



Inclusive Education

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ABSTRACT

There have been efforts internationally to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream. In order to achieve truly inclusive education, we need to think about and incorporate children with special needs into regular schools. Especially, because these kids face some sort of barriers to learning and participation in the classroom. Within the human right and social justice movement of including students with special needs into the regular classroom; it found that there are different classroom teaching practices should be taking into account. It brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and seeks to maximize the potential of all students. It is one of the most effective ways in which to promote an inclusive and tolerant society. Inclusive Education denotes that all children irrespective of their strengths and weaknesses will be part of the mainstream education. It is clear that education policy in India has gradually increased the focus on children and adults with special needs, and that inclusive education in regular schools has become a primary policy objective. Keeping in view, Govt. of India had accelerated the new scheme of Inclusive Education to achieve the target of Education for All (EFA) by 2010. Inclusion is an effort to make sure that diverse learner – those with disabilities, different languages and cultures, different homes and family lives, different interests and ways of learning.

Keywords: Effective Teaching, Inclusive Classroom, Special Education

The government initiatives in the area of inclusive education can be traced back to National Educational Policy, 1986, which recommended, as a goal, 'to integrate the handicapped with the general community at all levels as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence'. The World Declaration on Education for All adopted in 1990 gave further boost to the various processes already set in the country. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992 initiated a training programme for the development

of professionals to respond to the needs of students with disabilities. The National Policy for Persons with Disability, 2006, which attempts to clarify the framework under which the state, civil society and private sector must operate in order to ensure a dignified life for persons with disability and support for their caretakers. Most recent advancement is the Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education (2009) which guarantees right to free and compulsory education to all children between ages six to fourteen. Making the education system compulsory led to more demands and calls for participation of children with disabilities in the regular classroom with their peers at least from civil rights perspective. This programme laid special emphasis on the integration of children with mild to moderate disabilities, in line with world trends, and became one of the GOI's largest flagship programmes of the time in terms of funding with 40,000 million rupees (approximately 740 million US dollars). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education in 2001, is one such initiative. Three important aspect of UEE are access, enrolment and retention of all children in 6-14 years of age. A zero rejection policy has been adopted under SSA, which ensures that every Child with Special Needs (CWSN), irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has laid down a clear context of inclusive education.

Effective Teaching Practices

Teachers' behaviour has a significant link to students' achievement. Teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom may be regarded, as a challenge for teachers accustomed to teaching in the regular classroom; therefore teachers should require the basic characteristics of effective teaching. To be a successful teacher in inclusive classrooms is not easy as the teacher is dealing with different abilities. Effective teacher should be a good classroom manager, focusing on academic skills, with good expectation, enthusiasm, using effective strategies to keep students on task and using variety of teaching and resources styles, covering the material content. Also the effective teacher uses easy presentation of material, is direct in teaching, explains and outlines instruction clearly, frequently observe what students are doing taking into account differences between the students and re-teaching when necessarily, give frequent feedback for all students and checks for understanding by using probing questions. Expert teachers are more able to monitor students' problems and assess their understanding whilst providing feedback at the same time, they can see the difficulties facing the students and build strategies and hypotheses and examine or test these strategies and the extent to which they are working by measuring students' outcomes, they respect their students, they have responsibility over their students, they motivate their students, they build self-concept and self-efficacy for their students, they have a positive influence on their students' outcome and lead the students through challenging tasks and they have content knowledge. Including students with disabilities and having the knowledge of how to treat them are important characteristics

of the effective school. In this regard Ainscow (1991) mentioned that the effective school has effective leadership and staff able to deal with all students and their needs and optimistic that all students can progress and develop their abilities toward successful achievement. Effective school has a willingness to support its staff by meeting their needs and taking into account the curriculum and ensuring that the curriculum meets all the students needs and also effective school reviews its programmes (teachers, curriculum, students' progress) frequently.

Need and Importance of Inclusive Education

Effective teaching operates within a complex teaching and learning context that can influence it in different ways. The Government of India has created numerous policies around special education since the country's independence in 1947. One of the earliest formal initiatives undertaken by the GOI was the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme of 1974 (NCERT, 2011). The Kothari Commission (1966) which highlighted the importance of educating children with disabilities during the post-independence period (Pandey 2006). In 1980s the then ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India, realized the crucial need of an institution to monitor and regulate the HRD programme in the field of disability rehabilitation. Till 1990s, ninety percent of India's estimated 40 million children in the age group- four-sixteen years with physical and mental disabilities are being excluded from mainstream education. The National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE, 1986), and the Programme of Action (1992) stresses the need for integrating children with special needs with other groups. The Government of India implemented the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) in 1994–95. In late 90s (i.e. in 1997) the philosophy of inclusive education is added in District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). This programme laid special emphasis on the integration of children with mild to moderate disabilities, in line with world trends, and became one of the GOI's largest flagship programmes of the time in terms of funding with 40,000 million rupees (approximately 740 million US dollars). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched to achieve the goal of Universalisation of Elementary Education in 2001, is one such initiative. Three important aspect of UEE are access, enrolment and retention of all children in 6-14 years of age. A zero rejection policy has been adopted under SSA, which ensures that every Child with Special Needs (CWSN), irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided meaningful and quality education. National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has laid down a clear context of inclusive education. In 2005, the Ministry of Human Resource Development implemented a National Action Plan for the inclusion in education of children and youth with disabilities. Furthermore, IEDC was revised and named "Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage" (IEDSS) in 2009-10 to provide assistance for the inclusive education of the disabled children at 9th and 10th classes. This scheme now subsumed under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) from 2013. It is important to integrate these children into regular schools to help them socialise and build their confidence.

In India, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) joined hands with UNICEF and launched Project Integrated Education for Disabled Children (PIED) in the year 1987, to strengthen the integration of learners with disabilities into regular schools. In recent years, the concept of inclusive education has been broadened to encompass not only students with disabilities, but also all students who may be disadvantaged. This broader understanding of curriculum has paved the way for developing the National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005) that reiterates the importance of including and retaining all children in school through a programme that reaffirms the value of each child and enables all children to experience dignity and the confidence to learn. The effectiveness of an inclusive outcome on students with learning disabilities found that students with specific learning disabilities demonstrated academic progress at pace comparable to that of students did not possess such disabilities, in addition their teachers and parents indicated progress in self-esteem and motivation. We have learned that inclusive education is a better way to help all students succeed. Researches show that most students learn and perform better when exposed to the richness of the general education curriculum. The growing body of research has shown that children do better academically when in inclusive settings and Inclusion provides opportunities to develop relationships. Some of the benefits include: friendships, social skills, personal principles, comfort level with people who have special needs, and caring classroom environments. Classmates of students with disabilities also experience growth in social cognition, often can become more aware of the needs of others in inclusive classrooms. An interesting side effect is that these parents report that they also feel more comfortable with people with special needs because of their children's experiences.

Inclusive Outcome

We know that Albert Einstein was learning disabled but still managed to become the greatest mind of the 20th century. Educating children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers is considered one of the better ways to provide education to the population in India. As a system, inclusive education should be flexible. Its flexibility must be reflected in the methods and materials used to give these children the widest possible access to the regular curriculum. Inclusion should not be the sole responsibility of the specific class teacher. Everybody should be involved and take responsibility. Training for teachers should be sustained and ongoing. It should most importantly focus on attitudinal change. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education could be formed and developed in the context of an educational system which can provide some specific conditions in order to have a good practice in this field. Differently abled children should be treated equally as the normal children and instead of looking them in sympathy their talents and abilities should be recognized for their self-respect and welfare of the society. The school has the primary responsibility for helping children learn alongside their typically developing peers. An inclusive school must enable education structures, systems

and methodologies to meet the needs of all children, particularly those who face the greatest barriers to achieving their right to education. A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout Indian education system (NCF, 2005). Schools need to become centers that prepare children for life and ensure that all children, especially the differently abled children from marginalized sections, and children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit of this critical area of education. The Right to Education (RTE) must apply to all citizens of India. State and central Governments as well as all the other social actors should recognize the importance of a broadened concept of inclusive education that addresses the diverse needs of all learners.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the right of students with special needs to be educated in an inclusive classroom rather than educating them in an isolated environment has been a main concern raising, issues and interest for educators, policy-makers and researchers in recent times. Thus, it is became the basic issue in terms of teaching students with special needs. Effective school and teachers characteristics influence positively students' achievement or outcome in an inclusive classroom. School characteristics could be: qualified leadership, learning environment, high expectation, positive reinforcement, monitoring student's progress and parent-school co-operation. Teacher characteristics such as: efficient use of time; good relationships with students; provides positive feedback; has a high student success rate; and in general provides support for the students with and without disabilities. All of that can only be operated in an appropriate educational context.

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