



## CHALLENGES, PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION; INDIAN CONCERNS

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### Abstract

*Inclusion, the process of allowing all children the opportunity to fully participate in regular education classroom activities regardless of disability, race, or other characteristics is often fought in public schools. Inclusion is most commonly associated to the field of special education in United States. It involves providing a variety of activities and experiences so that all students can participate and be successful in the regular education classroom of their neighborhood school. Most educators use the terms mainstreaming or integration to refer to the placement of students with diverse characteristics into a shared educational setting. The term inclusion became widespread in the 1990's and is often used in place of mainstreaming or integration. Inclusion is a more comprehensive term and emphasizes the addition of specially designed activities that engage all the students collectively. This paper highlights on concept of Inclusion, characteristics of inclusion, importance, barriers of inclusion, and effective measures to implement inclusion in education system. Thus, the overall paper presents the essentiality of implementing the inclusion in system of education and minimizing diversity needs of learner.*

**Keywords:-***Inclusion, Barriers of inclusion, support services, and effective measures etc.*



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### Concept of Inclusion

The term **inclusion** captures, in one word, an all-embracing societal ideology. Regarding individuals with disabilities and special **education**, **inclusion** secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in general education classrooms.

**UNESCO** now defines inclusion as the “process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and

modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all [...] and a conviction that is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all.” Inclusion thus emphasizes those groups of learners who are at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. It is now widely accepted that inclusion also concerns issues of gender, ethnicity, class, social conditions, health, and human rights. This means that inclusion policies must ensure that all citizens, whatever their social or economic background, have opportunities to access knowledge and facilities as fully and freely as possible in school and society as a whole, to participate completely, to achieve at the highest level and to enjoy a high quality of life. Inclusion is the full manifestation of the effective exercise of the right to education and learning. It is about learning to live with diversity and learning to learn from difference, not only in a certain period but throughout the entire lifecycle in a variety of contexts. Thus, inclusive education opens the path to inclusion in society.

The term inclusion has different interpretations in various countries. It is sometimes associated with those students living in marginalized or poor contexts, but frequently it is related to the participation of the disabled or those with special educational needs in mainstream schools. In this way, inclusion is considered almost the same as integration, when they are in fact two different approaches with different visions and perspectives. Because of this misconception, inclusive policies are regarded as a responsibility of special education, restricting the analysis of all the common forms of exclusion and discrimination that take place within education systems.

The aim of inclusion is wider than the aim of integration. The latter seeks to ensure the right of the disabled to study in mainstream schools, whereas inclusion is intended to realize the right of all people to a high quality education, focusing on those who, due to differing reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized. These groups vary depending on the country but, in general, include the disabled, those belonging to an ethnic or linguistic minority, those from isolated or poor areas, children from migrant families or without a birth certificate, those affected by HIV and AIDS, armed conflict or violence. As regards gender, girls are the most excluded in many countries, however in some other countries, the boys are more excluded. Moreover, the focus of inclusion is different from the focus of integration. In the case of integration, students enrolled in school have to adapt themselves to the existing school environment (curriculum, methods, values and rules), regardless of their mother tongue culture or abilities. Education systems maintain their “status quo”, and actions are more centered on catering for the needs of every particular student (individual programs,

differentiated strategies and materials, special education teachers, etc.), rather than modifying those factors of the learning and teaching environment that are barriers to the participation and learning of all.

### **Characteristics of Inclusion**

The following are the important characteristics involved in Inclusion

- **Broad vision of education on diversity:-**The old tradition of conceiving differences from normative criteria, what is absent or far from “normality”, has led to the creation of options segregated for those categorized as different. According to an inclusive education perspective, the differences are inherent in human nature—each child is unique and unrepeatable—and they are conceived as an opportunity to enrich the learning process, which means that they should be part of education for all rather than the subject of differentiated programs or modalities.
- **It encourages the Education system as a whole:-**The education system as a whole is responsible for responding to diversity which means that it is necessary to shift from homogenous approaches, where all are offered the same, to education models that consider the diversity of needs, abilities and identities so that education can be pertinent for all people and not only for specific groups of society.
- **Universal curriculum/ balanced curriculum:-**The curriculum should achieve the difficult balance between responding to commonality and to diversity, offering universal learning opportunities to all students. This should ensure equal opportunities for all but at the same time give sufficient freedom to schools for defining the learning contents necessary to address the requirements of the local context and the educational needs of their students.
- **It identifies and minimizes the barriers encountered by students in classroom:-**It is intended to identify and minimize the barriers encountered by students to access and stay in school, participate and learn. These barriers arise from the interaction between students and different contexts: people, policies, institutions, cultures, and socio-economic circumstances affecting their lives.
- **It propounds change in the education systems and the school culture:-**It is a never-ending process as it implies a profound change in the education systems and the school culture. The educational institutions should constantly review their values, organization, and educational practices to identify and minimize the barriers encountered by students to participate and succeed in learning, seeking more appropriate strategies to respond to diversity and learn from differences.

- **It act as support system to Education:-**Inclusion also entails support systems which collaborate with teachers in addressing students' diversity, paying special attention to those who need it most in order to optimize their development and improve their learning.

### **Importance of Inclusion**

Inclusive education is based on ethical, social, educational, and economic principles.

- **It is a means to realize the right to high quality education without discrimination and having equal opportunities:-**Education is a public good and an essential human right from which nobody can be excluded since it contributes to the development of people and society. The right to education in its broadest sense goes beyond the access to free and compulsory education. In order to fully enjoy this right, a high quality education must be provided; promoting the highest development of the multiple abilities of each individual, that is to say, the right to education is the right to lifelong learning.
- **It is a means to advance towards more democratic and fair societies:-**Quality education for all and the development of schools, which receive students from different socio-cultural contexts and with different capacities, are powerful tools to contribute to social cohesion. Nevertheless, the development of more inclusive and egalitarian schools and societies cannot only be achieved by means of education, as social equity is necessary to guarantee the basic conditions leading to learning. Therefore, it is necessary to develop inter-sectoral policies addressing in an integral way the factors within and outside the education systems that generate exclusion, discrimination, and inequality.
- **It is a means to improve the quality of education and the professional development of teachers:-**Ensuring that all students can learn reaching levels of excellence requires adapting teaching practices and pedagogical support to the needs and characteristics of every student. Inclusive education and the consideration of diversity involve a greater professional competence for teachers, collaboration among teachers, families and students, and more comprehensive and flexible educational projects, which favor the participation and learning of all.
- **It is a means to learn to live together and build our own identity:-**Inclusive education is based on a series of conceptions and values regarding the type of society to be built and the ideal of person to be developed. If we want to have more inclusive societies, which are more peaceful and respectful of differences, it is essential that

students have the opportunity to develop and experience these values in their education, whether in schools or non-formal settings.

- **It is a means to improve the efficiency and cost-benefit relationship of the education systems:**-It is less expensive to have schools where all students are educated together than a complex system of different kinds of schools specialized in different groups of students. If inclusive schools offer an effective education to all their students, there will be a higher cost-benefit relationship when providing Education for All

### **Barriers to Inclusion**

Following are few commonly observable barriers that hinder proper practice of inclusive education in our country

- **Improper and delay in implementing the policy planning** Government of India claims that it has implemented inclusive education everywhere and at all levels. However, the policy planning is improper and measures to assess the degree of implementation have not been developed. Furthermore, implementation of inclusive education in private sector has not been enforced and ensured.
- **Improper pre-service teacher education training programme:** The pre-service teacher education programmes being run in the country are failing to sensitize and equip prospective teachers in inclusive education practices.
- **Lack of awareness about children with disabilities:** The teachers, at all levels, lack basic awareness about children with disabilities. They have their own socially and culturally constructed notions about certain obvious disabilities but lack scientific and educational knowledge about the disabilities such as classification, labeling, special needs, and adaptations etc.
- **Lack of proper curriculum:** For practicing inclusive education, curricular adaptations suited to special and unique needs of every learner, including children with disabilities, are necessary. Concepts like 'Universal Instructional Design' are to be properly developed and incorporated into the curriculum. However, needed curricular adaptations either are missing altogether or are improper.
- **Lack of responsibilities of parents:** Keeping in mind the nature of Indian society and culture, it can be safely stated that family has a very important role in implementing inclusive education in India. Family is considered having sole responsibility for their children in India. Hence, inclusion can only be realized by motivating and involving family in the process.

- **Lack of sufficient funds for implanting inclusive education** For a huge and diverse country like India, implementation of inclusive education at all levels requires a lot of money to be spent. The government does not seem willing to incur this huge expenditure. Being a developing country, the apprehensions of the government can be very well understood.
- **Lacks of skills teachers:-**Skills of teachers that are responsible for implementing inclusive education are also not up to as desired and necessary for inclusion.
- **Negative perception towards inclusion:** For practicing inclusive education, negative self-perceptions of children with disabilities pose a great challenge. Neighbors, peers, and teachers often strengthen these negative perceptions. Without wiping out these negative self-perceptions, true inclusion of such children is not possible.
- **Poor availability of information and communication technology:** - Present age is the age of information and communication technology it is providing great help in almost all endeavors of human life including education and training. There are a number of ICT-enabled pedagogical and assistive devices are available particularly useful for children with disabilities. Their use can ease and expedite inclusive education. These should be made available and competencies for their use should be developed among all stakeholders.
- **Poor school Environment:** School environment is very important needs accommodations for truly practicing inclusive education. However, such accommodations are not there in majority of the schools. Facilities like ramps, lifts, and directional cues etc. are mostly absent in schools.
- **Support services:** For implementing inclusive education in all educational institutions, at all levels, we need strong support services. Their strength should be both quantitative and qualitative. But, existing support services are scarce and inadequate

### **Effective measures to achieving inclusion**

Following are few measures to achieve Inclusion for all

- All forms, types and styles of learning must be integrated (informal, non-formal and formal, face-to-face, self-directed, open and distance education), as must the different learning objectives. Each individual and every group has different learning needs and demands, interests, strategies and styles, all of which can be hampered by various obstacles, exclusion being among the most severe. In order to overcome such barriers,

it is therefore important to identify these needs and interests, and adopt the most appropriate strategies, content, and modalities to address them.

- Developing policies, which articulate expansion with quality and equity, fostering a debate on the real meaning of quality education without exclusion.
- Establishing support systems to collaborate with schools and teachers in addressing students' diversity.
- Gender disparities must be addressed, and education and learning adapted to the needs, interests, and expectations of boys, girls, women, and men. Socio-economic, cultural, ethnic and racial discriminations and privileges having incidence on access and participation must be combated.
- Learning must be articulated and integrated organically into the different levels of the education system from early childhood education right through to higher education.
- Making education systems flexible to offer different options with equal quality to access or complete studies in any stage of life, both in formal and non-formal settings. Ensuring articulation between the different educational levels and modalities to facilitate the transition, coherence, and continuity of educational processes.
- Paying special attention to the emotional factors which are very important for the development of inclusive schools and have a great impact on students' learning
- 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.

**Conclusion:-**

Inclusive education means welcoming all children, without discrimination into regular or general schools. By the change of attitude against differential treatment of education, differences in people will likely be seen in a positive perspective. It calls for a respect of difference and celebration of diversity. Inclusion is not just about placing students with disabilities in to mainstream classrooms. It recognizes that all children have individual needs, and that teachers who are trained to facilitate an inclusive classroom, can better meet the needs of all children.

There is no doubt that the dream for discrimination free and equal education for the children with disability may require a comprehensive change in the institutional arrangements and legal provisions but the most important change has to come in our minds, in our thinking and attitude towards the disabled. The need of the hour is concerted efforts



amongst various stakeholders to be made in a time – bound manner. We need to fulfill our obligations to this country and to the international community. What is urgently needed is the political will to ensure that disability is included across all policies, across and all Ministries and Departments, and a time is fixed to make our facilities, schools, colleges, public places, etc. accessible for all people with disabilities and adequate resources allocated. Removing barriers to accessing education and to learning for children with disabilities are prerequisites for the realization of Education for All.

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