



ADVANTAGES AND BARRIERS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the “World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality” (Salamanca, Spain 1994) and was restated at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal 2000). 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. Of late, a consensus has emerged among Indian intellectuals and pedagogues for adopting inclusive education in mainstream schools.



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Introduction

The Constitution of India and the educational policies envisaged in post-independent India reflect a perseverance and commitment to the fulfillment of Universal Elementary Education. Constitution states that ‘free and compulsory education should be provided for all children until they complete the age of 14 years’. The Kothari Commission stressed a common school system open to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition and social status. In 1968, the NEP followed the commission’s recommendations and suggested the expansion of educational facilities for physically and mentally handicapped children, and the development of an ‘integrated programme’ enabling handicapped children to study in regular schools.

NPE-1986 stressed the ‘removal of disparities’ in education, while attending to the specific needs of those who had been denied equality so far. It stated ‘the objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth, and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence.’ In 1987 government launched the PIED (Project for Integrated Education Development). It states ‘wherever feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be in common with that of others.’ handicapped people enjoy

the same rights as the rest; have access to the quality of life like any other citizen; and are treated as equal partners in the community.’ Hence POA outlined measures to implement the policy including massive in-service training programmes for teachers, orientation programmes for administrators and develop supervisory expertise in resource institutions for school education at the district and block level and provision of incentives such as supply of aids, appliances, textbooks and school uniforms etc were made.

Meaning

- **Inclusion** in education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. Under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-special needs students. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms,
- Inclusion is an effort to improve quality in education in the fields of disability, is a common theme in educational reform this is supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006).
- Inclusive education is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. It seeks to address the learning needs of all children with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It implies all learners – with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common pre-school provisions, schools and community educational setting with an appropriate network of support services. This is possible only in flexible education system that assimilates the needs of diverse range of learners and adapts itself to meet these needs.
- Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school.
- Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together.
- Inclusion philosophy rests on the idea that every individual, regardless of his/her disabilities, has the right to be incorporated fully into the fabric of society. Inclusive classrooms show benefits to both traditional and special need students.
- Inclusive education services allow children with disabilities to stay with their family and to go to the nearest school, just like all other children.

Advantages of inclusive Education :

Tolerance and celebration of diversity: Other students will learn from children with Down syndrome, and it will change them for the better. The children with Down syndrome learn to deal with the world around them. Traditional students learn how to mentor and help others who are impaired. People should help each other, but too much of the time we don't. We just let life pass us by and seem perfectly happy to do so. Students are the people we once were. When we were younger and helped another student who couldn't do what we could do or couldn't understand what we understood, it changed us. It gave us a sense of accomplishment with a sense of hope which made students better people.

Learn effective social behaviors: Special needs children learn effective social behaviors through the other children. Isolating children in the hopes that we'll be able to protect them from getting hurt only makes it hurt worse when they are exposed to painful situations. So, give them a chance to figure things out. Let them learn how to deal by watching others.

Higher expectations on the student: People rise to the occasion so students do this as well. In fact, they do it much better than adults. Add to the equation the fact that these children are battling delays in learning and other disadvantages and you'll see how their determination overcomes many of life's challenging moments.

Access to the general curriculum: Students with Down syndrome deserve all the benefits of education that everyone else has and receives. They actually deserve more. Educators learn this when they teach these students.

Less isolation: Inclusive education will give an opportunity to see more, students literally open their minds to more. If they put in segregated environment they hardly get the opportunities to learn different types of activities. Hence they will become isolate but here it's not so.

Greater access to teachers, resources, etc: Students need teachers so why not give students who struggle access to more teachers. Those same students become adults who need to function and interact with this world so they need access to the same information anyone else would have.

Develop individual strengths and gifts: This type of environment will develop high and appropriate expectations for each child. The activities and efforts of other traditional students will motivate and fill strength among the impaired students and also helps to work on individual goals while participating in the life of the classroom with other students of their own age.

Involvement: Inclusion will help to involve their parents, friends in their education and in the other activities of their local schools. This involvement will remove their loneliness and keep them active.

Foster a school culture of respect and belonging: Inclusive education provides opportunities to learn about and accept individual differences, lessening the impact of harassment and bullying.

Relationship : This develop friendships with a wide variety of other children, each with their own individual differences, needs interests and abilities. And also teaches how to develop and maintain relationships which will positively affect both their school and community to appreciate diversity and inclusion on a broader level.

BARRIERS TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Government of India is trying a lot to remove all the barriers and make universalization of education to all the children irrespective of anything but still there are many barriers in the implementation of inclusive education. A UNESCO article, “Inclusive Education,” outlined many of them, including:

Physical Barriers: In some areas, students with physical disabilities are expected to attend schools that are inaccessible to them. In economically-deprived school systems, especially those in rural areas, dilapidated and poorly-cared-for buildings can restrict accessibility. Some of these facilities are not safe or healthy for any students. Many schools don't have the facilities to properly accommodate students with special needs, and local governments lack either the funds or the resolve to provide financial help. Environmental barriers can include doors, passageways, stairs and ramps, and recreational areas. These can create a barrier for some students to simply enter the school building or classroom.

Problem of proper implementation: 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, nor have they reached their goal of “education for all” across the country. the problem is with implementation of the said policies and moreover educating the mainstream teachers who need to change the attitude. The Government of India needs to bridge the gaps in their education system to build a strong system of inclusive education in India.

Lack of Motivation towards Inclusive Education: We have become very conscious of the need to educate our children but it is hardly academic motivation, which generates this interest but rather an economic motivation. Education is largely seen as the route to white

collar jobs and this is due to our present education system, which has molded generations to the thinking that all worth is measured in terms of money.

Attitude of the parents: Societal norms often are the biggest barrier to inclusion. Old attitudes die hard, and many still resist the accommodation of students with disabilities and learning issues, as well as those from minority cultures. Prejudices against those with differences can lead to discrimination, which inhibits the educational process. The challenges of inclusive education might be blamed on the students' challenges instead of the shortcomings of the educational system.

Lack of authentic and accurate data: A major restriction has been the lack of statistics on the prevalence of intellectual disability. Surveys conducted by the NSSO (National Sample Survey) and the Census reports of the same year shows varying figures with the NSSO quoting 1.85 Crore of the country's population and the census quoting 2.19 Crore of the population. Accuracy of statistics is always questionable since still many families do not reveal the truth if they have any children with disabilities in the family. They feel segregated from the mainstream society.

The big classrooms: since most of our schools except the elitist ones have classes where student teacher ratio is anywhere between 50 to 60. In most free educational institutions offering services to the poor and even in some middle class communities catering to a major chunk of educable children can hardly earn the title of quality. The disparity between elite educational institutions and their poorer counterparts are too glaring even to be mentioned. Large class enrollment resulted to teachers' inability to attend to each learner needs.

Lack of awareness: Majority of our educational institutions and the people who are involved in the educational system doesn't know about the concept clearly. It is important to note that within government documents and scholarly publications in India, the three different terms-segregation, integration and inclusion-are often used interchangeably.

Lack of skilled persons: Treating normal student is different than that of treating special child. In order to treat them properly systematic, comprehensive and proper training is required.. And the teachers must be trained according to. General training may not be that much sufficient to treat the differently abled children.

Suitable Curriculum: Curriculum is another area that needs a makeover. There is no curriculum for children with special needs to help them remain in the mainstream education. This creates segregation between people with and without disabilities. The curriculum, methods, skills and activities should be structured in such a way that they should cater to the

needs of all types of children in an inclusive setting. Children with disabilities need child-centered curriculum, which takes into account the individual needs of children. The curriculum needs to set specific, observable, measurable and achievable learning outcomes. A rigid curriculum that does not allow for experimentation or the use of different teaching methods can be an enormous barrier to inclusion.

Socio-economic factors: Areas that are traditionally poor and those with higher-than-average unemployment rates tend to have schools that reflect that environment, such as run-down facilities, students who are unable to afford basic necessities and other barriers to the learning process. Violence, poor health services and other social factors make create barriers even for traditional learners, and these challenges make inclusion all but impossible.

Funding: Adequate funding is a necessity for inclusion and yet it is rare. Schools often lack adequate facilities, qualified and properly-trained teachers and other staff members, educational materials and general support. Sadly, lack of resources is pervasive throughout many educational systems.

Co-operation: One of the final barriers associated with inclusion education is a lack of communication among administrators, teachers, specialists, staff, parents, and students. Open communication and coordinated planning between general education teachers and special education staff are essential for inclusion to work. Time is needed for teachers and specialists to meet and create well-constructed plans to identify and implement modifications the, accommodations, and specific goals for individual students. Collaboration must also exist among teachers, staff, and parents to meet a student's needs and facilitate learning at home.

Conclusion:

However, the journey towards Inclusive education has begun and is a reality since the mindset of government and the general public by and large has changed. The need of the hour is to end the differences between words like special education, regular education, and inclusive education. The most recent development is that an important Indian board, the Central Board of Secondary Education, has decided to set up an Inclusion panel for children with special needs. It says that the committee shall act as facilitator for promoting inclusive education at school and in neighborhoods. The committee shall also take steps to raise public awareness on the importance of equality, overcoming discrimination and prohibit any kind harassment and victimization of any child with special needs in school. This is the recent development in Special Education Needs programme which has given a new hope to parents of such children and the activists working in this field. The most important aspect is that not

only the education but social inclusion is also considered for holistic development of an individual who is differently able.

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