



CHALLENGES OF INCLUSION AND TEACHER EDUCATION IN FUTURE

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Abstract

Inclusion of all children in classrooms is the need of tomorrow. It has great impact on classroom teachers. Teacher Education programs should be framed in order to develop teachers' knowledge, competencies and skills regarding inclusion of children. Literature analysis tells us about the need of pre-service and in-service teacher education reform, in order to make teachers competent in dealing with all types of students in the classroom. Inclusion has a tremendous impact on general teachers as they are increasingly faced with the challenge of meeting a wide range of students need through inclusive practices. Existing teacher education is not capable of developing competencies required for inclusion. Theoretical portion is included which doesn't include any practical experience. There is urgent need to equip teachers to work in diverse settings. This is a conceptual paper that focuses on need of training in Inclusion of Children. This review assumes that teacher education for inclusion should prepare teachers to engage with learner diversity arising from age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious background, socio-economic status, disability or special educational needs. Review of literature tell that Teacher education for inclusion should prepare teachers to engage with learner diversity arising from age, gender, sex, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious background, socio-economic status, disability or special educational needs It also suggests a framework for inclusive teacher education in future.



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Introduction:

The creation of an educational system capable of preparing people to live in the changing world is one of the crucial tasks of modern society'. (Kinelev 2000). "Teacher education is a program that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein."

Teacher education has to become more sensitive to the emerging demands from the school system. For this, it has to prepare teachers for a dual role of; Encouraging, supportive and humane facilitator in teaching learning situations

There are two kinds of exclusion prevalent in schools; one is the exclusion of the child with disabilities and the second is the social exclusion of children who come from socially and economically deprived backgrounds. There is a need to equip teachers to overcome their biases in these regards and positively handle these challenges.

Teacher education for inclusion should prepare teachers to engage with learner diversity arising from age, gender, sex, ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious background, socio-economic status, disability or special educational needs.

Research questions:

- What is the present status of Teacher Education regarding inclusion of students in the classroom?
- What type of framework is needed for training program for teachers about inclusion in future?
- How, teacher education contributes to the development of inclusive practices?

Methodology: is a literature review and survey. It includes information from books, internet sources, Schools, and teacher education institutions

Presentation:

The American Commission on Teacher Education rightly observes,

“The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of its citizens depends not exclusively, but in critical measure upon the quality of their education, the quality of their education depends more than upon any single factor, upon the quality of their teacher.”

Educating all children well depends not only on ensuring that teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their work, but also that they take responsibility for seeing that all children reach high levels of learning and that they act accordingly. Throughout the world, reform and innovation initiatives by nations have triggered much discussion about the structures of teacher education and training programs (Hébert, 2001)

Challenges of Inclusion:

Inclusion: “All children irrespective of their strengths or weaknesses, should become a part of school community.”

“**Inclusive Education** refers to an education system that accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.”

Components of Inclusion: there are many components of inclusion such as;

- **Physical inclusion**
- **Social Inclusion**
- **Curricular Inclusion**
- **Educational Environmental Inclusion**

In-service teacher education should offer opportunities for developing inclusive learning and practices. Indeed, inclusive education should be a focus of in-service teacher education, not only because teachers’ inclusive practices benefit from ongoing professional support, but also because many existing teachers have little or no experience of inclusive education.

It is more cost-effective and efficient to educate teachers about inclusive education before they start work than to invest in efforts to change their attitudes/practices later on. However, in-service teacher education will be necessary for updating or supplementing teachers’ learning on inclusive education, sharing of experiences, valuing teachers as lifelong learners, etc.

Inclusive education can also be used as a framework to better align and strengthen the complementary relationship between pre-service and in-service teacher education.

The UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009) set out the following justifications for working towards inclusive practices and educating all children together:

- **Educational justification:** Inclusive schools have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences and benefit all children.

- **Social justification:** Inclusive schools are able to change attitudes towards diversity and form the basis for a just, non-discriminatory society.
- **Economic justification:** It costs less to establish and maintain schools that educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different schools ‘specializing’ in different groups of children.

It states that teachers have a key role to play in preparing pupils to take their place in society and in the world of work and points out that teachers in particular need the skills necessary to Inclusion.

Although there is widespread support for inclusion at a philosophical level, there are some concerns that the policy of inclusion is difficult to implement because teachers are not sufficiently well prepared and supported to work in inclusive ways.

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From years our teacher education courses give stress on knowledge of diverse needs, symptoms, different teaching learning strategies, legislative policies etc. about inclusion.

There is a big gap between what they learn and what they are supposed to do in the classrooms. Practical knowledge in this respect is essential.

Inclusion and Teacher Education

Future teacher education courses should include doing as an essential element of training. It should include knowledge into action, learning how to work with all types of students, using evidences to improve.

Florian (2007) has identified three areas that deserve particular attention in the reform of teacher education based on the argument that future progress in inclusion requires new ways of thinking about provision and practice. These are: **clearer thinking about the right to education; the need to challenge deterministic views about ability; and a shift in focus from differences between learners, to learning for all.**

Everywhere in the world, Teacher education programs are being encouraged to change to include the concepts of inclusion through their accreditation agencies. In USA, in NCATEs (2002) latest set of unit (college) standards, as part of the vision for professional teachers for the 21st Century, it is mentioned that qualified teachers should teach every child. In India too NCTE, NCERT, has developed a curriculum of teacher education with a view to facilitate inclusion in the classrooms

As Demmer-Dieckmann (2011) wrote, “It is no longer a question of if, but how teacher forces are prepared for inclusive thinking and acting”. It is clear that teachers’ and school leaders’ abilities, and positive attitudes toward inclusion are essential for inclusion to succeed To facilitate inclusive thinking and acting, we must provide all teacher candidates and school building leadership candidates with knowledge about diversity and the pedagogy needed to embark on their practice with confidence.

Designing of Future Teacher Education:

Need of Intervention-I:

Curriculum Modification- Modification in curriculum is essential in teacher education to enhance their knowledge with respect to children with diverse needs and to develop positive attitude towards all types of students.

Need of Intervention-II

Pre- service teachers' training: Training teachers in teaching methods that can be used for students of all ability levels. Spreading awareness among the teachers about the importance and benefits of inclusion is one of the most important parts of implementing a system of inclusive education, because teachers are the people who are going to accommodate the students (Kohama, 2012).

Need of Intervention-III

Need of Special Educator as Teacher Educator: For the effective implementation of inclusive education, general classroom teachers need training in understanding the educational and emotional needs of these students (Singh2006). Training should be given in collaboration with special education teachers.

Stayton and McCollun (2002) identified three models that exist in programs that train for inclusion: the Infusion model, the Collaborative Training model and the Unification model. In the Infusion model students take 1 or 2 courses that cover inclusive education. In the Collaborative Training model, many more courses deal with teaching inclusive classes, and mainstream teaching students and special education students do all, or part of their practical experiences together. In the Unification model, all students study the same curriculum that trains them for teaching mainstream education with a focus on pupils with special needs.

Teacher education programs need to consider practical placements in schools and classrooms where inclusion has been embraced as a philosophy and in practice and where there is enough appropriate support to ensure a successful experience for pre-service teachers. Jordan et al. (2009) stress the need for practicum experiences in which there are 'opportunities to examine and foster their beliefs' and then learn about 'how to address the needs of diversity in the classroom' – a dimension which is neither typically or rigorously addressed in teacher education programs.

Three Essential Components for Capacity Building in Inclusive Education

1. Increase Awareness and Attitudinal Change through Advocacy: it is vitally important that teachers, principals and other education stakeholders maintain a positive attitude towards inclusion. They must be firmly convinced of the benefits that inclusive practices bring to all children. Even if inclusive education is mandated by law, it will never succeed without the enthusiastic support of its practitioners. Obtaining such support involves behavior and attitudinal change which is not a quick or easy process.

2. Create a Future of Trained Professionals: Pre-Service Training: This includes training at teacher training colleges and universities at both the national and provincial levels. Ideally, inclusive education should be a compulsory subject for all teacher candidates and an integral part of teacher training curricula. Fundamental knowledge and skills of inclusive education, such as understanding needs and abilities of children with special needs and pedagogic skills such as instructional accommodation and activity differentiation, should be provided widely to teacher candidates.

3. Build on Existing Human Resources: In-Service Training and Professional Development:

In-service training includes professional development for teachers who are already working in the classroom. In addition to developing the skills of professionals before entering the workforce, it is essential that teachers already teaching be provided skills and techniques for inclusive education. Teachers in many countries are required to upgrade their professional skills on an annual or regular basis to enhance their teaching performance. In-service training programs offer a particularly effective strategy to improve the quality of an entire educational system for all children regardless of their needs. Inclusive education methods are child-centered, employing active and participative learning techniques that improve teachers' capacity to teach children both with and without disabilities. Collaborative and participative techniques not only enhance learning outcomes, but also reduce prejudice and discrimination among children.

Upgrading of Teacher Education Practices to meet the challenges of inclusion:

Certain factors are needed to be considered while upgrading, they are;

- Strengthening of professionalism in teachers
- Bring attention to inclusive practices in schools
- Facilitate dialogue between schools and teacher education
- Capacity building in education systems regarding inclusion

Upgrading of teacher education activities:

Who: who will upgrade the teachers? –Special teachers, teacher educators, socialists, professionals etc

What: What activities are planned to train the teachers?

How: which methods, strategies are developed and how are we going to implement them?

Where- where are we going to implement? Whether it's possible to give real, practical experiences?

Stages of implementing Inclusive Teacher Training:

Stages	Task
Stage -1 Knowledge based	Sessions that equip teacher trainees about Knowledge of diverse needs of students, Identification of these needs, different techniques and methods used , Individualized Education Plans etc.
Stage -2 Observation and Understanding based	Give them opportunity to observe the diversities in the classroom. Provide opportunity of observations in different schools. Let them have their own observation records
Stage-3 Practical Experience	Let the teacher trainees identify the students with diverse needs in schools. Let them use different checklists for identification. Preparation of Individual Education plans
Stage -4 Revision and evaluation	Revision of knowledge through tests and practicals

Table 1: Plan for Inclusive Teacher Training

Conclusions:

From this study it can be find out that there are obvious gaps in teacher preparation programs. Teacher educators should view these gaps as a major roadblock to advancing the actualization of inclusion at the very basic level: the general education classroom. To ensure a better match between teacher preparation and the realities of inclusive classrooms, changes

to the current approaches are necessary and critical. Practical experiences to the existing courses in inclusion will benefit pre-service teachers. Practical supervised experiences will add a sense of preparedness to their positive attitudes toward teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Field experience is an essential ingredient for teacher preparation, including the preparation of teachers for the inclusive classroom.

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