

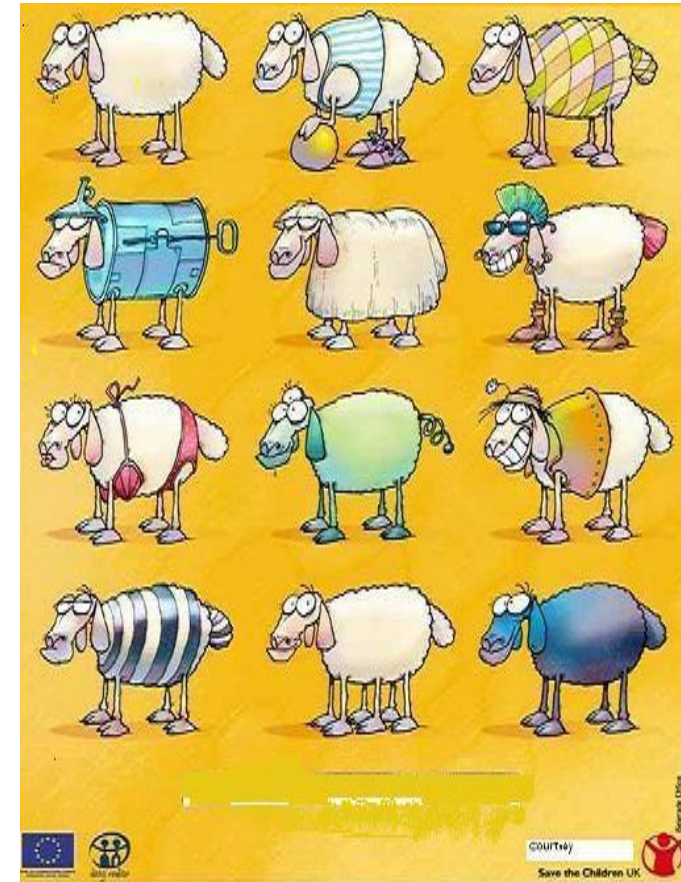
## Module

# Digital Technologies for Children with Special Needs

15 September, 2025

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**ALL EQUAL  
ALL  
DIFFERENT**

After completing this module, the learners will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the Children with Special Needs (CwSN),
- ✓ Understand the salient provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 ( RPwD Act, 2016 )
- ✓ Highlight the key provisions of the National Education Policy , 2020 related to digital technology for *CwSN*
- ✓ Promote the concept of Inclusive Education
- ✓ Apply principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- ✓ Design and implement digital initiatives for CwSN
- ✓ Leverage appropriate assistive technologies to support CwSN

After completing this session , the learners will be able to:

- ✓ **Focus on Children with Special Needs (CwSN),**
- ✓ Understand salient provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 (RPwD Act, 2016 )
- ✓ Understand the key provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 related to digital technology for *CwSN*
- ✓ Understand the concept of Inclusive Education
- ✓ Understand principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- ✓ Design and implement digital initiatives for CwSN
- ✓ Leverage appropriate assistive technologies to support CwSN

# Who are the Children with Special Needs?

- Children with Special Needs (CwSN) comprise of a broad group of learners for whom schools need to adapt their curriculum, teaching method, organization and provide for additional human and material resources to stimulate efficient and effective learning (adapted from International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED97)).
- CwSN include:
  - ❖ Children with Disabilities (CwD) as defined in RPwD Act 2016
  - ❖ Children exhibiting challenging behaviours that interrupt their daily routine, and/or comprehension (even though not having been diagnosed with a specific disability as listed in RPwD Act)
  - ❖ Children from SEDGs
  - ❖ Children having difficulty in accessing regular classrooms

After completing this module, the learners will be able to:

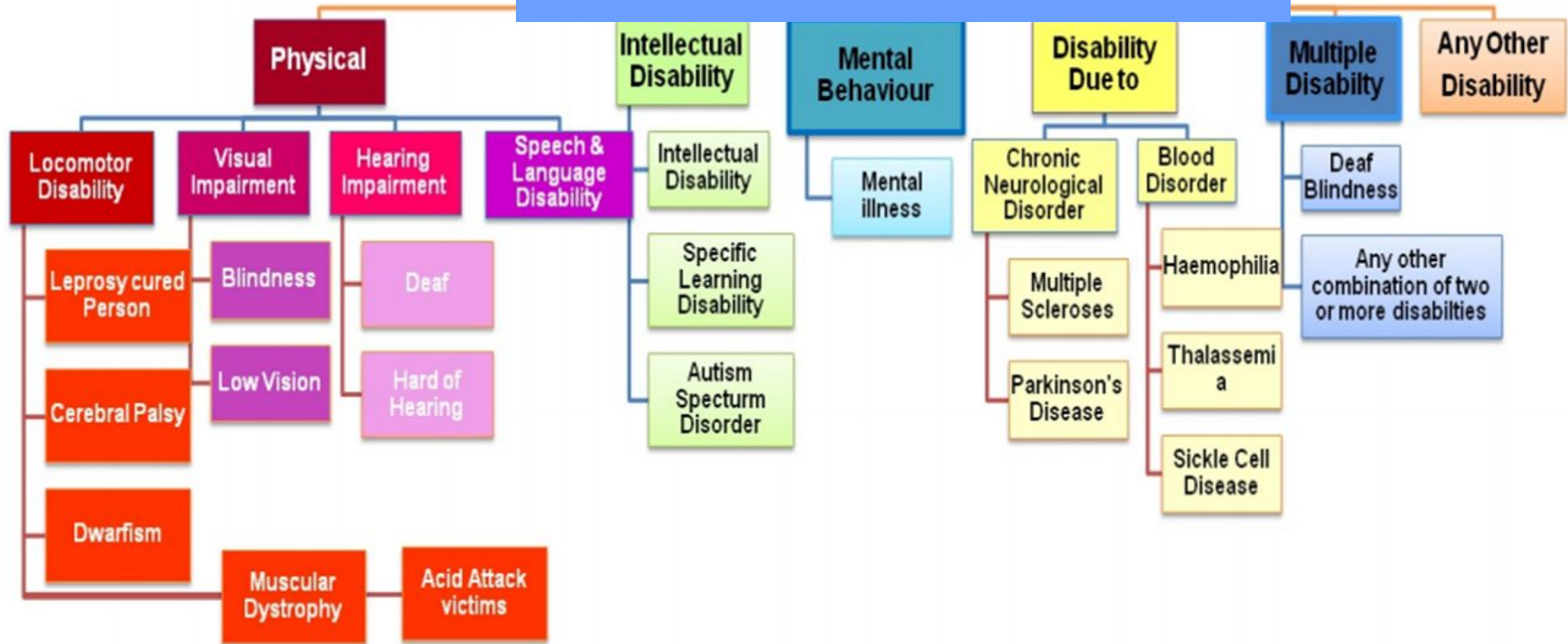
- ✓ Identify the Children with Special Needs (CwSN),
- ✓ **Understand salient provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 (RPwD Act, 2016 )**
- ✓ Understand the key provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 related to digital technology for CwSN
- ✓ Understand the concept of Inclusive Education
- ✓ Understand principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- ✓ Design and implement digital initiatives for CwSN
- ✓ Leverage appropriate assistive technologies to support CwSN

# Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ( RPWD, ACT 2016)

- The RPwD Act, 2016 is a landmark legislation
- Aims to empower people with disabilities and protect their rights
- The Act was passed by the Parliament in Dec. 2016 and came into effect from April 2017.
- The Act replaces the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995
- Brought about significant changes in the legal framework for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities
- The Act defines Person with disability as *“Person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others”*
- The Act recognizes 21 disabilities (as against 7 disabilities in previous Act)
- The Article 40 of the RPwD Act, 2016 prescribes that:
  - *All contents should be available in audio, print and electronic media and must be in accessible format*
  - *Persons with disabilities must have access to electronic media by providing audio description, sign language interpretation and close captioning;*
  - *Electronic goods and equipment, which are meant for everyday use, are available in universal design*

# 21 Disabilities as recognised in the Act

## Disability Categories and 21 Types of Disabilities under RPwD Act 2016



A common thread that runs throughout NEP-2020 is an extensive use of digital technology to provide accessible content to All children, including children with special needs

- *Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang student (**Introduction to NEP**)*
- *Software will be available in all major Indian languages and will be accessible to a wide range of users including students in remote areas and Divyang students.( Clause 23.6)*
- *Teaching-learning e-content will continue to be developed by all States in all regional languages, as well as by the NCERT, CIET, CBSE, NIOS, and other bodies/institutions, and will be uploaded onto the DIKSHA platform (Clause 23.6).*
- *Existing e-learning platforms such as DIKSHA, SWAYAM and SWAYAMPRAKASH will also be leveraged for creating virtual labs.(Clause 24.4 f)*
- *Standards of content, technology, and pedagogy will be laid to formulate guidelines for e-learning by States, Boards, schools and school complexes, HEIs, etc. (Clause 24.4 j)*
- *Schools will develop smart classrooms for using digital pedagogy (Clause 4.46)*
- *Teachers will undergo rigorous training in learner-centric pedagogy and on how to become high-quality online content creators themselves using online teaching platforms and tools.(Clause 24.4 g)*



- The NEP 2020 recognizes that certain groups of children are more vulnerable to exclusion and these groups have been termed as the **socio economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs)**.

SEDGs can be broadly categorized based on:

- **Gender identities** (particularly female and transgender individuals),
- **Socio-cultural identities** (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities),
- **Geographical identities** (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts),
- **Disabilities** (including learning disabilities), and
- **Socio-economic conditions** (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor).



**Separate strategies will be formulated for focused attention for reducing each of the category-wise gaps in school education.**

# Supporting Children with Special Needs (CWSN)

## Regular Schooling

Children with special needs will be integrated in the regular schooling process from elementary to higher education levels

## Modules

NIOS will develop high-quality modules to teach Indian Sign Language

## Certificate Courses

Certificate courses for pre-service and in-service teachers to become special educators



## Enabling Mechanisms

Enabling mechanisms for CWSN or Divyang to receive quality education

## Assistive Devices and Orientation to Parents

Technology enabled assistive devices/tool for CWSN and orientation of the tools/devices for parents/caregivers

## Alternative Schools

Alternative forms of schools will be encouraged to preserve the alternative pedagogical styles

# Ensuring Equity

## Interventions

The critical problems and recommendations regarding ECCE, foundational literacy and numeracy, access, enrolment and attendance will be targeted in a concerted way for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged groups - SEDGs.

## Special Mechanisms

Special mechanisms for children belonging to tribal groups to receive quality education

## Learning Outcomes

Focus on attainment of learning outcomes of children belonging to SC/ST/OBC

## SEZs

Large populations from SEDGs to be declared Special Education Zones (SEZs)

## Fee Waivers

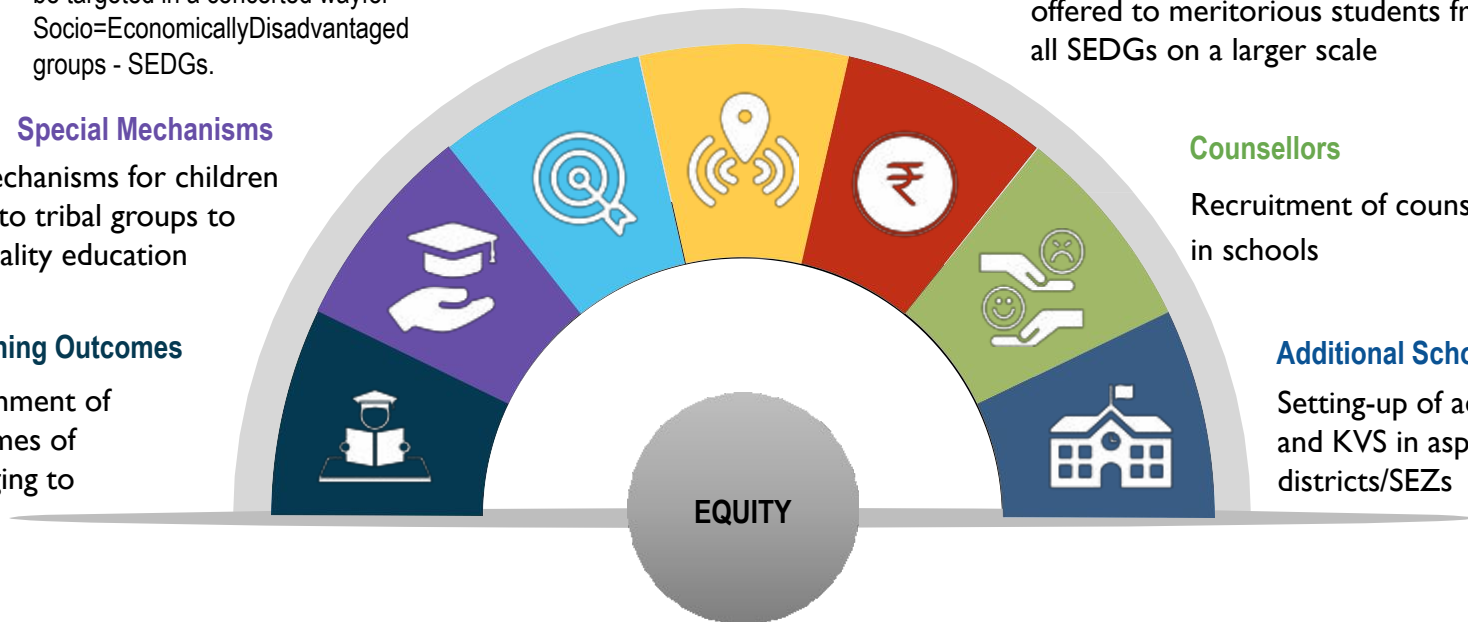
Fee waivers and scholarships will be offered to meritorious students from all SEDGs on a larger scale

## Counsellors

Recruitment of counsellors in schools

## Additional Schools

Setting-up of additional JNVs and KVS in aspirational districts/SEZs



## Gender Inclusion Fund

Gender-Inclusion Fund for female  
and transgender students



### Safety and Rights

Careful attention to safety  
and rights of all children  
particularly girls  
to retain them in school

### KGBVs

Strengthening and extension  
of KGBVs up to grade

12

### Gender Sensitivity

'Gender Sensitivity' to be an integral  
part of curriculum

### Bridging Gender Gap

Focus on bridging the Gender  
Gap and provide equal  
opportunities to all.

### Policies targeted for Girls

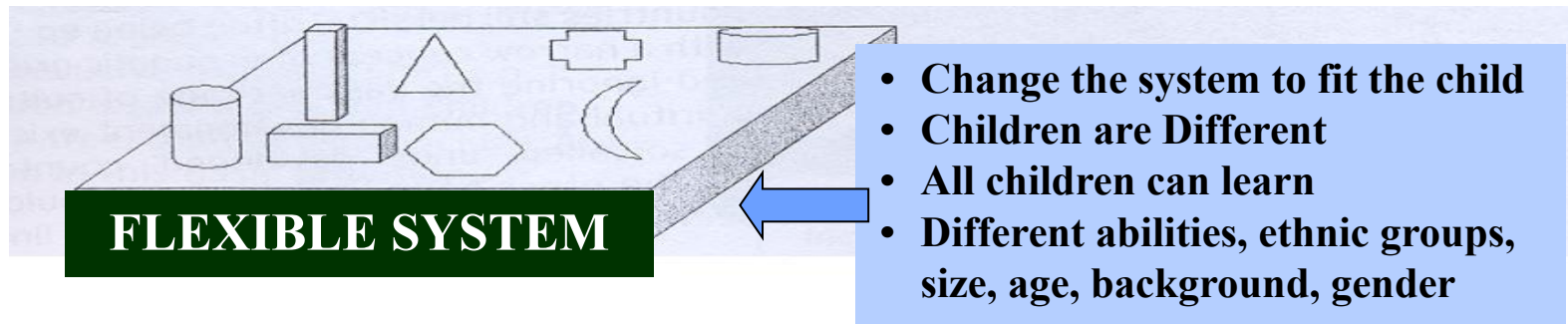
Thrust on designing policies and  
schemes targeted towards female  
students in the SEDGs

After completing this module, the learners will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the Children with Special Needs (CwSN),
- ✓ Understand salient provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 (RPwD Act, 2016 )
- ✓ Understand the key provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 related to digital technology for CwSN
- ✓ **Understand the concept of Inclusive Education**
- ✓ Understand principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- ✓ Design and implement digital initiatives for CwSN
- ✓ Leverage appropriate assistive technologies to support CwSN

- The Article 17 of RPWD Act enumerates specific measures to promote and facilitate inclusive education, which is defined as:

*“a system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities”*



Source: Stubbs, S (2002) Inclusive Education: *Where there are few resources*; The Atlas Alliance, in cooperation with NAD

Indonesian Context Source: Implementation of IE in Indonesia-A persons Disabilities perspective; A presentation material by Didi Tarsidi

# Nuance of Inclusion and Equity

- In many countries, inclusive education is still thought of **as an approach to serving children with disabilities within general education settings**
- Internationally, however, it is increasingly seen more broadly as a **principle that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners**. It is based on the belief that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society. The aim is to eliminate exclusion due to attitudes and responses to diversity in:
  - ✓ Social status,
  - ✓ Religion,
  - ✓ Gender, Sexual orientation,
  - ✓ language
  - ✓ Migrant status and
  - ✓ **ability**
  - ✓ Any other?

*INCLUSION is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners*

*EQUITY is about ensuring fairness, where education of all learners is seen as having equal importance*

• **“Children who learn together, learn to live together”**  
**“Children who live together, live to nurture an inclusive nation”**

Every learner matters and matters equally



# Inclusive and Equitable Classroom

All students learn together in the same classroom



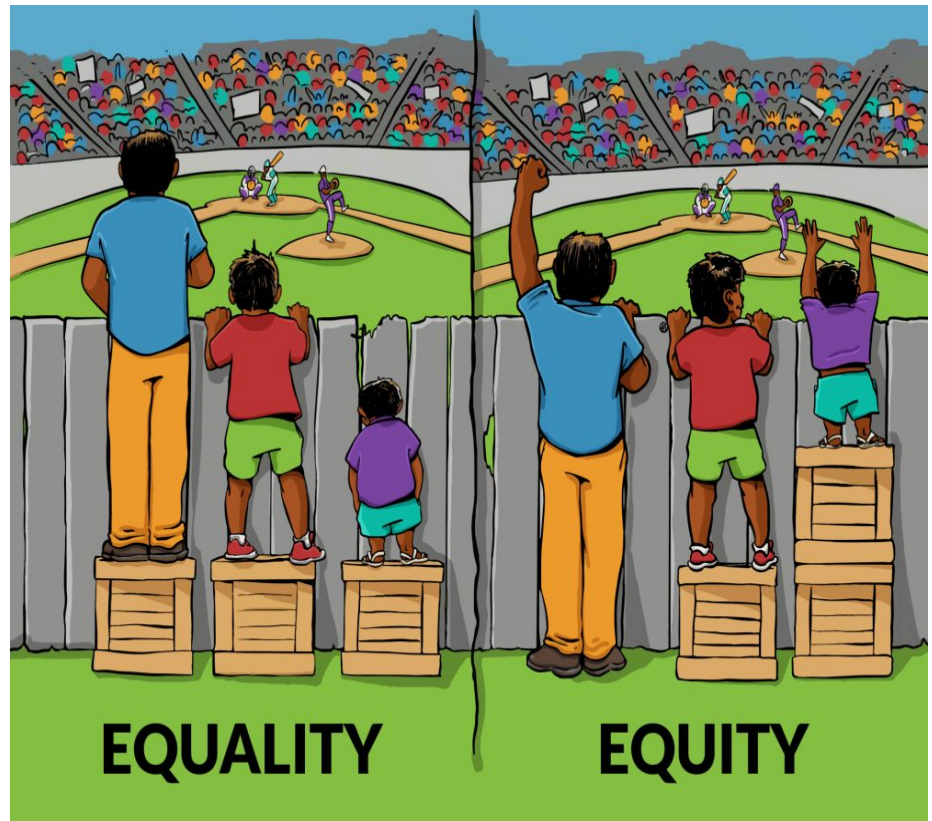
<https://scooneews.com/news/news-essential-handbook-on-inclusive-education-for-educators-laws-initiatives-benefits-challenges-8865/>

Inclusive classroom provide equal learning opportunities to ALL



<https://cbmindia.org/inclusive-education/>

Equity in the classroom requires putting systems in place to ensure that every child has an equal chance for success





# UNESCO's latest Resource Pack (published in Dec 2021) provides a broad understanding of nuances of inclusion



REACHING OUT TO ALL LEARNERS:  
a resource pack for supporting inclusion  
and equity in education

International  
Bureau of Education

unesco

## IBE resource pack – members of the advisory group

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Ignacio Calderón Almendros, University of Malaga, Spain

Cynthia Duk, Universidad Central de Chile

Petra Engelbrecht, North-West University, South Africa

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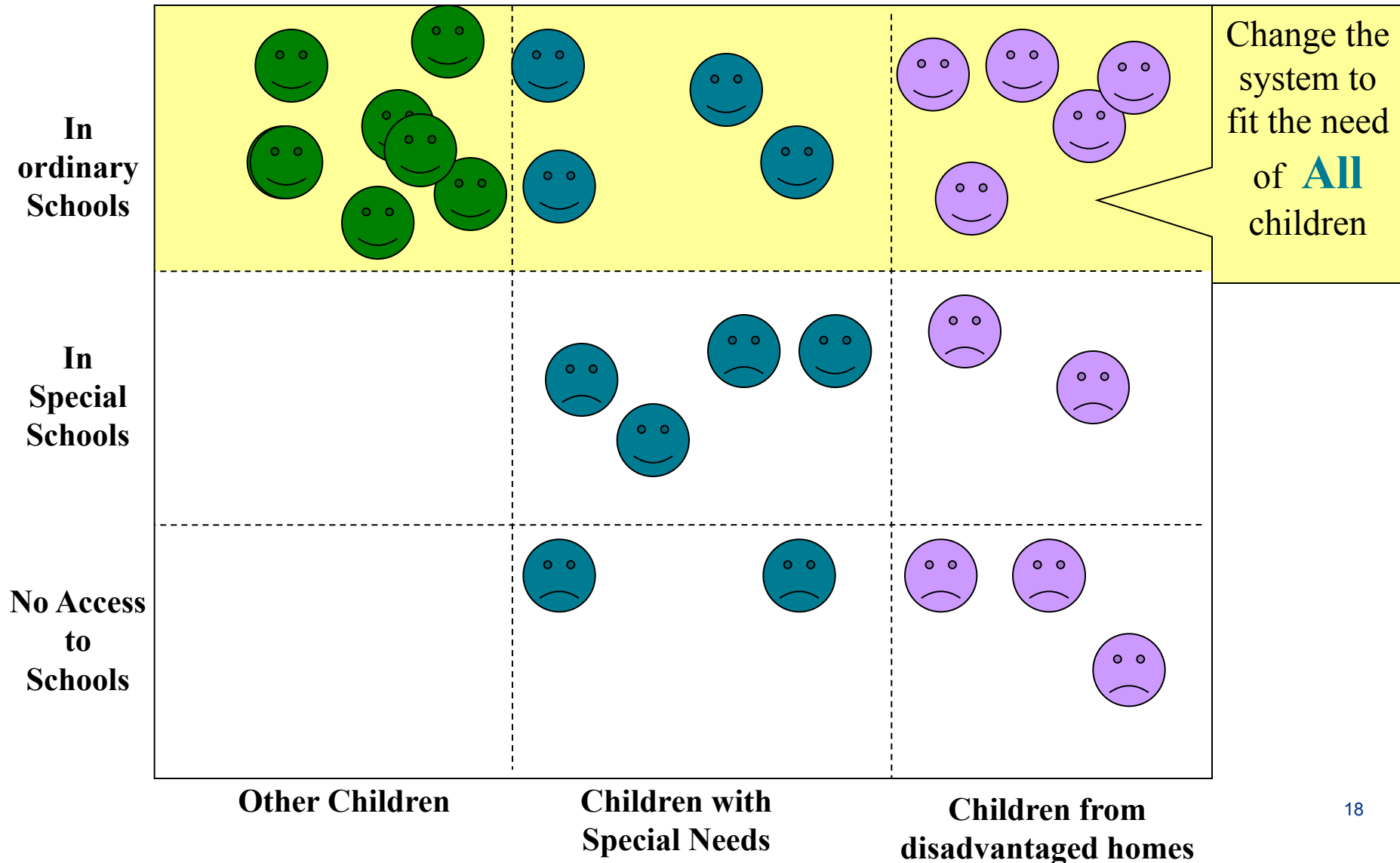
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REACHING OUT TO ALL LEARNERS: a resource pack for supporting inclusion and equity in education

3

# Moving towards inclusion: Change the System and not the child





**All for the  
Children**

**For All the  
children**

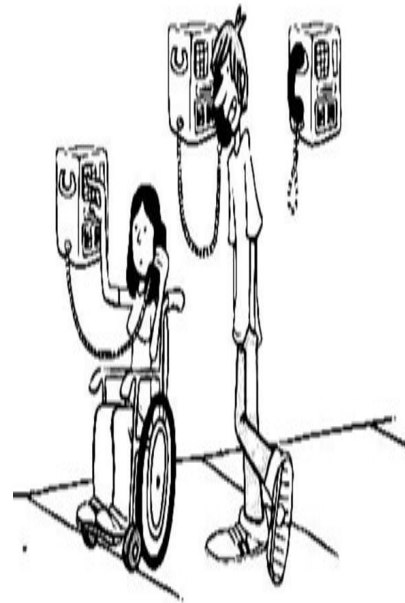


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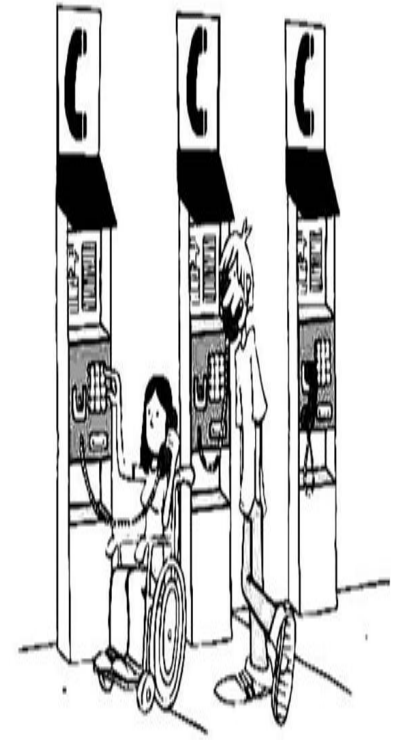
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- ✓ Understand the concept of Inclusive Education
- ✓ **Understand principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**
- ✓ Design and implement digital initiatives for CwSN
- ✓ Leverage appropriate assistive technologies to support CwSN

No 'single',  
'one size' fits all

Customized according to  
individual needs and  
requirements of all  
children



Non-UDL



UDL



# Universal Design of Learning (UDL)-An approach to address diversity

- Children have varied background, strengths, needs, and interests



**I learn** when I see pictures

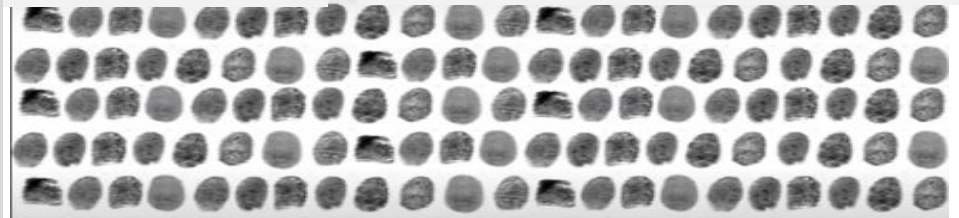


**I learn** when text is read loud



**I learn** when I conduct experiments

- The way the children learn is as unique as their fingerprints (research based evidence)



- UDL minimises barriers and maximising learning of each student



## Provide Multiple means of Representation

### Present content and information in multiple forms

- ✓ Print
- ✓ Braille
- ✓ Digital text with options for-text enlargement, screen background colour and contrast
- ✓ Text to speech
- ✓ Videos with closed captions,
- ✓ Audio with transcripts,
- ✓ Audio books
- ✓ Sign Language

## Provide Multiple means of Action and expression

### • Give students multiple options of expressing what they know

- ✓ Assignments
- ✓ Painting
- ✓ Video
- ✓ Comic strip
- Optimise access to assistive technologies
- Provide feedback

## Provide Multiple means of Engagement

### • Give option that engages all students

- ✓ What fires one student won't fire up another!
- ✓ Give students choices to fuel their interests and autonomy
- ✓ Help students risk mistakes and learn from them. If they love learning they will persist through challenges

After completing this module, the learners will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the Children with Special Needs (CwSN),
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- ✓ Understand the key provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 related to digital technology for CwSN
- ✓ Understand the concept of Inclusive Education
- ✓ Understand principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- ✓ **Design and implement digital initiatives for CwSN**
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- Lack of accessible textbooks and teaching-learning material often results in children with disabilities, dropping out or being “pushed out” of school or stay in school facing segregation.
- Printed textbooks cannot offer all the features needed to ensure access for children with disabilities
- According to the World Blind Union, nearly 95 percent of all published knowledge is “locked” in printed form. Students with disabilities such as blindness, low vision, dyslexia, or mobility impairments that affect their use of print, are not able to access this material.
- There is thus a need to create books that are accessible during the publishing process. As long as a book is “born digital,” it can be “born accessible.”
- By leveraging innovative digital tools and platforms, educators can cater to the diverse needs of CwSN, by providing them with personalized learning experiences that enhance their academic, social, and emotional development.
- Digital revolution during last few years has made it possible to publish Accessible Digital Text Book (ADTs) and supplementary academic and non-academic content with multi-media content at affordable cost.

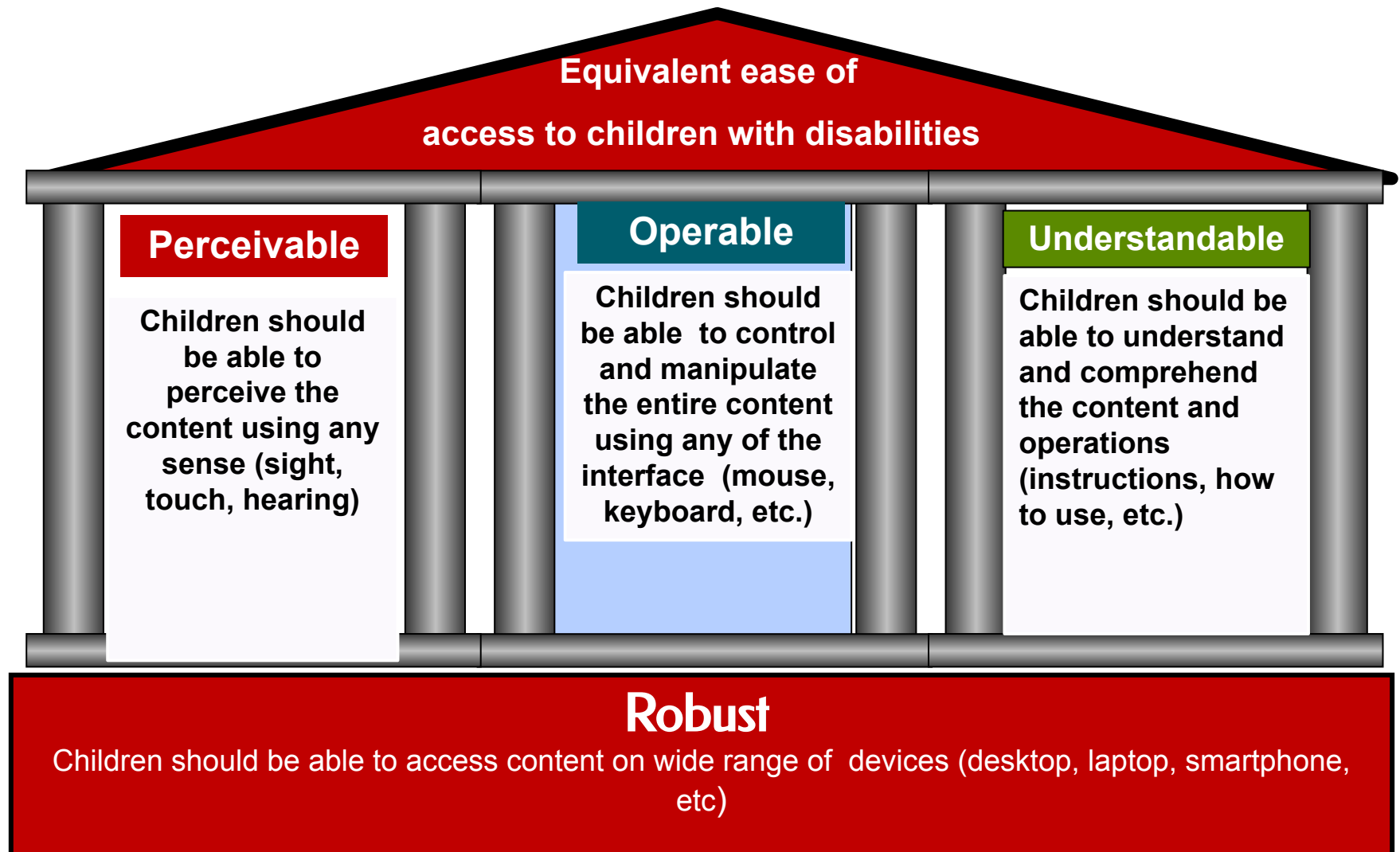
## How do we define Accessibility ?

*Accessible means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability. Although this might not result in identical ease of use compared to that of persons without disabilities, it still must ensure equal opportunity to the educational benefits and opportunities afforded by the technology and equal treatment in the use of such technology”*  
(Office for Civil Rights (OCR), USA Compliance Review No. 11-11-6002 )

### **Accessible materials**

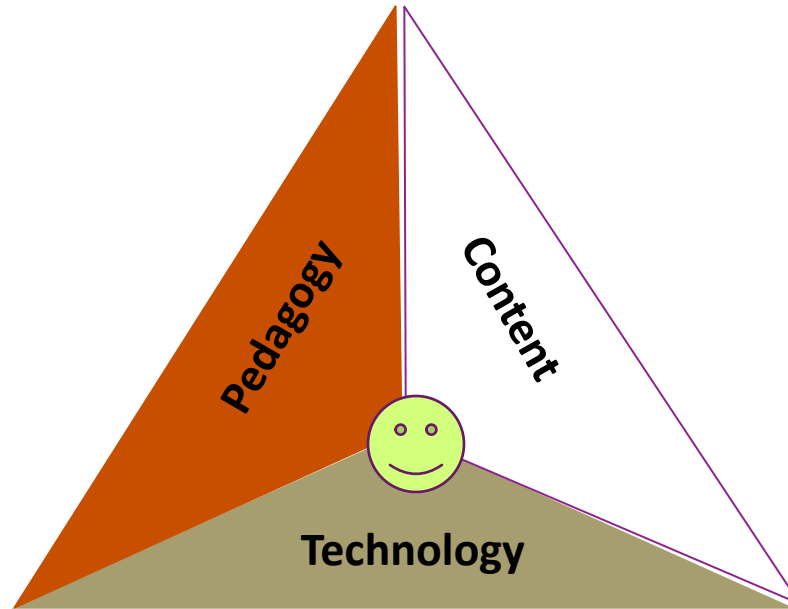
*“Accessible materials are aimed at ensuring that people with disabilities can navigate, perceive, and understand content that takes into account the physical, visual, speech, auditory, neurological, and cognitive disabilities of the user (Gray & Blackorby, 2017)”*

- **Content complies with Accessibility Technical Standards**
- **Distribution platforms like DIKSHA on which content is uploaded and distributed must comply with technical standards**
- **Reading platforms like e-Pathshala or electronic devices on which content is accessed and interacted must also comply with technical standards**
- **Pedagogical Adaption in assessments, materials, curriculum, or classroom environment to a student's needs so that he/she can participate in, and achieve the teaching learning goals.**
- **Modifications involve making changes to learning goals, pedagogy, assignments, assessments and evaluation to accommodate a student's learning needs.**



Guidelines for development of e-content can be downloaded from [M website](#) producing Accessible E-content have been published

Compliance of guidelines for during authoring and Publication will lead to **“Born Accessible”** learning material



Section 5 exclusively provides guidelines to develop Accessible Digital Textbooks (ADTs) for ALL

Guidelines can be used for developing e-Content **both academic and non-academic content**

**CIET,  
NCERT  
initiatives  
in digital  
technology  
for  
providing  
accessible  
digital  
content for  
school  
curriculum**



ePathshala



Barkhaa



Teaching Learning  
Resources in Indian Sign  
Language



Accessibility Concerns in  
NCERT Textbooks



Audio Books



Priya-The Accessibility  
Warrior



Bhasha Sangam



Teachers support  
material on Inclusive  
Education



PMeVidya



DIKSHA



SWAYAM on MOOCs



NISHTHA



Augmented Reality /



Tactile map Book

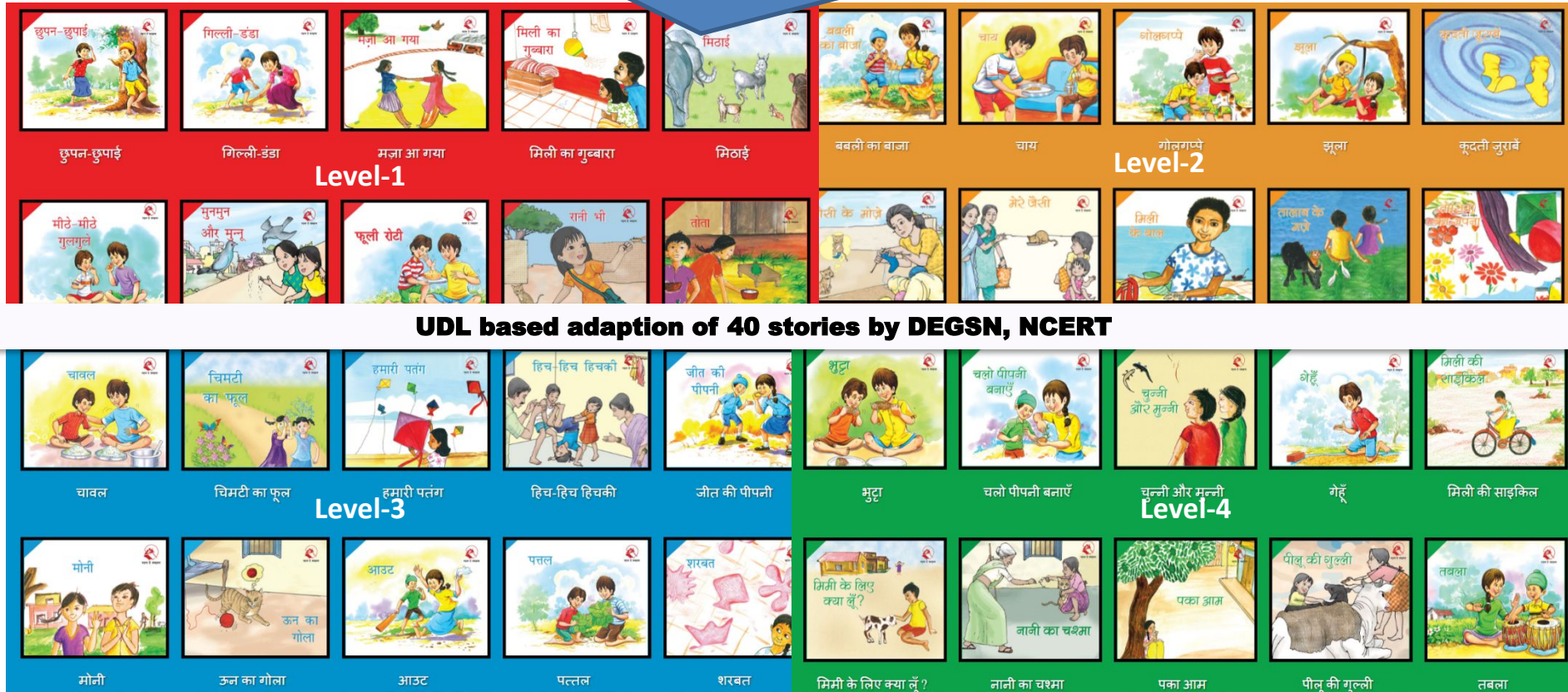


Prashast



# “Barkhaa Series” to “Barkhaa Series for All”

An innovative exemplar of a set of 40 illustrated stories based on Principles of UDL and inclusive pedagogy



**UDL based adaption of 40 stories by DEGSN, NCERT**

**Adaption done by DEGSN, NCERT both in print and Digital version through research based innovations, inputs of disability /IE experts, special educators, teachers and try-outs in in varied school settings**

**Digital version of all 40 stories can be downloaded from NCERT website**

# Adapted *Barkhaa* Series – Key Features of Digital Version

- Can be accessed on **computers, laptops, mobile phones and tablets.**
- Retains all the features of the print version and has
  - ✓ **'How to Use' page**
  - ✓ Content can be viewed in 3 **different background colour combinations**
  - ✓ Option to increase **size of text and image**
  - ✓ The introduction of each story **in regular and sign language** video formats-Helps to arouse curiosity and make reading interesting
  - ✓ **Flash cards** appear highlighting key words and picture.
  - ✓ Click/tap **arrows** on the black border to go to the previous or next page





# Story Introduction : in Signed and regular forms

A child may have read any story e.g " Hide and Seek" (*Chhupan Chhupai*) with the additional features in the adapted booklet.

But what if the child does not know the " Hide and Seek" game and has never played this game?

**Can we still help him read with meaning and pleasure?**

**An introduction to each story in video, regular and signed forms helps**

- *We all like to play games, some inside homes and some others outside. In this story children are playing Hide and Seek. One child looks for others who are hiding. Let us see how Jeet , looks for Babli and his other friends hiding in different places both inside and outside the home. Does he find them all or does he need some help?*
- *Let us read the story Hide and Seek!*

# Innovation based on Tryout of Print and Digital Versions

**Feedback Tryout analysed and incorporated in both Print and Digital Versions**



Try out of the Digital booklet at **Saksham , Delhi**



Try out of the Digital booklet at **Umang, Jaipur, Rajasthan**



Try out at **Maharani Gayatri Devi Girl's School, Jaipur, Rajasthan**



Try out at **Blossoms School, Bhubaneswar**

- Based on the principles of **UDL** and **Inclusion**, NCERT has also developed exemplar “**Accessible Textbooks for All**” with focus on children who are widely excluded from activities of reading and learning due to special needs

Fundamental  
premise : *Reading  
is a basic right  
that must be made  
available to ALL  
children*

# Beginning the journey

- ❑ Stories and poems from NCERT Textbooks of Class I to V being adapted into multi-media modes:
  - Sign language videos with:
    - ✓ Illustrations,
    - ✓ Audios,
    - ✓ Sub titles and
    - ✓ A teacher using sign language

- Allows learners and educators to choose from amongst multi-media .
- Counters the idea that printed textbooks are the only medium for the reading process
- Fills in a crucial gap by going beyond the "one-size fits all approach"



## • Two type of audio tracks

- i. **“Audio track with highly dramatic story telling”**- dramatization, voice modulation, and sound effects that enhance the effect and emotion of the story.
  - ii. **“Audio track with fluent reading”**, paced and without sound effects. Students can listen to the story while reading the text on their own
- Option for students to choose either of above audio tracks to suit learning style
  - Introductory Section - to arouse curiosity, build interest, and scaffold the story or poem
  - Concluding Section : Open-ended question on the story/poem- based on the students individual thinking.
  - Glossary of difficult words and difficult signs appended to each story and poem.





# Stories and Poems from class I to V NCERT Textbooks adapted under the Accessible Textbooks for 'All' initiative.

## National Anthem

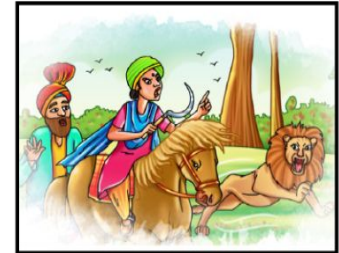
- Jana Gana Mana

## Stories and folktales

- Bahadur Bitto
- Ek Din ki Badshahat
- Who will be Ningthou
- Idgah
- Chuskit Goes to School

## Poems

- Chakai ka Chakdum
- Hathi Challam Challam
- Purane Bachche
- Koi Laake Mujhe De

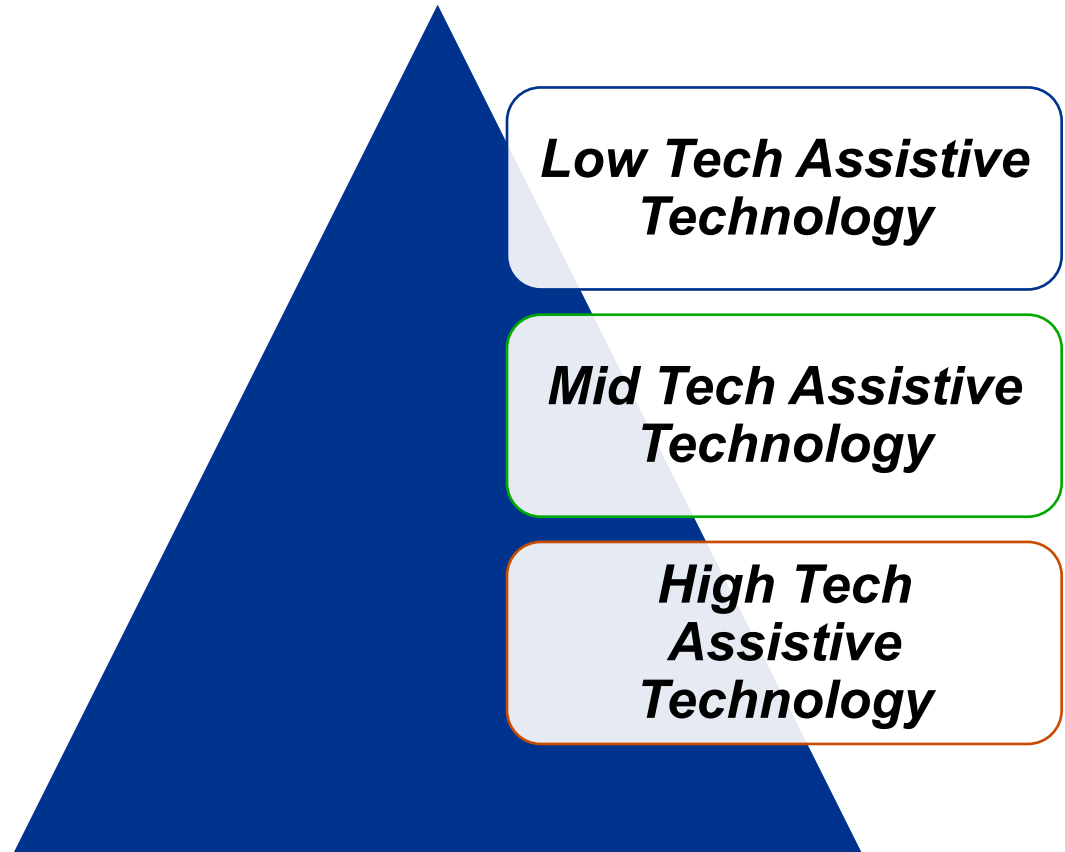


- ***E-patshala*** Digital Textbooks ( Class 1-12) in all subjects
- ***E-patshala*** Mobile App- *Text To Speech (TTS)*
- ***Sign Language Video Programmes***
- ***Tactile Map Book with Audio programmes***
- ***Audio Books***

After completing this module, the learners will be able to:

- ✓ Identify the Children with Special Needs (CwSN),
- ✓ Understand salient provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 (RPwD Act, 2016 )
- ✓ Understand the key provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 related to digital technology for CwSN
- ✓ Understand the concept of Inclusive Education
- ✓ Understand principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- ✓ Design and implement digital initiatives for CwSN
- ✓ **Leverage appropriate assistive technologies to support CwSN**

**Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities (UNESCO)**



## Low Tech Assistive Technology –A few Examples

Communication Board –used by von-verbal children to communicate what they need by showing symbols /words



Pencil grip- It facilitates a functional grasp helping the child write with endurance and fluency



Head pointers used by children who have no use of their hands. A stick mounted directly on the user's head that can be used to push keys on the keyboard



Modified Scissor - This helps children with cerebral palsy to overcome their challenge in holding the scissor and cutting





## Mid Tech Assistive Technology –A few Examples

Talking Calculator with large display has built-in-speech output to reads the numbers, symbols & operation keys aloud



Audio book: Helps child to listen to recorded lessons at their own pace



Adapted Switch: Accessibility device for children with limited movement. It can be use independently.

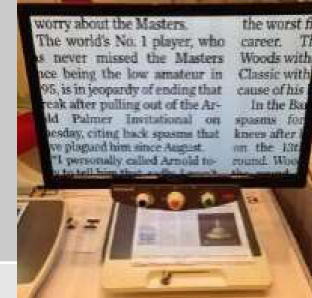


Electric Wheelchair: A child with CP will find it useful. It gives the child the ability to move around independently by using various control options



## High Tech Assistive Technology –A few Examples

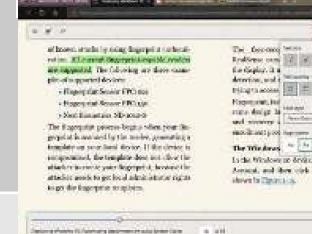
Screen magnification software for children with low vision- allows the child with low vision to control the size of the text/graphics on the screen.



Screen reader - transforms text and image to speech / Braille for child with VI e.g. JAWS, NVDA



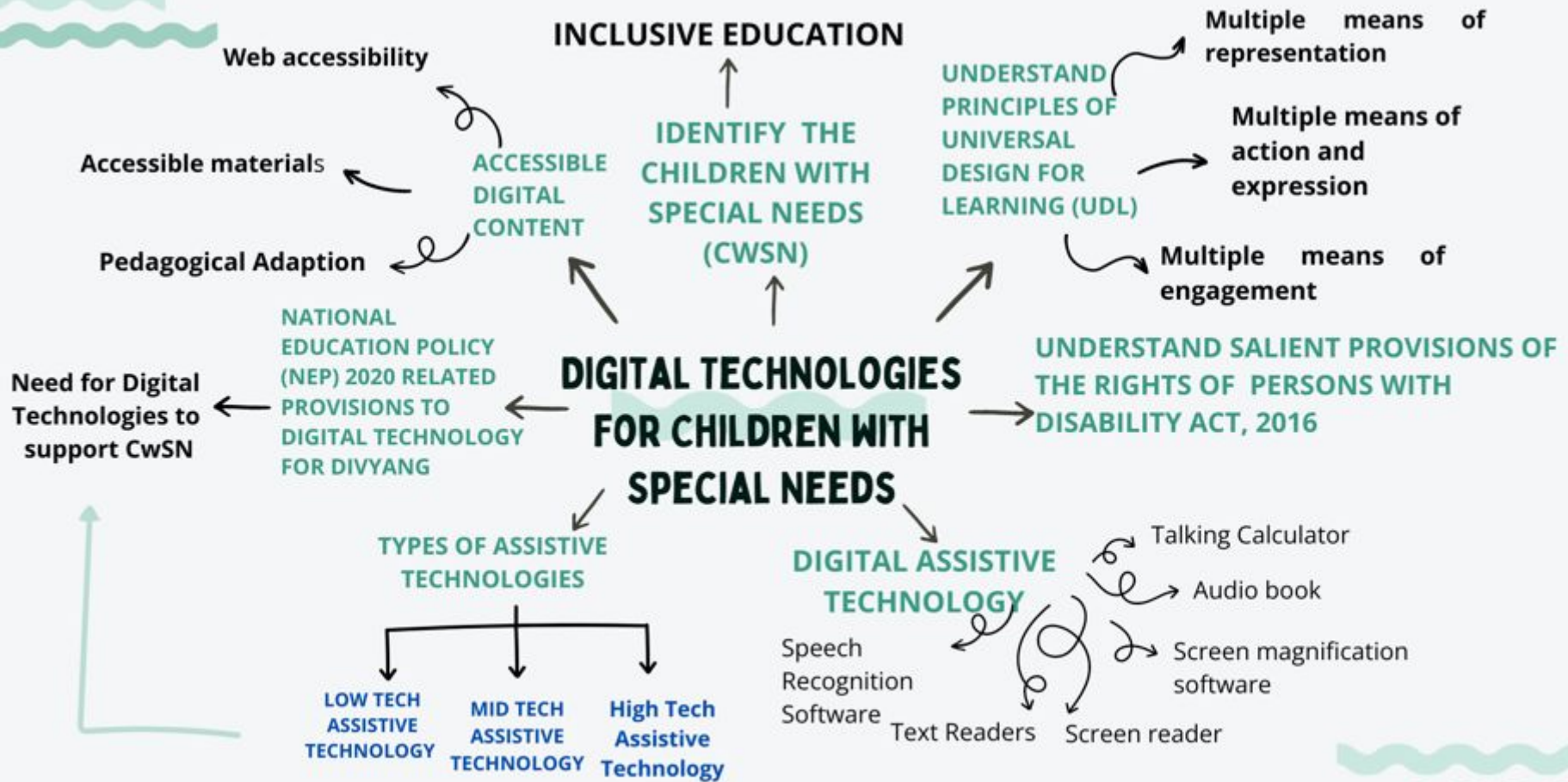
Text Readers- e reads text with a synthesized voice for child with LD



Eye tracking device- functional assistive communications system for children with severe motor & speech impairment.



# Digital Technology- Mind Map





**Thanks for Your Attention**

***“The problem is not how to wipe out all differences, but how to unite with all differences intact”- Rabindranath Tagore***