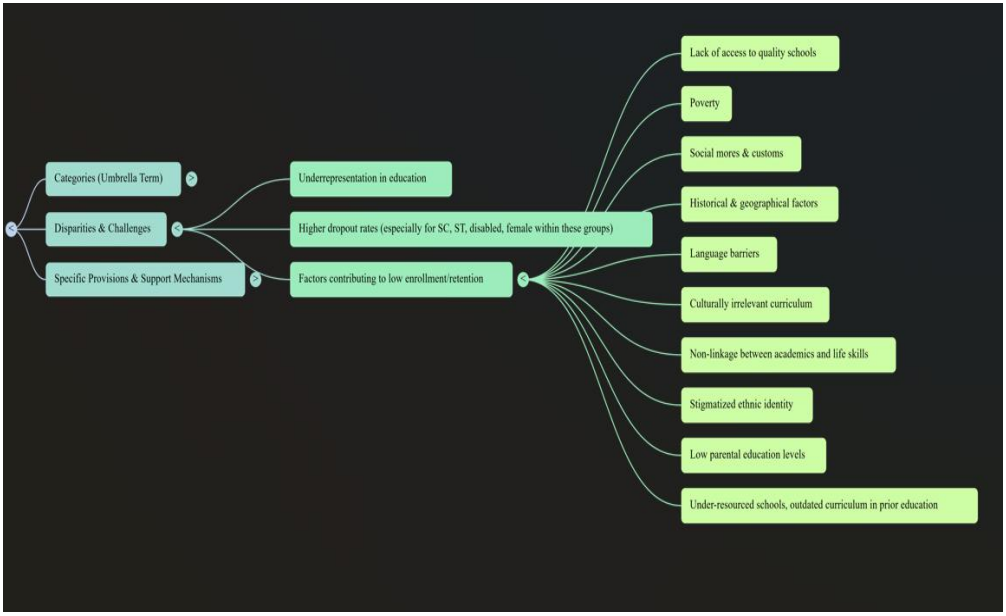

Figure 2: Reason of disparities against SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

Support mechanisms

There can be several support mechanisms to increase enrolment and ensure retention among SEDGs as shown in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Support mechanisms for SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

Starting with targeted scholarships, conditional cash transfers to parents to ensure they educate their children, provisions of bicycles to children in remote areas, creation of special education zones & gender inclusion fund, free boarding facilities, support centres and counselling.

Review of Literature

Verma & Kumar (2021) stated that education is a major element in changing society and has a crucial function in handling challenges. The National Education Policy 2020 has also presented similar views about education and tries to create a new education system for the nation. NEP

2020 envisions an equitable society which is powered by a new education system, securing quality and accessible education for all.

Soni (2023) explored the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals in his study and concluded that NEP 2020 is aligned in its vision of fulfilling Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda by 2030 through ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Another study by Akunuri (2023) examined the innovative and forward-looking aspects of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, highlighting its commitment to holistic, high-quality, and research-based education, particularly for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) at both the school and higher education levels. Additionally, Mustaq (2023) emphasized the importance of educating children from these disadvantaged groups, asserting that such efforts should align with the vision of NEP 2020. To achieve this vision, it is crucial for every citizen, alongside all stakeholders and members of the educational community, to actively participate in the process.

Researchers have explored the causes of being marginalized within socially disadvantaged groups and how to provide access to equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning to children of SEDGs and prevent dropout in the long run (Makwana and Elizebeth, 2022). Proper and adequate implementation of NEP 2020 measures can empower SEDGs (Kumar and Singh Dehal, 2022). Desai and Kulkarni (2008) revealed that action programs in India have improved status of castes and ethnic groups in matters of education, but this did not reach Muslims or higher-income groups. Varughese, & Bairagya (2020) revealed that policy measures show little result in reducing educational inequalities among SEDGs and it is time to improve secondary and higher education without forsaking primary education initiatives. Saxena and Yadav (2025) concluded that interventions can be successful when the community, trained teachers, financial aid, and social awareness all come together.

Mir and Swaroopa (2024) concluded that the barriers to women's education are rooted in social, cultural, economic, and institutional factors. Addressing this complex array of challenges requires the collective involvement of the community, a shift in mindsets, and the establishment of robust legal frameworks. Similarly, Mitra, Mishra, and Abhay (2022) found gender bias as girls are 16% more deprived of school than boys, due to socioeconomic and spatial causes, especially those belonging to Scheduled Tribes. Sabharwal (2021) studying social and spatial disparities in educational access commented that increased number of HEIs has enhanced access for SEDGs but regional disparities continue with socio-economic and spatial factors influencing access to higher education opportunities in India.

Das (2019) observed that SEDG children in India can have academic resilience if mothers are educated and poverty can be eliminated. Maji and Sarkar (2008) concluded socio-economic factors are stronger reason for educational backwardness than caste. National Education Policy (NEP) tries to improve cognitive, social, ethical, and emotional competencies in SEDG children so that they are included in mainstream and education equality is established (Kamala, 2020).

Operational definition of the terms

Socio-economically Disadvantaged Group is an umbrella term which has numerous groups and sub-groups included in it. The classification can be as Gender Identities (female & transgenders), Socio-cultural identities (SC, ST, OBC & minorities), geographical identities (students from rural area and aspirational districts), disabled children (Divyang & CSWN), socio-economic condition (migrant children, low-income household, children in vulnerable condition, orphans & victims of trafficking) as shown in figure 4:

Figure 4: Classification under SEDG

Source: Online Survey, 2025

Methodology

Researchers have undertaken a systematic approach to examine the research objectives. This study was conducted on trainee teachers from few B.Ed. colleges from different districts in West Bengal. The sample consists of 105 respondents (aged between 21 to 25 years old, Female =85) all studying in two-year B.Ed. programme. The data was collected using a 15-item questionnaire using a five -point rating scale ranging from *Strongly disagree* scoring 1 *to Strongly agree* scoring 5. The questionnaire consists of informed consent received from respondents in the last item. The data

was collected from the respondents using a google form which was circulated through mail with instructions regarding purpose of the study and information on content area.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To analyze the awareness of the trainee teachers about the SEDG as mentioned in NEP 2020
- To examine the awareness of the trainee teachers about the importance of SEDGs
- To examine the awareness of the trainee teachers about the implementation of SEDG related policies

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was used to assess the awareness of B.Ed. trainee teachers regarding the provisions and recommendations for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) under NEP 2020. Researchers employed quantitative approach applying structured questionnaire.

Sources of Data

Primary data were collected from trainee teachers at different B.Ed. colleges using structured 15-item five-point Likert questionnaire (through Google Forms). Secondary data from sources as NEP 2020, UGC Guidelines on SEDGs, government reports, journal articles and books were analysed in the study.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Random sampling technique was applied, sample comprised of 105 B.Ed. trainee teachers (85 females; age 21–25 years) enrolled in two-year B.Ed. programmes from few teacher education colleges located in different districts of West Bengal.

Data Collection Procedure

Researchers used Google Form to send questionnaire through email to students. Trainees were also provided with instructions to create awareness about importance of the study. Voluntary participation was ensured and informed consent was collected from trainees.

Tools and Techniques of Analysis

Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to analyse the responses. Findings were presented through item-wise figures and interpreted in relation to the study objectives.

Ethical Considerations

Trainees gave informed consent indicating voluntary participation. Researchers guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, and ensured responses were used only for academic purposes. Participants had option to leave at any stage without penalty.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Scope*:* Selected B.Ed. colleges from different districts of West Bengal, geographical coverage extended to boundaries of West Bengal. ***Limitations:*** Findings are based on a relatively small sample and therefore cannot be generalized to all trainees in other states. Self-reported responses collected at one point in time can be biased and used descriptive analysis could have been supported with quantitative data.

Data Analysis, Interpretation & Findings

Descriptive analysis presented through Figures 5.1–5.15 presents a picture of trainee teachers' awareness regarding the provisions, initiatives, and challenges related to Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) under NEP 2020. Apart from item wise percentages, overall responses show positive orientation toward inclusive education and the necessity for teacher preparedness. Dimension-wise awareness varies as trainees show strong agreement in dimensions of importance of quality education, inclusive pedagogy, and teacher training, while moderate in case of awareness

regarding NEP recommendations such as the Gender Inclusion Fund and categories of disabilities. Figures below indicate both areas of strength and areas requiring further sensitization and professional preparation of trainee teachers.

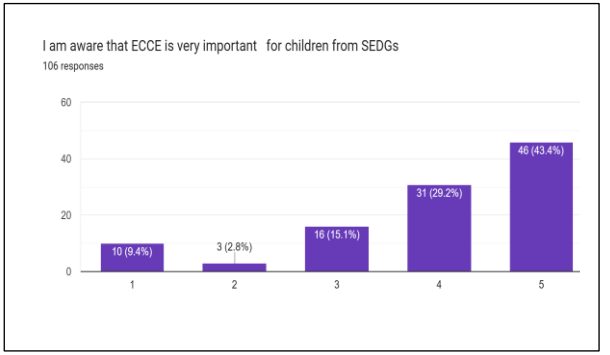

Fig 5.1: I am aware that ECCE is very important for children from SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

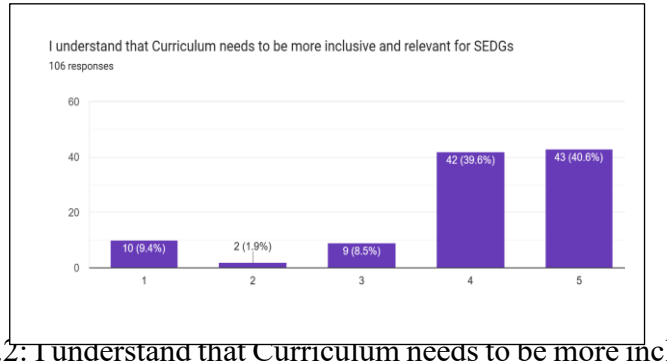

Fig 5.2: I understand that Curriculum needs to be more inclusive and relevant for SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

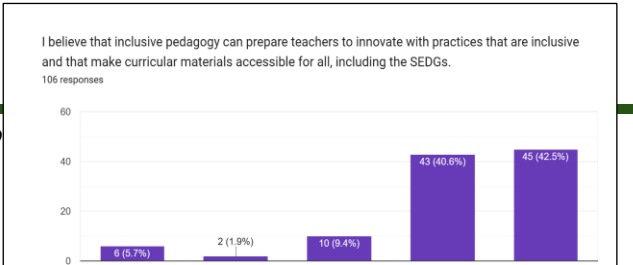

Fig 5.3: I believe that inclusive pedagogy can prepare teachers to innovate with practices that are inclusive and that make curricular materials accessible for all, including the SEDGs.

Source: Online Survey, 2025

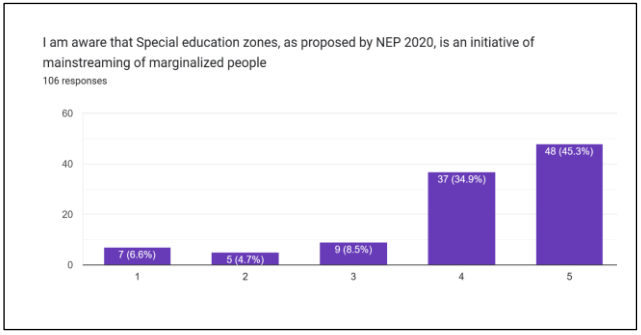

Fig 5.4: I am aware that Special education zones, as proposed by NEP 2020, is an initiative of mainstreaming of marginalized people

Source: Online Survey, 2025

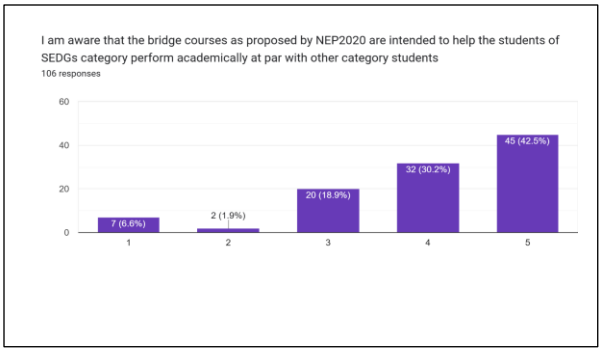

Fig 5.5-I am aware that the bridge courses as proposed by NEP2020 are intended to help the students of SEDGs category perform academically at par with other category students

Source: Online Survey, 2025

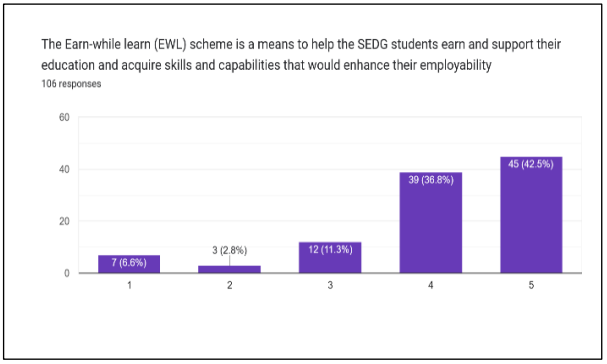

Fig 5.6- The Earn-while learn (EWL) scheme is a means to help the SEDG students earn and support their education and acquire skills and capabilities that would enhance their employability

Source: Online Survey, 2025

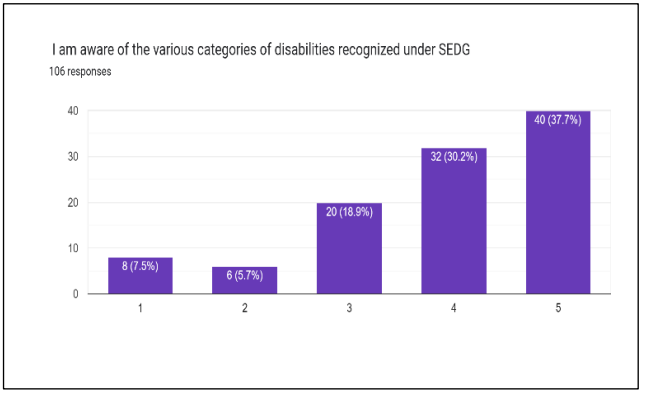

Fig 5.7: I am aware of the various categories of disabilities recognized under SEDG

Source: Online Survey, 2025

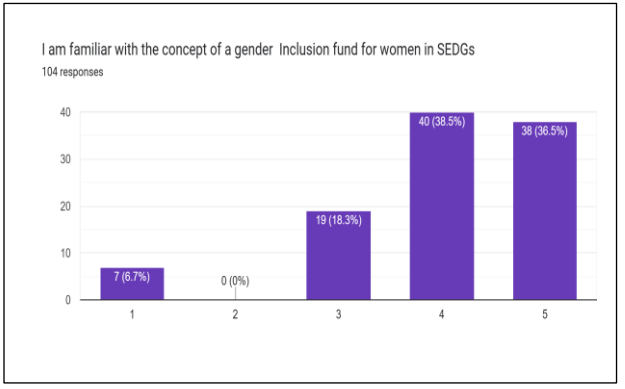

Fig 5.8: I am familiar with the concept of a gender Inclusion fund for women in SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

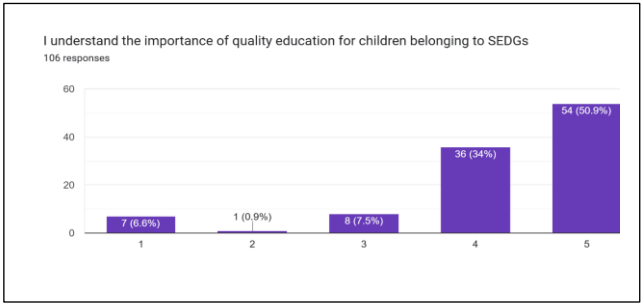

Fig 5.9: I understand the importance of quality education for children belonging to SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

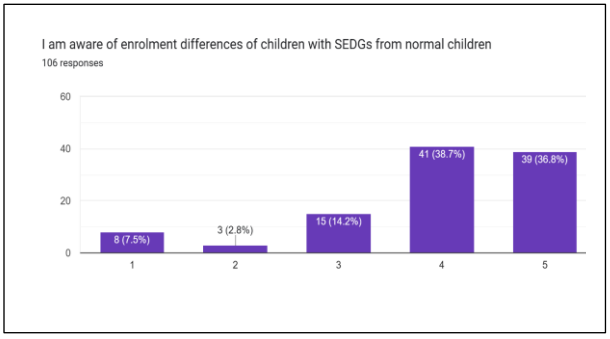

Fig 5.10: I am aware of enrolment differences of children with SEDGs from normal children

Source: Online Survey, 2025

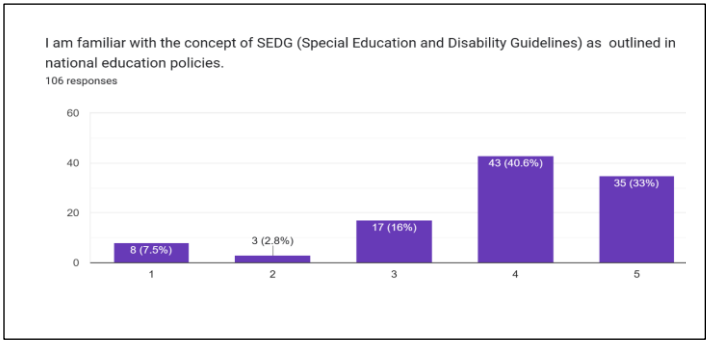

Fig 5.11: I am familiar with the concept of SEDG (Special Education and Disability Guidelines) as outlined in national education policies.

Source: Online Survey, 2025

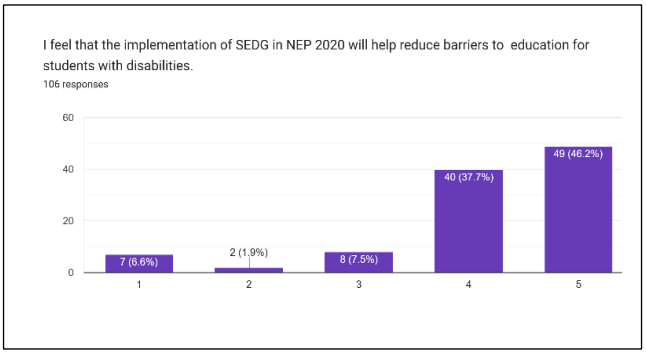

Fig 5.12: I feel that the implementation of SEDG in NEP 2020 will help reduce barriers to education for students with disabilities.

Source: Online Survey, 2025

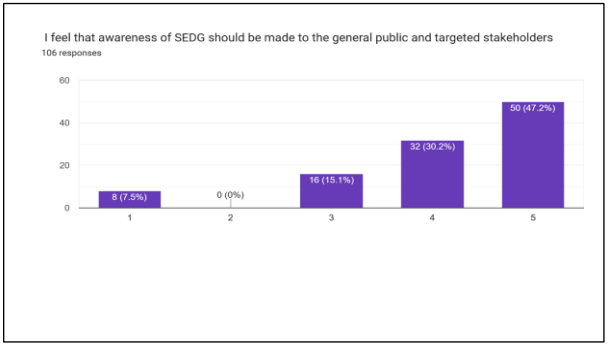

Fig 5.13: I feel that awareness of SEDG should be made to the general public and targeted stakeholders

Source: Online Survey, 2025

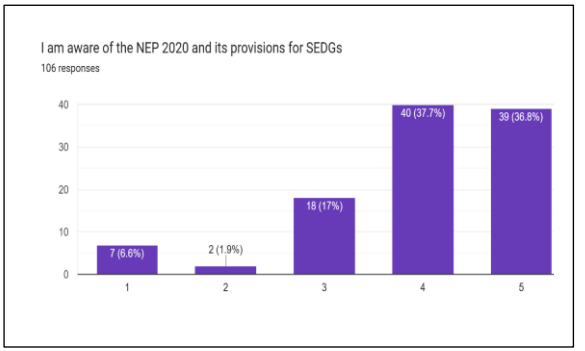

Fig 5.14: I am aware of the NEP 2020 and its provisions for SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

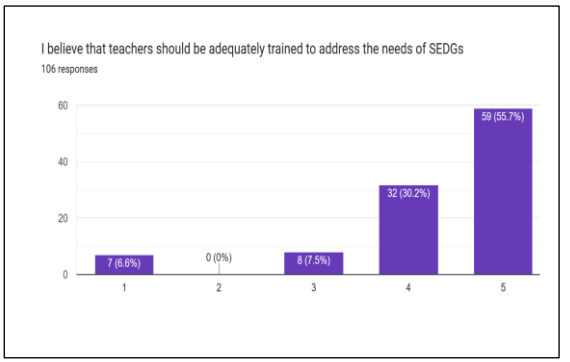

Fig 5.15: I believe that teachers should be adequately trained to address the needs of SEDGs

Source: Online Survey, 2025

Discussion

This research gives insights regarding the research problem in question allowing the readers in-depth idea of trainee awareness regarding SEDGs. As discussed earlier, NEP (2020) has identified certain sections of Indian students as socio-economically disadvantaged groups including female, SC, ST, OBC, religious and linguistics minorities, First Generation Learners, learners with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment, migrant children, beggars etc. (UGC, 2024). Sustainable development Goal 4 aims to provide equitable and quality school education

to all children free of cost while ensuring enrolment, access and completion rates (UNESCO, 2015). Wastage is a common problem in India but NEP 2020 highlights that though enrolments in schools decrease from Grade 1 to Grade 12, but the issue is severe for SEDGs, and more so for female students within each of these SEDGs (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020). In Clause 6.4, NEP 2020 recommends targeted scholarships, conditional cash transfers to parents so that they send children to school, providing bicycles for transport, etc., as some strategies to promote education of SEDGs (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020).

This article focusses on creating awareness among trainee teachers regarding the issues connected with education of SEDGs. Researchers surveyed trainees from different B.Ed. colleges of West Bengal to assess their awareness regarding the SEDGs, and the hurdles associated with educating them. The questionnaire dealt with various areas of SEDG education and trainees responded on a five-point Likert scale.

On an item regarding importance of providing ECCE to SEDG children the 43.4% of trainees responded they strongly agreed. Chandra, Gulati & Sharma (2017) found that identified importance of ECCE in improvement of children belonging to SEDGs. Vashisth, Wadhwa & Chandra (2024) conclude skills necessary to meet 21st century issues are developed during early childhood and influences future outcomes. While Rahaman, Mondal, & Chattopadhyay (2024) concluded that ECCE will form the basis for the future development of children.

40.6% of trainees strongly agreed that curriculum needs to be more inclusive and relevant for SEDGs. Sarkar, Ajagar & Swain (2025) state that infrastructural changes and skill-based education is necessary. Soy (2021) concludes that Special Education Zones are necessary to provide quality education to SEDG children.

42.5% of trainees strongly agreed that inclusive pedagogy helps trainee teachers to make their teaching inclusive. Ruhela (2023) states that

inclusive education is required to address need of diverse student populations. Namanyane & Shaoan (2021) discussed the social and medical models of inclusive education of dealing with students with disabilities and diverse learning aptitudes. Sarkar, Ajagar & Swain (2025) stated that inclusivity can be obtained through state-wise schemes such as Kerala's targeted emphasis on Special Education Zones, multilingual interventions of Odisha, residential schools of Manipur, Children with Special Needs (CWSN) intervention of Uttarakhand, and Goa's inclusive scholarship schemes. Kumar & Singh (2025) concluded that targeted interventions such as targeted pedagogical strategies, teacher training, and structured support mechanisms can increase inclusivity.

45.3% of trainees responded that they are aware that Special education zones, as proposed by NEP 2020, are necessary in mainstreaming SEDGs. Dabral & Anjali (2025) state access, retention, and quality education for SEDGs can be obtained through targeted scholarships, gender inclusion funds, special education zones, and curriculum revisions.

42.5% of trainees strongly agreed that bridge courses as raise the performance of students of SEDGs category and make it at par with other category students. Bridge courses can be designed preferably in local languages, tailor-made for SEDGs, with a separate timetable and delivered in physical or online mode to elevate SEDG students at par with others (UGC, 2024). NIEPA (2020) also suggests Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be provided with special hostels in dedicated regions, bridge courses, and financial aids assistance allowing and ensuring access to higher education.

42.5% of trainees strongly agreed that Earn-while learn (EWL) scheme supports SEDG students earn and finance their education and acquire skills and capabilities increasing their employability. Along with enhancing employability skills and career preparedness, this scheme reduce

dropout rate, it helps parents to reduce their financial load, progressing student's career (UGC, 2024).

37.7% of trainees responded that they are aware of the various categories of disabilities recognized under SEDG. NEP 2020 is aligned with RPWD Act 2016 which promotes inclusive education bringing together students with and without disabilities in an infrastructure catering all (NCERT, 2020).

36.5% trainees are familiar with the concept of Gender Inclusion fund for women in SEDGs. Ministry of Education (2023) validates NEP 2020 suggestion of establishing a Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF) especially for girls and transgender students so that these children can be given equitable quality education.

50.9% of trainees said that they understand the importance of quality education for children belonging to SEDGs. NCERT has initiated several initiatives as e-Pathshala portal for providing free access to NCERT books and e-content, has designed supplementary reading material targeting reading skills such as Barkhaa Series, designed a book called Priya to create awareness about accessing education, created textbook videos on DIKSHA portal, conducts holistic evaluation through PRASHAST, develop e-content for CWSN through PM e-Vidya initiative, for providing quality education to all (DSEL, 2025).

36.8% of trainees are aware of enrolment differences between children with SEDGs from normal children. Soni (2023) noticed that in the U-DISE data of 2016-17, there was dropout among SEDGs where 2% decrease in Scheduled Castes (SC) at the primary level, 5% in case of Scheduled Tribes (ST) students, and three quarter reduction in case of differently abled children was noticed (1.1% to 0.25%), with female students facing greater reduction rates in all categories.

33% of trainees are acquainted with the concept of SEDG (Special Education and Disability Guidelines) as outlined in national education policies. 46.2% of trainees feel that the implementation of special initiatives for SEDG as recommended in NEP 2020 will help reduce barriers to education for students with disabilities. Hussain (2023) highlighted that

NEP 2020 alongwith Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016 focusses on mainstreaming disabled children through appropriate teaching-learning strategies, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), barrier-free access, use of technology-based assistive devices, appointing Special educators with cross-disability training, developing text materials, and emphasizing safety and security of these children.

47.2% of trainees feel that awareness of SEDG should be made to the general public and targeted stakeholders. UGC (2024) states that it is essential to follow principles of equity and inclusion by all educational institutions and the first step is to sensitize all stakeholders regarding opportunities available.

36.8% of trainees are aware of the NEP 2020 and its provisions for SEDGs. NEP 2020 suggested several initiatives for children belonging to SEDGs such as gender inclusion fund, Free boarding facilities, recruitment of special educators, preparing curriculum in consultation with National Institutes of DEPwD (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020).

55.7% of trainees believe that teachers should be adequately trained to address the needs of SEDGs. NEP 2020 recommends that continuous learning and skill enhancement for in-service teachers is mandatory in the fast-evolving educational scenario so that teachers can handle technological advancements, curriculum innovations and diverse classrooms with varying pedagogical issues (Panda, 2025).

Challenges in regard to Education of SEDGs

Providing quality education to SEDGs faces numerous challenges as resource constraints (fig 6), lack of adequate teacher training (fig 7), varying socioeconomic backgrounds (fig 8), inclusion issues (fig 9), barriers specific to women education (fig 10) and transgender education (fig 11).

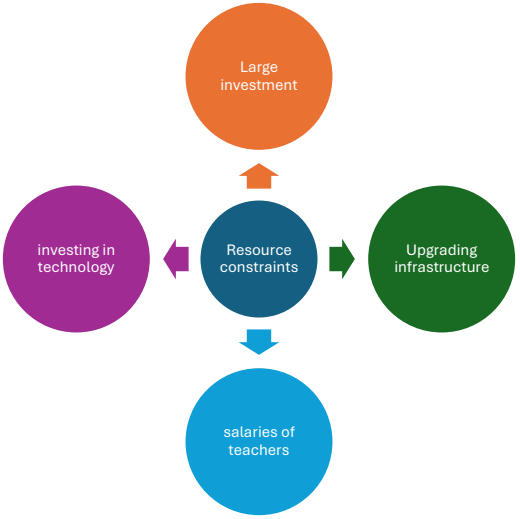

Figure 6: Resource constraints
Source: Online Survey, 2025

Figure 7: Lack of adequate teacher training
Source: Online Survey, 2025

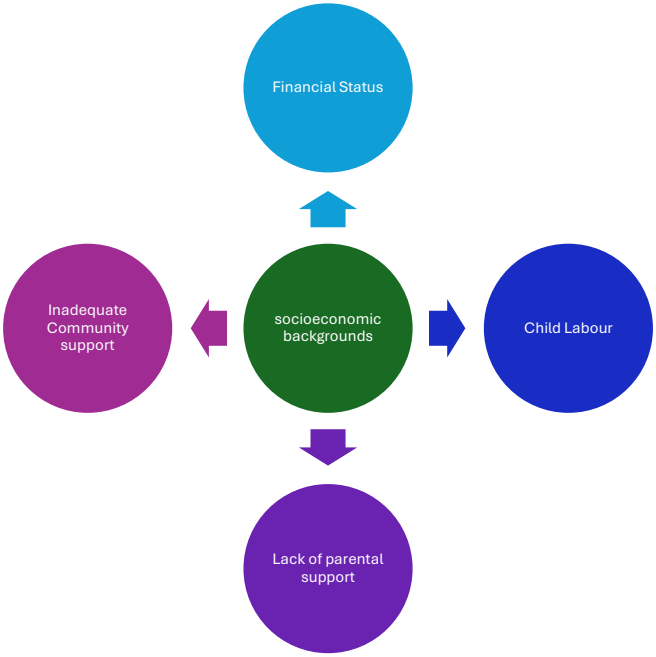

Figure 8: Varying socioeconomic backgrounds
Source: Online Survey, 2025

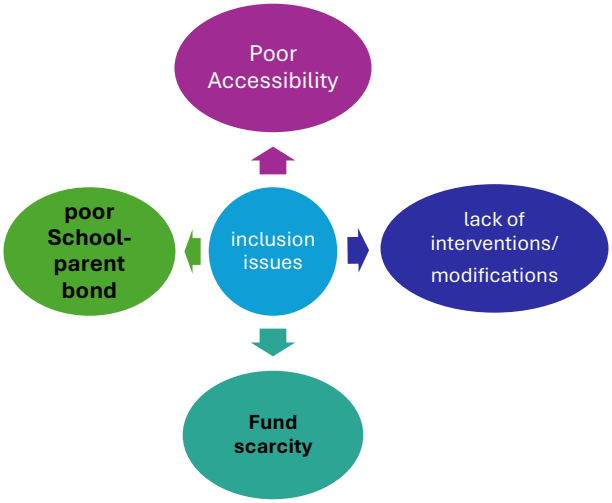

Figure 9: Inclusion issues

Source: Online Survey, 2025

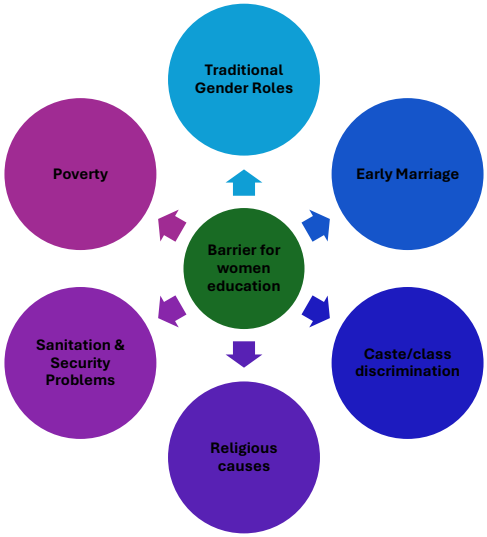

Figure 10: Barriers specific to women education

Source: Online Survey, 2025

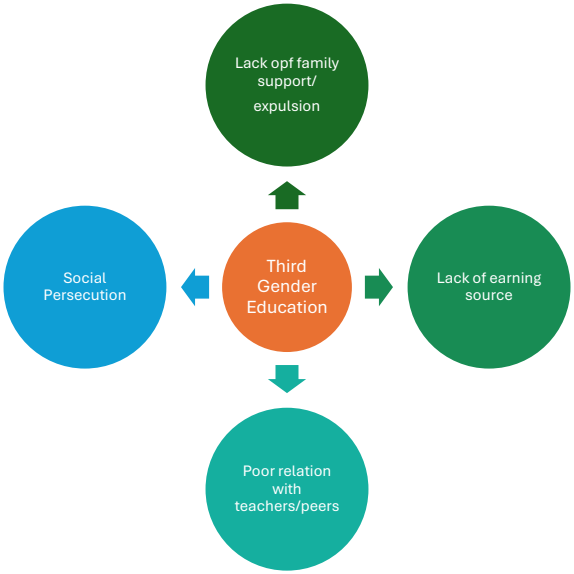

Figure 11: Barriers specific to transgender education

Source: Online Survey, 2025

Suggestions to overcome challenges related to SEDG education

The issue of SEDG can be easily tackled with efforts focused on multiple dimensions which can be in the form of strategic measures, schemes for SEDG, empowerment of SEDG and CWSN. The recommendations can be summarized as follows (shown in Table 1).

Table 1: Suggested Measures

Recommendations	**Suggested Measures**
Strategic measures	Provide assistance to parents through workshops, support groups
	Provide help of experienced educators
	Adoption of flexible curriculum based on aptitude

	Parent-community involvement
	Fostering Cultural Diversity
	Mainstream education for CSWN and SEDG
Implementation of SEDG schemes	Creating awareness about the schemes for SEDGs
	Proper implementation and follow-up
	Easy documentation
	Direct Benefit Transfer to prevent corruption & exploitation
	Proper follow-up
	Co-ordination among govt. departments
	Arrangement of mobile schools/Sakhsarshala for migrant children
Empowering SEDGs through education	Preferential treatment for SC/ST in institutions
	Reservation policy in private HEIs
	Residential facilities for SC/ST and flexibility in education
	Preference for 1st generation learners in admission, scholarships and hostels
	Mean & merit scholarships, supervisors for research scholars
	Female student forums, vulnerable group infrastructure, communication skill centers, short term research programmes
	Teacher sensitization programme
	Social outreach programme in slums
	Equity and inclusion centre in university
Others	Vocational Training alongwith classroom education
	Sensitizing teaching & non-teaching staff
	Creating awareness among stakeholders
	Career guidance & Counselling
	Promotion of study materials in local language
	Multilevel Entry

Source: Data analysis and researchers' reflection

Conclusion

The study shows a favorable orientation of the trainee teachers regarding equity and inclusion as recommended by NEP 2020 guidelines. Trainees believe that quality education, inclusive pedagogy, and professional preparation are mandatory in satisfying needs of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). It was observed that trainees were not adequately informed about specific policy provisions, including the Gender Inclusion Fund, categories of disabilities, enrolment disparities, and the broader conceptualization of SEDGs as presented in NEP 2020 framework. These results show that having positive attitudes will not suffice for effective implementation of inclusive reforms. SEDG issue requires a multidimensional response which will include action from all stakeholders as teacher education institutions, policy makers, communities, and support agencies. Pre-service teacher education programmes need to be revamped through systematic training, policy awareness, and experiential learning opportunities about SEDG-focused interventions. The success of NEP 2020 depends not only on structural reforms, but also on professionally competent teachers providing meaningful learning experiences based on equity and inclusion.

References

Afroza, D. (2024). Quality education for all: Addressing barriers and promoting excellence. *International Journal Of Novel Research And Development, 9* (8), 699-701. https://www.ijnrd.org/papers/IJNRD2408164.pdf

Akunuri, N. N. (2023). National Education Policy 2020 Equitable and inclusive education: Learning for all. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), 11* (9), c554-c560. https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2309300.pdf

Chandra, R., Gulati, R., & Sharma, A. (2017). Quality early childhood care and education in India: Initiatives, practice, challenges and enablers. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education, 11*(1), 41–67. https://doi.org/10.17206/apjrece.2017.11.1.41

Dabral, S., & Anjali. (2025). Inclusive and equitable education in NEP 2020: A study of Scheduled Castes and marginalized communities. *Journal of*

Mountain Research, *20*(1), 449-457. DOI: https://doi.org/10.51220/jmr.v20-i1.48

Das, D. (2019). Academic resilience among children from disadvantaged social groups in India. *Social Indicators Research, 145*(2), 719–739. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-1899-y

Desai, S., & Kulkarni, V. (2008). Changing educational inequalities in India in the context of affirmative action. *Demography, 45*(2), 245–270. https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.0.0001

Department of School Education & Literacy (DSEL). (2025). *Learning for all*: *Equitable and inclusive education.* https://dsel.education.gov.in/en/inclusive-education

Global Goals. (2025). *Quality Education*. https://globalgoals.org/goals/4-quality-education/

Hussain, A. (2023). National Education Policy 2020 and inclusive education: A comprehensive analysis. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts, 11*(7), f719–f727. https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2307670.pdf

Kalam, A., Alam, M., Basharat, L., Sarker, G. F., Al Mamun, M.A., & Muhammad Ahsan, A. H. (2024). The right to education and attitudes toward Hijras in Bangladesh: Assessing educational support to achieve sustainable communities. *Quality Education for All, 1*(1),187-203. https://doi.org/10.1108/QEA-11-2023-0016

Kamala, K. (2020). India National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. *Advance Research Journal of Social Science, 11* (2), 80-86. https://doi.org/10.15740/has/arjss/11.2/80-86

Kaur, S. (2025, January 11). *Socio-Economic concerns in Education: An Analysis of NEP 2020 in India*. Counter Currents. https://countercurrents.org/2025/01/socio-economic-concerns-in-education-an-analysis-of-nep-2020/

Kumar, B. A., & Singh, V.P. (2025). Academic and social experiences of socio-economically disadvantaged groups children admitted in private unaided schools under RTE Act, 2009. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, *51* (9), 1257–1271. https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2025/v51i92456

Kumar, C. (2024). Educational exclusion of tribal communities in India. *International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Management (IJHSSM), 4*(4), 880–882. https://ijhssm.org/issue_dcp/Educational%20Exclusion%20of%20Tribal%20Communities%20in%20India.pdf

Kumar, P., & Singh Dehal, P. (2022). CWSN and SEDGs empowering deprived through education: NEP-2020 recommendations, insights and inputs. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, 10* (6), 14-19. https://www.questjournals.org/jrhss/papers/vol10-issue6/Ser-2/C10061419.pdf

Maji, K., & Sarkar, S. (2018). Comparative analysis of educational attainment among different social groups in some selected mouzas of Saltora C.D. Block of Bankura District, West Bengal, India: An empirical study. *Space and Culture, India*, *8*(1), 72- 90. https://doi.org/10.20896/saci.v6i1.308.0

Makwana, G., & Elizebeth, H. (2022). Challenges for children from marginalized Indian communities. *Vidya -Journal of Gujrat University, 1*(1), 60-67. DOI: https://doi.org/10.47413/vidya.v1i1.109

Ministry of Education. (2023, July 31). *National Education Policy, 2020 provides for setting up a Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF) especially for girls and transgender students to provide them equitable quality education* (Press Release ID: 1944287). https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/PIB1944287.pdf

Ministry of Human Resource Development. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

Mir, A. H., & Swaroopa, P. K. (2024). Women education in India: Issues and challenges. *International Journal of Emerging Knowledge Studies, 3*(5), 210-215. https://ijeks.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/IJEKS-3-07-021.pdf

Mitra, S., Mishra, S. K., & Abhay, R. (2022). Out-of-school girls in India: A study of socioeconomic-spatial disparities. *GeoJournal*, *88*(1), 341–357. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-022-10579-7

Mushtaq, R. H. (2023, March 12). *Education For SEDGs Under NEP-2020*. The Kashmir Horizon. https://thekashmirhorizon.com/2023/03/12/education-for-sedgs-under-nep-2020/

Namanyane, T., & Shaoan, M. R. (2021). Inclusive education: A literature review on definitions, attitudes and pedagogical challenges. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS), V* (III), 358-365. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2021.5324

National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020: Equitable and inclusion—Learning for all*

[Background paper for Teacher's Fest]. https://www.education.gov.in/shikshakparv/docs/Inclusive_Education.pdf

Niazi, A. (2025). Education is the foundation of individual growth and social progress. *Integrated Journal for Research in Arts and Humanities, 5*(4), 80-83. https://doi.org/10.55544/ijrah.5.4.11

Ottaplackal, J. J., & Anbu, K. (2022). Issues and challenges of school education faced by tribal students in India: A critical review. *Shanlax International Journal of Arts Science and Humanities, 9*(4), 25-30. https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v9i4.4823

Panda, S. (2025). Teacher professional development in alignment with NEP 2020: A transformational approach. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 7*(2), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2025.v07i02.38652

Rahaman, S. M., Mondal, N., & Chattopadhyay, K. (2024). A comprehensive overview of early childhood care and education: Policies and schemes. *RESEARCH REVIEW- International Journal of Multidisciplinary, 9*(2), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2024.v09.n02.001

Ruhela, V. S. (2023). Inclusive education and addressing diversity in the classroom: A comprehensive review of literature . *International Journal of Novel Research and Development, 8*(10), c78-c101. https://www.ijnrd.org/papers/IJNRD2310210.pdf

Sabharwal, N. S. (2020). Extended education at college in India: Advancing equity through the extension of public academic support programmes for students from the socially and economically disadvantaged groups. *International Journal for Research on Extended Education, 8* (2), 156–172. https://doi.org/10.3224/ijree.v8i2.05

Sabharwal, N. S. (2021). Nature of access to higher education in India: Emerging pattern of social and spatial inequalities in educational opportunities. In A. K. Mahamallik, G. Poyyamoli, & S. P. Ngachan (Eds.), "*Reflections on 21st Century Human Habitats in India*" (pp.345-369). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3100-9_14

Sarkar, K., Ajagar, A., & Swain, R. D. (2025). Educational priorities of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups across the states in India. *The Social Science Review: A Multidisciplinary Journal, Special Issue*, 305-310. https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.250307053

Saxena, N., & Yadav, K. (2025). Systematic analysis of obstacles preventing quality education for children in slum areas. *Naveen International Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences (NIJMS)*, *1*(4), 113-124. https://doi.org/10.71126/nijms.v1i4.41

Soni, A. (2023). Provisions for deprived groups (SEDGs) in NEP 2020 [Editorial]. *Indian Journal of Research in Anthropology, 9* (2), 61-63. https://doi.org/10.21088/ijra.2454.9118.9223.1

Soy, S. S. (2021). A Step towards inclusive, equitable education: Special Education Zone (SEZ) recommended in NEP 2020. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), 9*(10), d821-d830. https://www.ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT2110104.pdf

UNESCO. (2015). *SDG 4 Indicators*. https://www.education-progress.org/en/indicators

University Grants Commission. (2024). *Guidelines to provide equitable opportunity for the socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) in the HEIs.* https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/2540260_SEDGs-Guidelines.pdf

Varughese, A., & Bairagya, I. (2020). Group-based educational inequalities in India: Have major education policy interventions been effective? *International Journal of Educational Development*, *73*, 102159. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102159

Vashisth, S., Wadhwa, V., & Chandra, R. (2024). Deriving ECCE excellence: Impact on later education. *International Journal of Home Science, 10*(2), 290-294. https://doi.org/10.22271/23957476.2024.v10.i2e.1634

Verma, H., & Kumar, R. (2021). New Education Policy 2020 of India: A theoretical analysis. *International Journal of Business and Management Research (IJBMR), 9* (3), 302-306. https://ijbmr.forexjournal.co.in/archive/volume-9/ijbmr-090308.html