

## **Inclusive Education: From Policies to Practices**

The Department of Education, Panjab University organized one day national seminar on 'Inclusive Education: From Policies to Practices' at ICSSR Hall on December 13, 2016. The seminar brought together about sixty five educationists, academicians and researchers from different colleges and departments of the university. Eight posters were presented by researchers presenting how inclusive education should be the order by now.

The background paper was presented by Dr. Kuldeep Kaur, Assistant Professor, Department of Education giving a glimpse of how the government policies, especially the recent RTE Act and new Education policy (draft), offer to deliver the results and also to look into the fault lines in the planning and implementation.

The keynote speaker, Prof. Ratna Ghosh from Department of Education, McGill University, Montreal talked about *Including the Excluded*. She emphasized inclusion as fundamental to human dignity. Inclusive education is where children learn together irrespective of their difficulties and differences. Exclusion is based on the politics of difference and identity. All human beings are born free and are equal in dignity and rights, but, we also know that they are born unequal in multiple ways. We need to accept and appreciate these differences.

Prof. Kuldip Puri, Education, University School of Open Learning, Panjab University talked about *Inclusive Education: Policy Perspectives*. He emphasized how the non-formal education which started as the minimal policy to educate the one who cannot attend the school due to various reasons can be educated became the maximal policy of education. This has worsened the condition of schools creating low quality classrooms with downgraded teachers. The policy has proved to be ineffective. RTE norms should be followed and cost cutting should not affect the educational policies.

Prof. Raj. K. Gupta, Department of Education talked about the *Rationale of Inclusion*. For including the children with intellectual & physical disabilities in the inclusive system, everything is to be housed in one single premise. Other challenges include change of mindset among teachers, parents, school children, of curricula, teacher training, modifications in infrastructure etc. Regular children needs to be sensitized and parents should be included in the decision making. The session provoked minds of many to ask questions relating to how the policies can be improved, teacher education and attitudinal change can be brought.

Following this was the panel discussion by Prof. Nishtha Jaiswal, Department of Laws; Prof. Nandita, Department of Education, Panjab University; Mrs. Opendarjeet, CRC under SSA and Mrs. Usha Sapra as panelist. Barriers of poverty, social ostracization and exclusion need to be removed to build a global inclusive society.



