

Preparing Teachers For Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Inclusive education is based on the principle that local schools should provide for all children and young people regardless of any perceived social, emotional, cultural intellectual or linguistic difference or disability. Students who would previously have been referred to specialist forms of provision, having been judged 'less able', are now believed to belong in mainstream classrooms.

However, it is often argued that teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to work with such students in inclusive classrooms. This paper identifies key concepts associated with inclusive education and discusses them in relation to issues in the reform of teacher education. It argues that the reform of teacher education for inclusive education is an important activity in improving educational equity.

Introduction

In India, as elsewhere, classroom teachers are increasingly faced with the challenge of teaching learners whose differences vary across many dimensions. Schools often exclude, or refuse to include, certain students on the grounds that teachers do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to teach. This sense of being unqualified or not prepared to teach all students in inclusive classrooms raises questions about what constitutes 'necessary knowledge and skills', and different views about what classroom teachers need to know and how they might be prepared to work in inclusive classrooms.

In India, the issue of education of children with disabilities remains imperceptible, hidden from the public domain, a private problem for families and NGOs to deal with. It's time that governmental agencies as well as mainstream institutions woke up to the reality that '**segregation**' of children with challenging needs is morally unjustifiable and a violation of human rights. Indeed there is no other way to provide education to 27 million disabled children. Seventy-eight percent of Indian population lives in rural areas without provision for special schools. Therefore, inclusive schools have to address the needs of all children in every community and the central and state governments have to train their teachers to manage inclusive classrooms. This study aims to prepare mainstream classroom teachers for inclusive education starts from the premise that the question is not what teachers need to know or whether they have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach in inclusive classrooms, but how to make best use of what they already know when learners experience difficulty. Children with disabilities are educated in India through special schools as schools exclusively for blind and deaf under government sector. But there is not any special provision in mainstream government schools for education other disabled children like low vision, leprosy cured, hearing impaired, locomotory disabled, mentally retarded, mentally ill, autism affected, cerebral palsy affected and multiple-disabled. These children with disabilities are nurtured to some extent through the special schools of non-government sector. In Saharanpur many special schools have been established by NGOs or even government funded as Bachpan-day school, Rajkiya Netraheen Vidyalaya, Sparsh or Sankalp.

Legislation and Policy

The Constitution of India (26 November, 1949), clearly states in the Preamble that everyone has the right to equality of status and of opportunity. The Article 45 & (86th Amendment) Act 2002 makes it mandatory for the government to provide free and compulsory education to "all children of the age of 6-14 years", with its preamble clarifying that "all" includes children with disabilities as well. **The National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE, 1986), and the Programme of Action (1992), Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) & National Curriculum Framework, 2005** stresses the need for integrating the physically and mentally handicapped children with general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to face life with courage and confidence"

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. This is possible only in flexible education system that assimilates the needs of diverse range of learners.

Every child has the right to education according to the limits of his capacity, whether that capacity be small or great. Every child has the right to live free from Discrimination (United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1989). Children with special needs are termed as Exceptional children.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusive means all castes, religions, races, gender, abilities learning and working together. Inclusion means not only disabled children but also other children in our context amongst the poorer segments of society who face barriers to learning. As The girl child, socially and economically disadvantaged child & The child with disabilities

Inclusive education is about embracing all, making a commitment to do whatever it takes to provide each student in the community - and each citizen in a democracy - an inalienable right to belong, not to be excluded. Inclusion assumes that living and learning together is a better way that benefits everyone, not just children who are labeled as having a difference Inclusive education implies all young learners, young people-with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common pre-schools and schools with an appropriate network of support services.

What is Inclusive Education?

Children with and without disabilities educated together in their neighborhood school & community

All students in general education classes; having instruction in the core curriculum content and participating in extracurricular activities

General and special education teacher consultation and collaboration to incorporate special supports and services into age-appropriate school and community environments

Flexible and individualized decision making about services, supports, and locations for instruction

Opportunities for building social networks and friendships and having planned and facilitated social network and relationship building

Instruction in schools and in the community
Students are active participants and learn from each other
ZERO exclusion

Why Inclusion?

“Separateness in education can generate a feeling of inferiority as to [children’s] status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. This sense of inferiority ... affects the motivation of a child to learn...and has a tendency to retard ... educational and mental development“

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

Inclusion Must Be In These Three Ways

Academic , Social , Environment

Learning with each other – disable students can learn a lot with each other & with normal students.

Principles for the Inclusion of Disabled Children in Schools

- To provide for vocational training suitable according to their abilities at higher and senior secondary level.
- All the disabled children have the equal right to learn and benefit from education and co-curricular activities
- Zero rejection
- It is the school which has to adjust according to the requirements of the disabled children.
- To provide for the training of regular teachers.
- To promote awareness in the community for the education of the disabled children.

Demolishing myths as

1. Myth that normal school teachers will not be able take proper care of disabled children
2. Myth that Inclusion has to have a continuous support of well-resourced specialist services
3. Myth that inclusion is only for rich countries
4. Myth that disabled children are infectious

Practicing Inclusive Education

- Understanding inclusion as a continuing process.
- Encouraging the participation of all students, teachers and parents.
- Making the curriculum flexible according to the needs of the disabled ,while keeping the objectives of education the same for all children.
- Providing support for the teachers as well the students.
- Competencies Needed For An Inclusive Teacher
- 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 set high targets for disabled children.
- Have the ability to provide success experiences to the disabled children.
- Should have the knowledge of special instructional material and how to use 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.

Fear of the Parents

- Parents think their children with disability may not gain effectively in the inclusive setting.
- Parents fear that their children will be teased or harmed in the inclusive setting.

Continuum Of Inclusive Education

- Full time placement in regular classroom.
- Full time placement in the regular classroom with special education consultations.
- Full time placement in regular classroom with provision of itinerant educator.
- Full time placement in regular classroom with a resource room and resource teacher.
- Education in special class in general schools.

Instructional Strategies and Compensatory Support Devices

For Physically Hnadicapped

Adjustable furniture, Wheel chairs, Crutches, Removing structural barriers, standing frames

For Blind Children

Braille, Mobility sticks ,Yellow path,
Concrete objects to teach shape, size, weight, thickness etc. near to real experiences through touch, smell and hearing.
Teacher should be more verbal., Talking books and calculator,
Audio aids and recordings
Making them familiar with the directions, Providing for auditory cues in games and sports.

For Hearing Impaired

Hearing aid, Action oriented situations like dramatization for teaching emotional concepts.
Use of visual aids like transparencies, chalk board, flash cards, handouts of classroom instructions
Lip reading, Placing the child in the front row. & Providing for speech trainer

For Mentally Retarded (slow learners):

- Concrete objects for teaching different concepts real life like situations
- Making repetitions.
- Activity based learning rather than seat based learning.
- Limit the distractions as much as possible
- Providing the content in easy language with a lot of pictures.

Instructional Strategies And Compensatory Support Devices For Gifted Children

- Skipping the classes at Primary Level.
- Receiving some instructions at a Higher Level with another group of students.
- At secondary level special courses can be organized like-foreign languages
- Modification of the content by increasing its complexity and by bringing novelty

Pedagogy and Training – Putting Inclusive Principles in Teacher Training

- Pedagogy and training especially of the regular teachers are imperative for Inclusive Education to happen. This has to be with a resource support team from the special education to ensure retention of children in schools. NGO's and special schools could play an important role as Resource Support Teams.
- 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. The Principles of Inclusive Education need to be put into all training.
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What is required is the Reculturation of schools through:

Creating Inclusive Cultures, Producing Inclusive Policies and Evolving Inclusive Practices

RCI approved course for registered teachers need to be revised and included in the Ministry of HRD.

Special schools can become Resource Centres as well as Model Demonstration Hubs to actually demonstrate inclusive within each context engaging with Government's existing programmes.

Higher Education should like other countries across the world include a special subject of Disability Studies which should move away from the current medical entrenchment of disfunctioning individual to the social model of an enabling environment.

How do Teachers Support Inclusive Education? (Best Practices in the Classroom)

Collaboration with Parents, Teachers and other Specialists

Cooperative Learning and Peer Support

Differentiated Instruction

Specially Designed Instruction for Multiple Intelligences

Friendship Facilitation and Positive Behavioral Supports

Multi-age Groupings , Project-based Learning

Advanced Planning and Creative Problem-Solving

A Welcoming Environment for Parent Involvement

The teachers are being exposed to the concept of inclusive need based pedagogy through training on principles of effective teaching such as classroom organization, seating arrangements, TLM, IEPs, evaluation process etc. It is worth mentioning that similar in-service training programs are in operation in all Indian states under SSA.

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