



Exploring the Importance and Challenges in Inclusive Education in India

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Abstract: For all individuals, including children with special needs, inclusive education is the fulfillment of the right to education. In India, the right to education is guaranteed and secured by the constitution for children with special needs. The goal of this research is to address the important and challenges of India's inclusive education. This paper finds that socio-cultural concerns that involve the belief system of society and parents, regulatory issues, technological policies, and inclusive education operations, as well as a support system, are the challenges of inclusive education in India. On the basis of these results, it is hoped that all participants will be committed to recognizing the involvement of children with special needs, socializing, and speeding up the inclusive education regulations in the regions.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Education for All, UNESCO, UNESCO.

Introduction

“**Inclusive education:** according to UNESCO, means that the school can provide a good education to all pupil irrespective of their varying abilities. All children will be treated with respect and ensured equal opportunities to learn together. Inclusive education is an on going process. Teachers must work actively and deliberately to reach its goals”.

Following the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, with the acceptance of the Salamanca Declaration and Mechanism for Action on Special Needs Education, inclusion captured the area in 1990. Ninety percent of children with disabilities do not attend school in developed countries, says UNESCO (UNESCO, 2009).

There is no formal or official definition of inclusion in India, which not only implies the placement of SEN students in standard classrooms. The Inclusive Education Draft Scheme prepared by the MHRD (2003) uses the following definition:

Inclusive education ensures that all learners, young people with or without disabilities, with an adequate network of support services, can learn together in ordinary pre-school provisions, schools, and community education environments.

According to the UNESCO Report on the Status of Disability in India 2000, around

30 million children are suffering from some sort of disability in India. The Sixth All-India Educational Survey (NCERT, 1998) estimated that 20 million of India's 200 million school-aged children (6-14 years) required special needs education. Although the national average for gross school attendance is over 90 percent, fewer than five percent of disabled children are in school. Most of these children stay outside conventional education (UNICEF, 2003).

Inclusive education occurs when kids with and without disabilities enroll in the same classes and work together. Evidence reveals that positive things happen when a child with disabilities attends classes alongside peers who do not have disabilities. Kids with disabilities have been taught in different classes or separate schools for a long time. People were accustomed to the belief that separate education meant special education. Yet we now know that beneficial academic and social effects for all the children concerned arise when kids are learned together. We all know that it does not yield positive results by merely placing children with and without disabilities together. When there is constant advocacy, planning, encouragement, and engagement, inclusive education happens.

Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is an approach that guarantees all students' participation, engagement, and achievement in education. This may take place in formal schools or non-formal learning areas, such as extra-curricular clubs and humanitarian camps. It also includes working in schools and other organizations responsible for education to adjust the processes, frameworks, policies, activities, and cultures so that they can adapt to the diversity of students in their group. Inclusion highlights opportunities for fair participation, however, where appropriate, options for special assistance and services and distinction within a shared learning environment (Sightsavers, 2011). All learners are included in the definition of inclusive education, but it can be interpreted differently according to the context. For instance, while it includes children who are excluded based on language, gender, race, disability, and other factors, it may only concentrate on children with disabilities. At the same time, more than one problem can affect kids. A child with disabilities may also speak, or be a refugee, the language of a minority ethnic group or, if she is a female, her family and community may not support the education of girls. According to Udo (2012), making schools inclusive for boys and girls with special needs enhances all students, including students facing exclusion due to other issues or more than one problem.

According to UNESCO (2011), Inclusion is:

- Recognition of the right to education and its provision in non -discriminatory ways.
- A common vision which covers all people.
- A belief that schools and other places of learning have a responsibility to educate all children (and adults) in line with human rights principles.
- A continuous process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners –regardless of factors such as disability, gender, age, ethnicity, language, HIV status, geographical location and sexuality –recognizing that all people can learn.

Inclusive education is the full integration of learners with and without special needs into the same classrooms and schools and thereby exposing them to the same learning opportunities. Ahmad (2010) defined inclusive education as the education of all children and young people with and without disabilities or difficulties in learning together in ordinary pre-primary schools, colleges, and universities with appropriate network support. Okwudire and Okechukwu (2018) saw inclusive education as the progressive increase in the participation of students, in reduction of their exclusion from the cultures, curricula, and communities of local schools. The authors further explained that with inclusive education, all students in a school regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area become part of the school community. It is a place where children are seen as equal members of the classroom without being marginalized. According to Ibok (2015), inclusive education means, providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age appropriate classrooms, in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society. It provides for equal access to educational opportunities in Nigeria at all levels of education. Inclusive education is a process of enhancing the capacity of the education system in any country to reach out to diverse learners for national development. The basis of inclusion is that special needs pupils have a right to benefit from a full school experience, with needed modifications and supports, alongside their peers without disabilities who receive general education.

Traditional education and inclusive education have so many differences, which are illustrated in Figure 1. The level of teaching competence is greater than that of traditional education. A design that is too special for inclusive education.

Inclusive education	Traditional Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for all • Flexible Individualized teaching • Learning in integrated settings • Emphasis on learning • Child centred • Holistic approach • Equalization of opportunities • Curricular view • Planning is made on ability • Label free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for some • Static or rigid • Collective teaching • Emphasis on teaching • Subject centred • Diagnostic • Opportunity limited by exclusion • Disability view • Disability wise • Labels children

Figure 1: Difference between inclusive education and traditional education.

Projects of education of children with disabilities in India

There are some projects education of children with disabilities in India:

1. Project for Integrated Education Development (PIED)
2. Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC)
3. District Primary Education Project (DPEP)
4. District Rehabilitation Centre and National Programme for Rehabilitation for Persons with Disability (NRPDP)
5. UN Support to primary education : Community School Programme.
6. SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) (Movement to Educate All). 7. Inclusive Education of the Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS)

Obstacles Faced by Inclusive Education

Some of the obstacles related to inclusive education with special reference to teacher preparation are:

- Lack of Teacher preparation Institution
- Lack of Competent Teacher Educator
- Lack of Infrastructure and Resources

- Lack of Proper Curriculum with special reference to Inclusive education during teacher preparation.
- Lack of proper strategies to improve practical skill and competency development on the part of student teachers.
- Lack of time for preparing teachers for inclusion in general classes.
- Lack of continuous workshop, seminar, projects, internship for special children education.
- Lack of adequate pedagogy and strategy to educate children with special need

Challenges

Teachers are the key to success in inclusion. Here, seven essential components for Teacher Preparation Programmes should be introduced based on the experience of training teachers in several teacher education institutions.

1. The Inclusive Teacher is an educational professional with a deep devotion to his or her culture. Topics with high social and community content should be included in the Teacher Training Program because they need to be attentive to student needs and the environment.
2. The Inclusive Teacher understands variations between people and implements learning strategies for both. The educational intervention focuses on diversity and encourages learning methods for quite a few and just one (equality) for all (equity). There are other important elements of the programs for teacher training. The principles of consistency, equality, and justice should be translated into concrete educational intervention acts.
3. Inclusion is funded by a group of teachers, a team exchanging information, making decisions, solving problems together, and creating behavior to strengthen the school and enhance learning for all. The collaborative work of teachers promotes inclusion and needs to be encouraged in the teacher training program. In this way, all pre-service educators should know and build skills because:
 - a. The teacher learns when teaching and the students teach when they learn
 - b. Everyone assumes tasks of leadership because we assume as protagonists.
 - c. Outcomes increase when we make synergy and identity is strengthened when we make joint decisions, shaping teams in the resolution of problems, allowing everyone to learn or re-learn social skills.

- d. The results begin when we work together because nobody, will do it for us whatever we must to do, let's do!
- e. The economic resources are a result of collaborative work and not a condition.
- f. Heterogeneity provides a great richness.
- g. Collaboration boosts accountability and recognition processes in all communities.

Conclusion

If all hands are put on the deck, the successful implementation of inclusive education at the level of basic education for national growth is already being implemented. Based on the appropriate provision of the required facilities, funds, and trained workers. It has been expected that if all hands are placed on task, the strategy would be able to lead to more positive results compared to the ones previously introduced. Under this structure or policy, all levels of government have been obliged by a requirement to provide all Indian people with free access to education. Students are expected to undergo compulsory primary and junior secondary education for nine (9) years, of which the former should be completed for a period of six years and the latter for a period of three (3) years. It is important to note that the successful implementation of inclusive education at the level of basic education will be futile without the different determinants listed in this work. Specific information for preparation needs to be given, instructional facilities for special requirements children, availability of trained staff at the basic level with special teacher interpreters in mind, and sufficient funding. When all of these are put in place, the successful implementation of comprehensive education at the level of basic education for national growth would go a long way.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should increase the budgetary allocation to the education sector in regard to the recommendation of UNESCO that 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should be allocated to the sector. Also, government at all levels should increase the funding of education especially the all educational programmes.
2. Adequate infrastructure and facilities should be provided even to the very grassroots by the government to ensure coverage.
3. Only qualified and skilled teachers should be recruited by the government.

4. A special directorate of inclusive education should be created in federal and state ministries of education charged with the responsibilities of planning, strategizing, implementing, and monitoring of inclusive education activities in Nigerian schools by the federal government.
5. Initial training and retraining of general and special education teachers to partake in the principles and practices of inclusive education should be put in place by the government prior to their utilization.

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