



## **A STUDY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

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### **1. Introduction :**

There has been an increasing interest of educating children with disabilities in mainstream schools over the last two decades. Research indicates that children with disabilities function better in life when they attend same learning environments with their normal peers than being educated in segregated special schools primarily because they face same social, cultural, political and economic challenges. Educating children in segregated special units diminishes children's social skills that are necessary for societal adaptation.

This report contains an overview of the findings of the Classroom and School Practice project. The project is focused on revealing, analyzing, describing and disseminating classroom practices in inclusive settings in such a way that teachers can implement inclusive practices on a wider scale in their classrooms. Furthermore, it addresses decision-makers within the educational system by presenting the necessary conditions for teachers to become inclusive in their practice.

### **2. Definitions of Inclusive Education and Disability :**

#### **1. Inclusive Education :**

It refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education.

Inclusive education is related to enhancing human rights and dignity especially of learners with disabilities who seem to be regarded as the vulnerable. Inclusion in this study does not comprise all these dynamics. The researcher has narrowed down to a specific group

of individuals (those with disabilities) that are left out of the mainstream schools and put in a 'box' called special schools where they are deemed to receive specialized kind of instruction. Inclusion implies the collective process of bringing together all children so that they can learn and develop together. It is important that every child regardless of the circumstances have fair chances in life—equal opportunities to education, social and cultural life. The concept of inclusion only surfaces when there is a general feeling that some groups of individuals are not fully integrated with the mainstream – they are excluded basically in regard to access to social services, life opportunities and in resource allocation. Inclusion and exclusion are mutually interrelated. Inclusive education means learning environments are restructured to accommodate diversity, that is, children with varying needs, capabilities and styles of learning. Inclusive practices aim at helping individuals to recognize and appreciate their uniqueness abilities. Schools' sensitivity to differentiating children's varying needs is critical in this respect. Barriers within learning environments need to be minimized in order to accommodate a diversity of learners.

In principle inclusive education aims at giving children equal opportunities to co-exist and learning together in same educational environments based on the values of non-discrimination. Inclusive education therefore implies practices and strategies aimed at varied needs of learners in supportive environments. Valuing diversity and providing appropriate and timely support is critical in inclusive educational practices (Mitchell 2004).

### ***Inclusion – a developmental approach in education***

Inclusive education as an approach seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and was restated at the Dakar World Education Forum (2000).

Inclusive education means that :

*... schools should accommodate **all children** regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.*

### **2. Disability:**

According to Colin and Shelia (2001), there is no single commonly- accepted, straightforward definition of disability. However, they classify disability according to three

perspectives as follows; the medical, social and legal models. Despite these perspectives the researcher picks and defines one model which seems to combine all the three models in the discussion. The discussion uses the definition as per the World Health Organization 1948 (WHO) as:

A disease, disorder or injury produces an impairment causing a chance to ordinary functioning. Impairment refers to failure at the level of organs or systems of the body. This means loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

In this case, disability comes because of loss or reduction of ability to perform an activity in the manner considered normal for a human being. For the sake of this discourse, disability is looked at in the following angles; visual impairment (functional limitation of the eye or the vision), hearing impairment (a problem or damage to parts of the ear), physical impairment (challenges on a person's physical functioning or mobility) and learning difficulties (a number of learning problems). Furthermore, WHO (1948) describes the relationship between disability, impairment and handicap. More so, a handicap is also described as a social disadvantage stemming from an impairment or disability which tends to limit or retard a fulfillment of a normal role which a normal human being is capable of carrying out.

### **3. Framework :**

The focus of the study is effective classroom practices within inclusive education. Generally, it can be assumed that inclusive education mainly depends on what teachers do in classrooms. Of course, what teachers do in classrooms depends on their training, experiences, beliefs and attitudes as well as on the situation in class, school and factors outside the school (local and regional provision, policy, financing and so on). However, it is the teacher that has to implement inclusion into daily life practice and therefore (s)he is the decisive factor.

The way in which teachers realize inclusion within the classroom can take different forms. It is the goal of this study to describe these various approaches and to make them available for others. To identify various models of dealing with differences in classrooms (also known as 'differentiation', 'multi-level instruction' and other terms) thus forms the main task of the project. However, it should be clearly noted that the existence of different models of dealing with differences in classrooms depends not only on teacher factors but also on the way in which schools organize their educational provision and on other external factors.

*The main question for this study is: How can differences in the classroom be dealt with? Additionally, it also attempts to provide an answer to the question: which conditions are necessary for dealing with differences in classrooms?*

The **target group** for this study is defined in terms of all those who can influence practices in education. Educational practices depend heavily upon teachers and other professionals. They are the group who can implement changes that are stated by policy makers and educational advisors. The centre of attention for this study is therefore upon the work of teachers. However, we try to reach them in an indirect way.

It can be assumed that they mostly learn from significant key people in their immediate environment: colleagues and professionals in or around the school. Thus, the target group is student-teachers but, for dissemination strategies, the emphasis should be placed upon the professionals in or around schools who are significant for teachers.

**4. Need of Inclusive Education : The School teachers .....**

- Should have the ability to solve problems.
- Should know about the interest, aptitude and abilities of the disabled children and use them to develop various skills in them.
- Have the ability to provide successful experiences to the disabled children.
- Should have the knowledge of special instructional material and of using them.
- Should be highly patient, welcoming, polite and devoted.
- Should work as team with parents and special educators.
- Keep a record of the child's achievements and failures.

**5. Teacher's role in Inclusive Education :**

1. Information provider
2. Guide
3. Counsellor
4. Researcher
5. Resource person
6. Continuous learner
7. Network for sharing

**Teachers for Inclusion :**

1. Positive orientation
2. Flexibility
3. Innovation
4. Adequate application.

**6. Title of the Research :**

“A Study of Inclusive Education and Effective Classroom Practices”.

**7. Research Objectives :**

1. To study awareness of student-teachers towards ‘Inclusive Education’.
2. To explain differences among impairment, disability and handicapped.
3. To study of effective classroom practice of student-teachers.

**8. Research Assumptions :**

- 1) Student-teachers are aware about ‘Inclusive Education’.
- 2) Teachers are aware that education is compulsory in India.
- 3) Student-teachers should know that there is no difference between general education and special education in inclusive education.
- 4) Student-Teachers know the education should be effective only in classroom practice.

**9. Hypothesis :**

1. There is no significant difference in awareness of students-teachers regarding ‘Inclusive Education’ in pre-test scores and post-test scores.
2. There is no significant difference in effective classroom practice of student-teachers regarding ‘Inclusive Education’ in pre-test scores and post-test scores.

**10. Sample :**

Incidental sample.

42 students of B. Ed. class were selected as the sample for research.

**11. Research Methodology :** Survey Method and experimental method (Mix Method).

**12. Tools :**

1. S.N.D.T. Women’s University’s B. Ed. Syllabus (2014-2015).
2. Questionnaire for student-teachers (i.e. Pre-test and Post-test).
3. Instructional Program on Inclusive Education (PPT)

**13. Methods – Procedure and Techniques :**

- Student-teachers use a number of techniques to help build classroom communities:
- Involving students in solving problems
- Sharing books that teach community approach
- Assigning classroom jobs that build community
- Teaching students to look for ways to help each other
- Encouraging students to take the role of teacher and deliver instruction
- Focusing on the strength of a student with special needs
- Organize student desk in groups

- Create a likely and welcoming environment
- Help to establish short-term goals
- Design a multi-faced curriculum
- Communicate regularly with parents and/or caregivers

**14. Statistical treatment :**

Use of 't-test' to compare the pre-test and post-test scores and to test the hypothesis.

**15. Scope and limitations :**

**Scope :**

1. The instructional programme could be used for other students also.
2. It could be implemented for student-teachers.
3. It could be implemented for teachers also who is teaching in schools as well as college where there students are disabled.

**Limitations :**

1. The instructional programme will focus only on improving 'Inclusive Education'.
2. It does not include any activities to improve other skills.
3. The instructional programme will be for B. Ed. students.
4. The limitations of this program is that it is used only for S.N.D.T. College of Education, Pune.

**16. Data analysis :**

Data collected through Questionnaire (i.e. Pre-test and post-test) and observation for student-teachers internship and their practice lessons.

After the data is collected, analysis is to be done to find out the results of the research done. The basic objective is to find out whether the hypothesis framed by the researcher is valid or not. Analysis is the concept of putting data into meaningful perspective. It makes relationship between different units of data appear meaningful.

The post-test scores are considered as indication of the effect of the instructional programme. These post-test scores are used as basic data for testing the hypothesis dealing with the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

As the experiment was done as single group design and the hypothesis deals with the effectiveness of classroom practices of the training programme it test was used.

**17. Findings :**

1. The awareness of student-teachers have a realistic time frame to bring such changes and phase-wise plan so that they are able to address the current needs as well as preparation for the future.
2. Explaining the differences among inclusive education and disability, it will be a slow process as it requires revolutionary changes in the mindset of student-teachers.
3. Encouraging the participation of student-teachers does not require huge expenditure but it definitely requires courage and conviction.

**18. Conclusions and Recommendations :**

1. Duration for practice teaching should be increased
2. Teacher education rarely keeps up with changes in policy and practice.
3. The Teacher Training Courses at all levels also need to emphasize the study of disability and not let it be treated as an optional subject.
4. Curriculum for education and development of teacher educators also needs revision in the similar manner as for teachers considering the requirements of inclusion.

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