

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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"We need to be included. We require an umbrella of recognition." This is the cry of the excluded and marginalised children. They are excluded from the participation in the social, cultural, political and economic life of their communities. This is really awful. It is difficult to live in such a situation. Such a society is dangerous and harmful. This type of society needs a overhauling. This change can be done through education. That is **Inclusive Education**, where everyone is accepted. The concept of inclusive education has been spelt out in the Salamanca statement and the framework for action on special needs education 1994. It states that all governments have been urged to "adopt as a matter of law or policy, the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise". The basic premise is that the school should meet the educational needs of all children irrespective of their disabilities or limitations. Thus,

Inclusion is

- The concept of inclusion was conceived in 1948 with the declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly on the "International Bill of Rights" which recognises that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- This declaration fundamentally seeks to deal with the issue of discrimination at all levels in every facet of society.
- Inclusion is the acceptance of all people regardless of their differences. It is about appreciating people for who they are and their competences, rather than how they walk, talk or even behave.
- Inclusion also allows people to value the differences in each other by appreciating that each person is unique in his/her own creativity.
- Theoretically, inclusion is the creation of an enabling environment that provides for the acceptance of children with and without disabilities to play and interact every day without any prejudices whatsoever, even if these children are receiving therapeutic services.

- And for inclusion to succeed, it must be a passion that is shared by all the protagonists involved, including agencies, teachers, families, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Chiefs and the whole community.

And Inclusive Education is

- Education is the most effective way to break the cycle of discrimination and poverty that children with disabilities and their families often go through.
- In fact, it is about every child's right to participate in education, and the school's duty to accept him/her.
- According to the Children's Act, 1998, children with disabilities have the right to be educated with their non-disabled counterparts of their own age. The Act also states that children should have access to the same general curriculum taught to children without disabilities.
- Inclusive education, therefore, is when children with disabilities are placed in the same classroom environment as other children of their age who do not have disabilities.
- The idea is for these children to attend school in their neighbourhood with the same children whom they play with. This, it is believed, will enable these disabled children to make friends with their non-disabled counterparts and love school.
- The concept of inclusive education is a relatively controversial subject for many parents and educators. But the reality is that "inclusive education" involves modifications in philosophy, curriculum, teaching strategy, and structural organisation.
- Such modifications go beyond just affecting those students labelled as "disabled" and even far beyond the purview of what is traditionally known as special education.
- And each of these modifications has the potential to effect the necessary transformation and support needed by children with disabilities.
- Hence, it is essential that societies adapt their structures to ensure that all children, irrespective of age, gender and/or disability, can enjoy their basic human rights without discrimination of any sort.
- Research has proven beyond any reasonable doubt that it is possible to fully include children with disabilities in standard classrooms when the correct services and support-systems are provided.

- First, Behaviour-Intervention Plans must be put in place to address a child's behaviour at any time if necessary.

Definition of Inclusive Education:

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 marginalised areas or groups.” (The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3)

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development defines inclusive education as a philosophy that promotes:

- the right of all students to attend school with their peers, and to receive appropriate and quality programming;
- a range of supports and services in the most appropriate setting (large group, small group, individualized) respecting the dignity of the child;
- a welcoming school culture where all members of the school community feel they belong, achieve their potential, and contribute to the life of the school;
- an atmosphere which respects and values the participation of all members of the school community;
- a school community which celebrates diversity; and
- a safe and caring school environment.

Inclusive education is the process with which schools try to respond to all students as individuals, reviewing the organisation and provision of their curriculum (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996).

Inclusive education is virtually the practice that provides school experiences to children with special needs in the same school and classrooms they would attend if they did not have special needs. It is the process during which all children, regardless of their abilities and needs, participate into the same school. (Thomas, 1997)

Inclusive education acknowledges that all children can learn, respects differences in children e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability etc., enables education structures, *Copyright © 2017, Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies*

systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children, is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society, and is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving (Save the Children)

Inclusive education should be viewed in terms of including traditionally excluded or marginalized groups or making the invisible visible. The most marginalized groups are often invisible in society: disabled children, girls, children in remote villages, and the very poor. These invisible groups are excluded from governmental policy and access to education.

It is the implementation of the 'policy and process' that allows all children to participate in all programmes. 'Policy' means that disabled children should be accepted without any restrictions in all the educational programmes meant for other children. It denotes equality, and accepts every child with his own unique capabilities. This principle must be accepted by all the international, national and local programmes. The 'process' of inclusion denotes the ways in which the system makes itself welcoming to all. In terms of inclusion of disabled children, it means the shift in services from 'care of the disabled child' to his 'education and personal development'. Inclusive education goes one step further by defining these children as 'children with special needs' who need special attention, rather than children who are 'impaired' or 'handicapped'. Inclusive education is nothing but 'Making the programme for disabled children as an integral part of the general educational system rather than a system within general education'.

Legal Bases of Inclusive Education:

Inclusive education is based on few legal considerations. These are

- Articles on human rights of Universal Declaration
- Education for All and
- Millenium Development Goals

Articles on human rights of Universal Declaration:

- Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights(1948) calls for the right to education without discrimination for everyone
- Article 13 of the international Covenant on Economic, social and cultural Rights (1966) guarantees the right to education for everyone.
- Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) stipulates a child's right to education

- The Dakar Declaration on Education for All (2000) reiterates the concept of education as a fundamental human right

Education for All Goals:

- Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children,
- Ensuring by 2015 that all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to a complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality
- Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes
- Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills.

Millennium Development Goals:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger- halve the number of people living on one dollar a day and who suffer from hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women-equal access to primary and post-primary education for girls
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability- reduce by half those without access to safe water
- Develop a global partnership for development- more aid, more debt relief, access to essential drugs and good governance

Philosophical base Of Inclusive Education:

“Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam” Everything is God. **“Ekoham bahusyam”** I was one and I became many. From these declarations of Veda it is clear that All are equal and each one has equal right. Thus if all are equal then everywhere all should be given equal status. There should not be any differentiation. One should not see the external disability, but internal qualities and potentials should be observed. Inclusion is the birth right of each children. So, all children should be treated as children of God. They should all learn together and live together as brothers and sisters of one family following **fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind.**

Psychological base Of Inclusive Education:

Children feel happy to be together

Children are innocent, simple and pure. Their innate nature is to be happy and make others happy. When they are together they are really happy. As soon as they are separate and alone they are reserved/sad. Thus, there should not be any distinction among the children. They should be given equal opportunity.

Children want to be recognized

They aspire to be recognized is there in any human being so also the excluded children. They want to be a part of a larger group. Belongingness and recognition with a group is the strongest desire. Thus all children want to stay together, study together. If they are sent to special class, they feel segregated and develop a feeling of inferiority and this interpersonal problem is a lifelong problem. So, to save them from such a personality disorder inclusion is essential.

Children are same for Parents

All family and parents value equally their children and expects equal love, care and behavior from others. They want their wards to be participating in everyday activities, just like they would if their disability were not present. It's about building friendships, membership and having opportunities just like everyone else. So, inclusion is necessary.

Individual differences should be respected

All children are different in regards to their physical and psychological makeup. Their growth and development are different. There is inter and intra individual differences. These

differences should be taken care of. No one is better. There should not be any comparison. They should be treated equally. Inclusive education gives equal platform to all

Recipient of Inclusive Education:

A majority of special children go to special schools, away from their peers who go to regular schools. However, the Right to Education (RTE) Act, introduced in 2012 allows children with special needs to pursue mainstream education.

All students, irrespective of their impairment, should be educated in mainstream schools. "If we check Ch 2 (2) of the RTE Act, it says that a child with 'disability', as defined by the Persons with Disability Act 1995 and the National Trust Act, has the right to free and compulsory education as per the provisions of Ch V of the PWD Act,"

- I. Infants and children with special needs in the age group 0-6 yrs.
- II. Children with special needs in the age group 6-14yrs
- III. Young persons with disabilities in the age group 14 - to 21 yrs. who are part of the educational stream

Disability would refer to sensory, physical and intellectual impairments, communication, emotional and behavioral disorders, mental health difficulties and multiple disabilities. It would cover the disabilities as defined under the Persons with Disability Act (1995) and the National Trust Act (1999):



In the 0-6 yrs, this may also cover all children indicating developmental delay, low birth weight, termed at risk and medical problems that may lead to disabling conditions.

The 6-14 yrs group may also be referred to as Children with Special Needs (CWSN). As under the The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme which guidelines may be taken as a reference point.

Recently trans-genders are also included in this scheme.

Benefits of Inclusive Education:

As Inclusion is about welcoming diversity, providing equal access to education/ making certain provisions for special children without excluding them, it benefits all learners. The benefits are

- It promotes friendship
- It increases social initiations, relationships and networks
- It gives greater opportunities for interactions
- It develops the skill of acquisition and generalization
- It provides a way for higher expectations
- It paves a way to access to general curriculum
- It enhances participation
- It helps to have a realistic view of the society
- It prepares children for holistic future life

- It gives a better understanding and acceptance of diversity
- It provides greater academic outcomes
- It increases parent participation and family participation.
- It develops social skills and self esteem and confidence.

Thus, inclusion is about improving educational and social frameworks to cope with new trends in educational structures and governance. In this section the fundamental basis of inclusive education is discussed.

Exclusion from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of communities is one of the greatest problems facing individuals in our society today. Such societies are neither efficient nor desirable. In the past, efforts have consisted of specialized programmes, institutions and specialist educators. The unfortunate consequence of such differentiation, although well intended, has often been further exclusion. Achieving the EFA and Millennium Development Goals by their assigned time lines will require unprecedented inter-sectoral and inter agency collaboration among partners. Education must be viewed as a facilitator in everyone's human development and functionality, regardless of barriers of any kind, physical/ otherwise. Therefore, disability of any kind cannot be a disqualifier. Inclusion, thus, involves adopting a broad vision of Education for All by addressing the spectrum of needs of all learners, including those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion.

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