



# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A Holistic Approach

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## Abstract

Inclusive Education (IE) occupies an important place in its way towards social inclusion. Differently abled children get equal chances with all other students to share with class room learning in one and same platform. Because of "Minority Group" or "Divyangga" there was dearth of learning opportunities for them, but this inclusive education (IE) has paved way for social inclusion and thereby they have got free access to educational institutions. The modern India inclusive education is revolutionary approach which has established the right to education for all in a common educational set-up. In traditional India People with minority communities and disabilities were excluded from the educational facilities. Inclusive education brings social inclusion. There are different laws which protect the rights of differently abled persons. The Rights of Persons with Disability (RPwD) Act, 2016 has enhanced the scope of inclusive education in a broad manner as it is helpful for all learners regardless of learning abilities & disabilities. It supports all the students having passion to learn. It adheres the principle of inclusion and equity in diversity on the basis of ability. Similarly, the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 emphasises on inclusive education which invites social justice & equality for different communities and the whole society. Again, it focuses to eradicate educational barriers for children with special needs. The main **Objective** of this small piece of study is to focus on the importance of inclusive education and the principle of social inclusion. It also identifies the challenges in the path of inclusive education & suggests strategies to curve the challenges. This is completely a **Review Paper** & data is collected from secondary sources.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Inclusion, Differently Abled Persons, Minorities, Diversities & Challenges & Opportunities.

## INTRODUCTION

In the present digital era "Inclusive Education" is an important topic of discussion. It welcomes and includes all pupils irrespective of abilities and different abilities. The new approach "Inclusive Education" emphasises the accessibility of education of children under one roof without creating discrimination on the basis of race, gender & religion. It provides the right to learn and promote equity in education (Chandra, S. 2022). As we focus on the root of Inclusive Education in India there were twenty-four schools established for deaf before independence. The first school for deaf was opened by Roman Catholic Mission in Bombay Presidency in 1884. In 1887, the first blind school was founded in Amritsar. In 1893 another school was started for deaf & dumb in Calcutta and in 1896 in South India a school for deaf was also started (Disability Status India, 2003). There is increase in the need and number of schools for differently abled persons. On the basis of availability of data in the "Department of Education" in present era in India near about two thousand special needed schools are operating. But these schools are basically located in urban areas for which the problems of rural children who are differently abled are yet to be solved. In 1960s the Government of India has designed a training scheme for the teachers who would teach the special children with visual impairment and gradually different schemes by the Government have been introduced to uplift the differently abled children with the facility of trained teachers. But the lack of uniformity of syllabus of different courses, eligibility criteria of admission of students, no-availability of adequate number of teachers again have created questions on the success of Inclusive Education (Sanjeev, K. 2008). According to "Indian Education Policy & Inclusivity", the "Kothari Commission" in 1966 has focused on the significance and need of regular schools for differently abled children. In 1974, the first formal step towards inclusive education has taken by the Government who has introduced the program named "Integrated

Education for Disabled Children” (IEDC). It aims towards the retention and progress of children having disabilities. From 2018-19 the “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” aims to provide quality education for all students having ability & disability. It provides “Teaching-Learning Materials” (TLM) which creates awareness of differently abled children and acts as an initiative for them. It consists of different aids like: uniforms, large print books, Braille books, therapeutic services and other appliances. It also focuses on both general teachers and training of special educators and stipend with special need. The “National Education Policy 2020” aims maintenance of the principle of equity and fairness in education and promotes inclusive education. It emphasises on the education of children & youth specially girls belonging to economically and socially disadvantageous groups. At the same time large number of NGOs come to front with a philanthropic view and take the charge of inclusive education as it is the fundamental right to all and not a privilege. (<https://wordsopedia.com/inclusive-education-in-india/>).

## Review Of Literature

Sukumar (2023), has stated that inclusive education is a new approach which provides right to education opportunity to the children who were being excluded from education facility. It treats differently abled children and children who speak minority language equally with common students. It aims to reduce discrimination and promotes equality along with essential care and responsibilities. Sandeep (2022), has put question on whether the schools in India really follow the principle of inclusion. Because there is lack of awareness among parents, infrastructural problems, inadequate resources, irregular plans and improper execution of policies. The author has also focused on the issue of decline of enrolment of Children with Disabilities (CWD) in each successive level of schooling and near about 9% students complete secondary education. As compare to boys the drop-down case is higher with girls. The lack of inclusive schools forces the Children with Special Needs (CWSN) to opt for National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). Sanjeev (2007), has focused on the study of education of children with special needs which come under ministry of social justice & empowerment and takes care of the rehabilitation of differently abled children rather than the provision of education on the basis of the principle of equity. As it does not come under the human resource development ministry, the education of children with special need is not highlighted specially. Till today it is imperceptible and away from the public domain. Therefore, according to the author it is the time for the government institutions & non-government institutions to be focused to curb the challenges faced by the thirty-six million children with special needs. Hossain (2021), has discussed on the new approach, inclusive education which aims to provide education of differently abled children in the same roof with normal peers. The author states that on the basis of inclusive education one classroom and one community bring all students together regardless their strengths & weaknesses. It aims to maximise potential of all students with the help of beneficial policies & programs. The author also suggests to make a tolerant society which takes care of all children regardless their social, emotional, physical and intellectual conditions. Makwana (2022), has emphasised on design or structure of inclusive learning which should be linear-friendly and helpful for students and they enjoy their lessons. The author has also suggested that to be more innovative both educators & parents along with the community should work together. By doing this the huddles in the path of inclusive education can be dissolved easily and the children can overcome from such difficulties. The Government of India plays very vital role to enhance system of education including principle of inclusion. Chatterjee (2015), has focused on challenges of inclusive education & Governmental support to overcome the challenges. According to the author near about fifty percent of differently abled children are not able to get facilities of inclusive education as they are not in school. In India on the basis of different dimensions like: cast, gender, poverty & disability nearly eight million children are out of school. Hence, the Government of India has taken certain initiatives through several policies like: special education for special children in a common educational base or a common roof where children get education regardless their strengths & weaknesses. Singh (2016), has discussed on the concept of inclusive education and the heavy dropout rate of differently abled children in India. The author has focused on community barriers along with the lack of infrastructural facilities which are big challenges in the path of inclusive education. As inclusive education aims to provide education to children with unique abilities & disabilities under a common roof, it is the basic responsibility of the community, State Government & Central Government to provide infrastructural facilities & develop awareness towards inclusive education.

## Objective Of the Study

- To focus on the basic concept & importance of Inclusive Education.
- To identify challenges in the path of Inclusive Education
- To suggest remedial measures to curb the challenges and focus on future perspectives.

## Methodology Of the Study

This small piece of study is based on secondary sources of data collection. Data is collected from various sources such as, different journals, articles, books, e-books, newspapers and publications. This is a review-based study.

## Concept Of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education aims to educate children in a same roof with their abilities and disabilities, specially who are excluded from the general system of education. It tries to establish an appropriate network of support services to differently abled & minority students by accessing educational facilities. Inclusive Education has got its root at “World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access & Quality” (Salamanca, 1994). It signifies that inclusive education is value based as it is based on quality & accessibility. It can be possible only when the educational system will be flexible and assimilate with the needs of children of marginal group. Again, World Education Forum restated “Inclusive Education” & it is supported by United Nations (Dakar, 2000). In India “Inclusive Education” has published by CORE Scholar, 2007 which aims to provide equal opportunities of education to differently abled children. “Inclusive Education” is different from “Special need Education”. “Special Education” has been replaced and “Special Need Education” has been introduced which aims to provide education to both children & youth whose needs arise from disabilities & difficulties of learning. It provides regular school facilities with accommodation to differently abled children. The “Special Need Education” focuses on optimal progress of the children who are failing to access school or educational facilities due to different reasons. According to International Standard Classification of Education, 1997 it aims to provide additional support to those children by focusing on trained teaching staff, material resources & other accessories. But the inferiority complexes among those pupils and their parents again leads to exclusion and the growth rate diminishes gradually which creates a need for “Inclusive Education”. Both special needs & normal children come together, learn & develop in a common platform in “Inclusive Education”. On 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2005 the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) has made a collaboration with National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) to develop curriculum for special education with inclusion (Sanjeev, 2008). In 1994 Salamanca statement focuses on “Inclusive Education” which aims to accommodate children regardless of social, economic, psychological, physical, emotional, linguistic and other conditions. “Inclusive Education” paves the way towards “Social Inclusion” as it includes “differently abled children, gifted children, special children, ethnic children, minority children, street & working children”. Indian Government opens the door for “Inclusive Education” through different schemes, policies, programs & legal enactments. At the same time, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and social associations are contributing towards “Inclusive Education” through various types of developmental initiatives regularly (Singh, 2020).

## Challenges Of Inclusive Education

In case of India as resources are scarce and it is also difficult to provide quality education for common children, it is a great challenge to provide educational accessibility to differently abled children (Dash, 2006). In India eight million children are away from school on the basis of discrimination related to cast, religion, gender & disability. Nearly ten percentage of children are living lives with disability out of which eighty percent of children are living in rural areas and fifty percent of children are not attaining school. Indian Government has developed different policies for differently abled children and implemented Inclusive Education which aims to build up equality among all children and right to education for all. But to achieve the goal of Inclusive Education the country has been facing different challenges (Chatterjee, 2015).

According to Sanjeev, KR. & Kumar, K. (2008) there are some challenges which demand great attention for the success of Inclusive Education. These can be explained in the following manner.

- Availability of Trained Teachers or Trainers.
- Question on Sincere Effort of Teachers & their Performance.
- Lack of Consideration or Empathy of Teachers towards Special Students.
- Lack of Uniformity in the Syllabus of different courses.
- Unconducive Structure of Class Room & Lack of Basic Amenities.
- Difference in the Admission Criteria & Pattern of Teaching.
- Cultural Barriers & Inadequate Collaboration & Communication.
- Absence of Parental Concern create differently abled children more disabled.

Hossain, A. (2021) has focused on certain attitudinal issues in the contest of Inclusive India which are explained in the following manner.

- Rigidity of Society.
- Unconducive School Environment & Lack of Infrastructure.
- Lack of Adaptability & Poor Response towards Inclusive Education.
- Parental Approach or Inferior Complexity for Differently Abled.
- Lack of clear Objective & Educational Strategy.

According to Chandra, S. (2022), the basic barriers faced by India regarding Inclusive Education are:

- Infrastructural Problems in school set-up for differently abled children.
- Lack of Awareness among parents of special children along with Scanty Funds.
- In absence of Positive Attitude of Teachers towards these children.
- Unstructured Inclusive Platform for Gifted Children.
- Benefits reach towards Limited Number of Children in Rural Areas.
- Irregular Plans & Improper Execution of such Plans create huddles in the path of the. achievement of the goal of Inclusive Education.

## Strategies To Overcome Challenges In the Path Of Inclusive Education

It is always important to overcome challenges in the path of Inclusive Education as it will be helpful for the morale enhancement of Special Children & it will provide social security measures & psychological support to them. The Government of India has introduced several schemes regarding Inclusive Education. The policies emphasise on the rights of differently abled students and act as a legal safeguard for them.

There are certain points which are discussed as remedial actions regarding Inclusive Education. (<https://www.mizanurmizan.info/overcoming-challenges-in-inclusive-education-promoting-equal-opportunities-for-all/>)/These are:

- Provision of Infrastructural Facilities.
- Allocate Trained Teachers
- Focusing Proper Co-ordination & Communication Through Advocacy Organizations
- Promoting Attitudinal Awareness.
- Inclusive Education Models

### Provision Of Infrastructural Facilities

Inclusive Education demands accessibility of resources & basic infrastructure in educational set-up. The physical accommodation, assistive technology, learning materials, digital platform of learning, Braille material, sign language interpreter, adaptive devices, text books & other provisions should be provided adequately to differently abled children. The schools should have accessible rest rooms, ramps and sensory friendly spaces.



### **Allocate Trained Teachers Or Instructors**

There should be provision of trained teachers or efficient instructors who will be able to reduce the challenges in the path of Inclusive Education. Because availability of limited trained teachers for Special Children is a great hindrance to achieve the goal of inclusion. To address this challenge, it is important to invest resources on the training of teachers & instructors & ongoing professional development programs. The teachers with necessary skills & education can effectively participate in inclusive teaching practices. They prepare different strategies for inclusive learning programs by conducting different workshops, seminars & training sessions. The students feel free to participate in such programmes with the support of those instructors & their competency will be enhanced.

### **Focusing On Proper Co-ordination & Communication Through Advocacy Organizations**

Focusing on proper co-ordination and communication is the key to success of Inclusive Education. The Advocacy Organizations or Special Interest Groups or Lobby Groups which are engrossed in Inclusive Education play very vital role in maintaining co-ordination by allocating resources to teachers, parents or guardians, community or society for the betterment of differently abled children. The advocacy organizations maintain proper communication with teachers, support staffs, students and their parents. Parent teacher communication is done through meetings and conferences and it aims to provide a holistic approach to Inclusive Education. A broad frame work of inclusion is introduced as the organizations identify basic needs of the differently abled children and prepare strategies & plans to fulfil those basic needs.

### **Promoting Attitudinal Awareness**

Indian society is not free from stereotype biasness towards Special Children. Differently abled children are being neglected by the community, society and sometimes by their own family members. Some family members consider them as curse & inefficient as compared to other normal children. The comprehensive approach is the best way to deal with such attitudinal barriers. The awareness should be developed from the grassroot level first for which the schools should take initiatives towards awareness campaigns & training sessions to promote empathy. Encouraging humanity, acceptance and respect for special children can spread the culture of inclusion.

### **Inclusive Education Models**

There are certain Inclusive Education models which provide equal opportunities to all students. These are explained in the following manner.

- A Whole School Approach.
- Collaboration Approach
- Individualise Educational Program

#### **A Whole School Approach**

The Whole School Approach of Inclusion Model is based on the thought of creation of inclusive environment in entire school. Its main aim is to provide support to differently abled students in a general class room and it also focuses on sharing responsibility and collaboration along with accommodations and specialized instructions. As a result, there is build of friendship, social security and a sense of belongingness develop among all students.

#### **Collaboration Approach**

The Collaboration Approach of Co-Teaching Model helps to provide education to differently abled children and common children by two or more teachers or instructors in the same roof. A specialist deals with specialization education and another teacher deals with common education. Co-teachers are able to meet the diversified needs of diversified students and they share their responsibilities. This model is based on collaboration and student engagement.

## Individualise Education Program

Develop individualise plans and programs for each and every individual special child is the main aim of Individualised Education Program. It decides specific goals for specific differently abled student, provides support and prepares strategies to achieve that particular goal. Every goal is unique and tailor made, as every child is different. Personal care is taken to access the curriculum and progress of differently abled students.

## Conclusion

Inclusive Education aims to provide a common learning platform for all students with their strengths and weaknesses. Inclusive Education is not free from different challenges. Lack of proper implementation of policies, constraint of resources, inadequate trained teachers, attitudinal barriers and lack of infrastructural facilities create a question mark on its success. But the initiatives taken by the Government and Non-Government Organizations are helpful to take Inclusive Education in the path of achievement of its goals and objectives. Inclusive Education fosters a collaborative relationship between instructors and parents for the development of differently abled students. It creates a social inclusion by participation of all students under a common roof through co-teachers, workshops, seminars and other developmental programs. Hence, social awareness and first of all the awareness of parents is very vital in child's education. Schools should provide support and resources timely to create a belongingness towards Inclusive Education. Parents, teachers, communities and the overall society should be empathetic for "Differently Children" and consider them as a "Blessing" as they are "Special Children".

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