

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION : TARGET GROUPS AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

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### Abstract

Inclusion is gaining ground day by day. There is a lot of talk in these days about inclusion. Inclusion plays a big role in the health and resilience of both individuals and communities. The people who feel included, who have rich and diverse social Networks, tend to be healthier, happier and longer-lived than people who are isolated. They also have more opportunities to participation and contribute to their communities. Thus inclusion benefits communities, too, by bringing them a wealth of knowledge, energy, talent and skills that might otherwise remain untapped.

An inclusion society is one that highly values each and every citizen. Achieving such inclusion involves ensuring that people with disabilities have access to knowledge and a meaningful partnership with government, communities and support agencies, based on respect and equality.

Inclusion education means that all students, regardless of their strength and weaknesses, become a natural part of the main stream school community. When a child with special needs is brought to main stream school and school makes necessary adaptations according to needs of particular child it is called inclusive education.

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## PRESENT SCENARIO

Internationally, the drive towards inclusion is fuelled by a number of initiatives and treaties, including the UN convention on the Rights of the child (1989), the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) and the UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994). Together these documents recognize the human rights of all children to education which is inclusive. 193 countries have signed the convention on the Rights of Child. The main focus of the Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992) is to regulate the training policies and programmes for persons with disability. National Trust Act (1999) provides for the constitution of a national body for the welfare of persons with multiple disabilities.

### Policy Perspective

*Mental Health Act (1987)* gives provisions for rehabilitation and treatment of people with mental health disabilities.

*Operation Blackboard (1987)* Aimed to improve the human and physical resources available in primary schools.

*The National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1992)* gives the basic policy framework for education, emphasizing the correcting of existing inequalities.

*The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2000)* has recommended inclusive schools for learners with special educational needs.

NCERT implemented *Project Integrated Education for the disabled (PIED)* during 1987 with financial support from UNICEF.

*District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)* A Nation wide plan to put local communities in charge of education. From 1995, Education of disabled children has also included as integral component of programme.

*Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for all campaign)*. This is a historic stride towards achieving the long cherished goal of Universalization of education.

*Restructuring and Recognition of Teacher Education (1987)* Created a resource for continuous upgrading of teachers' knowledge. In spite, of the several acts enacted and implemented and various schemes and programme launched, still there are non starters, drop outs, stagnation at every level of education.

## Target groups in Inclusive Education

The target groups in inclusive education are: children with special needs, working children, undocumented children, refugees, Rural children etc. Five A's of Inclusive Education are:

### 1. Availability

Obligation to ensure compulsory and free education for all children in the country within a determined age range, up to at least the minimum age of employment.

### 2. Accessibility

Obligation to eliminate gender and racial discrimination in education by ensuring enjoyment of all human rights in practice.

### 3. Acceptability

Obligation to set minimum standards of education, including the content of text books, curricula, health and safety and professional requirements of teachers.

### 4. Adaptability

Obligation to adopt education to the best interests of each child, especially regarding children with special needs or minority.

### 5. Accountability

Obligation to work in collaboration and to be responsible for a social change.

## Teaching Strategies

- i) Development of national norms for Inclusive Education, to set standards of implementation, training, monitoring and evaluation for the programme.
- ii) Provide inputs in all pre and in service training for mainstream and special/ regular education teachers to enable them to work with children with diverse needs in an inclusive education system.
- iii) Teachers and communities have been trained to participate in 'school mapping' to identify the un-reached children.
- iv) Appropriate Resource service centers in every province for students and teachers through appointment of special educators, rehab professionals, provision of resource room, aids and assistive devices etc to support mainstream school teachers in the classrooms.

- v) Adaptable alternative learning systems for more economically efficient, mobile schools- especially available to areas of conflict, children in special situations are reached out to in different ways.
- vi) Put in place an effective communication and delivery system for specific delivery of teaching/ learning material, aids and appliances, hardware/ software.
- vii) Participation in sports, co-curricular activities, to promote all round ability development.
- viii) Safety education should be the part and parcel of curriculum.

In brief, when analyzing entry points for intervention in the entire education sector, there is a need to follow a more systemic approach. The generation and transformation of knowledge and leadership must be looked at when trying to transform the education system and society to become more inclusive and rights-based. Changing the attitudes, understanding and implementation of inclusiveness begins with the training of students who will guide the next generation of professionals in various academic areas including medicine, law, and education and in every aspect of our society.

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