



CHALLENGES, PROBLEMS AND CONSTRAINTS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION: INDIA CONCERN

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Inclusive Education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. 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. It is known that 73 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2010, down from a high of over 110 million out-of-school children in the mid-1990s, according to new estimates by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). About Eighty percent of Indian population lives in rural areas without provision for special schools. It means, there are an estimated 8 million children out of school in India (MHRD 2009 statistics), many of whom are marginalized by dimensions such as poverty, gender, disability, and caste.

Inclusive education has been defined at various ways that addresses the learning needs of the differently abled children. The efforts of the Government of India over the last five decades have been towards providing comprehensive range of services towards education of children with disabilities. In 1974, the centrally sponsored scheme for Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) was introduced to provide equal opportunities to children with disabilities in general schools and facilitate their retention. 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.

For education for a child with disability, the act has to be read in conjunction with Chapter V of the Persons with Disability Act, 1995. Chapter V of the PWD Act ensures that every child with disability is entitled to a free education up to the age of 18 years. 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. 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. (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. 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.

Concept of Inclusive Education

The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the “World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality” and was restated at the World Education Forum. The Statement solicits governments to give the highest priority to making education systems inclusive and adopt the principle of inclusive education as a matter of policy. The idea of inclusion is further supported by the United Nation’s Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Person with Disability Proclaiming Participation and equality for all. Inclusive Education (IE) is defined as a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners

by reducing barriers to, and within the learning environment. It means attending the age appropriate class of the child's local school, with individually tailored support (UNICEF 2007). Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities which would meet their basic learning needs. Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that provides all student's greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. This includes opportunities to participate in the full range of social, recreational, arts, sports, music, day care and afterschool care, extra-curricular, faith based, and all other activities.

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.

Need and Importance of Inclusive Education

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. As general education classrooms include

more and more diverse students, teachers realize the value of accepting each student as unique. In effective inclusive programs, teachers adapt activities to include all students, even though their individual goals may be different. 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. The most important function of friendships is to make people feel cared for, loved, and safe. In

an inclusive educational setting, low-achieving students are able to get extra help even though they did not qualify for special education. 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. Students with disabilities can create long-lasting friendships that would not be otherwise possible, and these friendships can give them the skills to navigate social relationships later on in life.

Challenges to implement Inclusive Education in India

In India the number of the disabled people is so large, their problems so complex, available resources so scarce and social attitudes so damaging. The road to achieving inclusive education is a long and varied one, on which challenges and opportunities will arise. India is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious country, and its people are stratified along sharp socio-economic and caste lines. With an estimated 1,210 million people, India is the world's second most populated country after China. It has 17 percent of the global population and 20 percent of the world's out-of-school children. The aim of inclusion is to bring support to the students. The key purpose has become more challenging as schools accommodate students with increasingly diverse backgrounds and abilities. According to official estimates from the Census of India (Government of India, 2011), the number of people with disabilities in the country is 26 million, or roughly 2.1% of the total population. However, UNICEF's Report on the Status of Disability in India (2000) states that there are around 30 million children in India suffering from some form

of disability. 10% of the world's population lives with a disability, and 80% of these people with disabilities live in developing countries. But 75% of people with disabilities live in rural areas in India. The Government has created numerous policies around special education since the country's independence. There could be many challenges for educating children with disabilities in regular classrooms. These challenges could emanate from scarcity of adequate human and material resources, negative attitudes of teachers and community, non-disabled peers and their parents. Although the Government of India has attempted to create policies that are inclusive for people with disabilities, their implementation efforts have not resulted in an inclusive system of education. Moreover, the number of students dropping out of school is getting higher, especially in poverty-stricken areas. Students are forced to leave school due to their parents' poor economic condition, and to work to help their parents make ends meet. This leads to the growing number of child laborers, which in turn leads to physical and

psychological disabilities. There are particular challenges around negative attitudes and behavior, on the part of both teachers and parents, in relation to the ability of disabled children to learn. Another serious challenge is the fact that most disabled people are still excluded from equal access to mainstream education. Government of India needs to bridge the gaps in their education system to build a strong system of inclusive education in the country. So, there are following measures for better implementation of Inclusive Education in India.

1. The Right to Education (RTE) must apply to all citizens of India.
2. A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout Indian education system (NCF, 2005). Schools.
3. The preparation of teachers for rural special education programmes should be planned differently. 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
4. 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. To ensure that all children have access to quality education, education policies and practices must be inclusive of all learners, encourage the full participation of all, and diversity as a resource, rather as an obstacle. Inclusive education will pave the way to prosperity for individuals and for the society. This prosperity will, in turn, lead to a more peaceful and sustainable development of humanity methods and materials used to give these children the widest possible access to the regular curriculum.
5. A school-based support team should develop strategies for the whole school to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs. This team should also be a resource for teachers experiencing problems in their classrooms.
6. 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.

7. Parents have a right to be involved in all decision-making concerning their child. They should be seen as partners in the education process. Where there is such co-operation, parents have been found to be very important resources for the teachers and the schools.
8. Bringing special children into mainstream requires adjustments that schools need to make in advance. Transport facilities should be altered, so that these children can move around with relative ease. Architecturally, there should be ramps and wheelchair access constructed in service areas such as toilets.
9. Student-oriented components, such as medical and educational assessment, books and stationery, uniforms, transport allowance, reader allowance and stipend for girls, support services, assistive devices, boarding the lodging facility, therapeutic services, teaching learning materials, etc should provide according to need of the students.
10. Differently abled children should be treated equally as the normal children and instead of looking them in sympathy their talents and abilities should be recognised for their self-respect and welfare of the society.
11. Necessary school supplies such as audio learning or textbooks in Braille should be made available. Suitable modification to examination system may be required, so as to eliminate pure mathematical and logical assessments.
12. 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.
13. Families with children without disabilities should develop relationships with families with children with disabilities and be able to make a contribution.
14. In-service training programmes of two to three weeks' duration for general educators and special educators in all the disabilities and in specific areas of disability should arrange to effectively teach children with disabilities.
15. Those schools that are committed to taking in children with special needs, then teachers must attend workshops in order to be adjusted to the child's needs.
16. Periodic evaluation of the training programmes and constant updating to meet the challenges of changing trends in special education should be part of the planning of teacher preparation.
17. 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.

18. The reform of the curriculum should be made in parallel with a proper training for teachers regarding their knowledge of inclusion and its principles. The curriculum for each of the above programmes should be carefully developed by an expert group which includes practicing special teachers.

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 fulfil 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. To ensure that all children have access to quality education, education policies and practices must be inclusive of all learners, encourage the full participation of all, and diversity as a resource, rather as an obstacle. Inclusive education will pave the way to prosperity for individuals and for the society. This prosperity will, in turn, lead to a more peaceful and sustainable development of humanity

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