

Effective Implementation of Right to Education Act in Higher Education System of India: with Special Reference Towards its Integration in the Present Scenario of Inclusive Education in India

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Abstract

India is the third largest economy of the world in terms of purchasing power. Despite this improvement, more than 460 million people in India live in poverty. The reciprocity of poverty producing disability, and disability resulting in poverty has created new challengers for the implementation of inclusive education in India. The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including persons with disabilities. In the recent years, there has been a vast and positive change in the perception of the society towards persons with disabilities. It has been realized that a majority of persons with disabilities can lead a better quality of life if they have equal opportunities and effective access to rehabilitation measures. In India about 240 million children are disabled and have been denied access to education due to certain barriers outside the institutions and those within. Such barriers include narrowly defined set of eligibility criteria, negative attitude, and inaccessible environments. In India, inclusive education is instrumental in addressing these barriers and in making education accessible to children with disabilities and for those who are denied access on racial, ethnic, health, linguistic and cultural grounds. The range of challenges confronting the school system while including children with diverse backgrounds have to be met by creating child centred pedagogy, through community development and community participation. The RTE Act makes it mandatory to all schools to accept children with learning disabilities and learning differences. The present paper explores that through RTE Act, there is a huge leap in the education system and the Governmental efforts to embrace the educable population in a wider perspective. In purview of these, teachers have to play a crucial and central in promoting inclusive development, participation and reducing underachievement, especially with children who might be perceived as having difficulties in learning. The present research paper also focuses upon that how inclusion is the major challenge facing educational systems and schools around the world. This paper also highlights the concept of inclusive education, legislation act and policy towards the movement of more inclusive education and a number of strategies to address the current challenges that Indian administrators and educators are facing towards inclusive education.

Key Words: *Inclusion, Inclusive Education, Inclusive Schools, Integration. Mainstreaming, Persons with Disabilities.*

Introduction

With the release of the Salamanca Statement in 1994 (UNESCO)²³, a large number of developing countries started reformulating their policies to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools. While a large number of developed countries now have policies or laws promoting “inclusive education”, as number of developing countries continue to provide educational services to students with disabilities in “segregated” schools.

Inclusive education means including children with disabilities in regular classrooms that have been designed for children without disabilities (Kugelmass, 2004)⁹. It is an educational practice based on the social premise of justice that advocates for equal access to educational opportunities for all children regardless of their physical, intellectual emotional or learning disability (Loreman et al, 2005)¹⁰. Ainscow (1995)² states that the aim of inclusive education is restructuring school so as to address the learning needs of all learners. That is, schools must change in order to be able to meet the learning needs of all learners in a given community.

Inclusive education also means “that students with disabilities are served primarily in the general education settings, under the responsibility of regular classroom teacher. When necessary and justifiable, students with disabilities may also receive some of their instruction in another setting, such as resource room” (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004)¹¹. According to UNESCO (2005)²⁴, “Inclusion is a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as a problem but as opportunity for enriching learning”. The aim of inclusive education is to remove the historical exclusion within and outside the school through enactment or modification of legislation, policies and educational management practices in order to promote the reorganization of the educational systems and the acceptance of all students independently of their differences (Rieser, 2009)¹⁵. Differences among students could be related to disability, gender, size, colour or ethnicity and disability is just one of the differences and does not limit ones strength and abilities. Inclusive education recognizes that these differences are valuable and bring creativity and through them ideas are shared and experienced. In other words, inclusion is about transforming systems to be inclusive of everyone and not about inserting persons with disabilities into existing structures (UNICEF, 2009)²⁵. Inclusion in education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. Under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students. Implementation of these practices varies. Schools most frequently use them for selected students with mild to severe special needs (Allen & Schwartz, 2000)³. Inclusive education differs from previously held notions of ‘integration’ and ‘mainstreaming’, which tended to be concerned principally with disability and ‘special educational needs’ and implied learners changing or becoming ‘ready for’ or deserving of accommodation by the mainstream.

By contrast, inclusion is about the child’s right to participate and the school’s duty to accept the child. Inclusion rejects the use special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. A premium is placed upon full participation by students with disabilities and upon respect for their social, civil, and educational rights. Inclusion gives children with disabilities skill they can use in and out of the classroom, “Students learn the importance of individual and group contributions

and develop valuable life skills that are often unexplored in less inclusive settings” (Tapasak, 2000)²⁰. In India, “integrated education” has been provided mainly to students with mild disabilities who are considered “easy “to include into regular school programs. In inclusive school difference is recognised, respected and represented. The inclusive schools demand reconstructed educational thinking and practice in regular schools for the benefit of all students (Slee, 2001 b)¹⁸. This involves reconstructing and realigning the whole system and the entire component parts so that assessment, curriculum,. Instruction, professional development, program evaluation and accountability.... work synergistically to ensure meaningful and sustained school improvement.

The Promise of Inclusive Education

- It is a fundamental objective of inclusive education to have a provision for the Education for All, irrespective of sex, physical and mental characteristics, socio-economic status and cultural variation.
- To bring all children together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and seeks to maximize the potential of all learners.
- To make sure those diverse learners-those with disabilities, different languages and cultures, different homes and family lives, different interest and ways of learning are exposed to teaching strategies that reach them as individual learners.
- To provide appropriate individualised supports and services to all students without the stigmatization that comes with separation.
- To vary teaching styles in inclusive classrooms to enhance learning for all students.
- To protect individual’s fundamental rights including right to education.
- To help special educational need children to have a respectable space in the society so that society may feel that they are important part of the society.
- To improve quality of education.
- To inculcate self confidence in the children, especially the disabled enabling them to compensate for their real as well as imagined deficiencies.
- To develop feeling of brotherhood.
- To transform disability and helplessness into competence and potential;
- To prepare them for new challenges.

Resources Required for Inclusive Education

Although once hailed as a way to increase achievement while decreasing costs, full inclusion does not save money, reduce students’ needs, or improve academic outcomes; in most cases, it merely moves the special education professionals out of their own classrooms and into a corner of the general classroom. To avoid harm to the academic education of students with disabilities, full panoply of services and resources is required, including:

- a) Adequate supports and services for the student.
- b) Well-designed individualised education programs.
- c) Professional development for all teachers involved, general; and special educators alike.
- d) Time for teachers to plan, meet, create and evaluate the students together.

- e) Reduced class size based on the severity of the student needs.
- f) Professional skill development in the areas of cooperative learning, peer tutoring, adaptive curriculum.
- g) Collaboration between parents, teachers and administrators.
- h) Sufficient funding so that schools will be able to develop programs for students based on student need instead of the availability of funding.

Government Policies, Programs and Legislative Frameworks in Inclusive Education

In 1950, when the Indian constitution was adopted, the focus of educational programmes has remained on Universalization of Elementary Education. This also included children with special needs. The Govt. Of India, through various schemes and programs has been making special efforts in assuring the enrolment of the children and youth with disabilities in the regular school system. The Central government schemes such as Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC), District Primary Education Program (DPEP) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) contain provisions for supporting the education of such children.

National Policy on Education (1986) & the Programme of Action (1992) stress the need for integrating children with special needs with other groups. The objective to be achieved as stated in NPE, 1986 is “to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence”.

Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC)

In 1970's, the Govt. launched the centrally sponsored scheme of IEDC. The scheme aimed to provide educational opportunities to learners with disabilities in regular schools and to facilitate their achievement and retention. Under the scheme hundred percent financial assistance is provided to for setting up resource centres, surveys and assessment of disabled children with disabilities, purchase and production of instructional materials and training & orientation of teachers.

Persons with Disability (PWD) Act of 1995

The PWD Act required the Central, State, and Union Territory Governments to ensure that all children with disabilities had access to a “free and appropriate” education until the age of 18 years. It also called upon these three tiers of Government to promote “integrated education”. The Act outlined a comprehensive education scheme to provide transportation facilities, remove architectural barriers, supply free books and other study materials, grant scholarships, restructure curriculum, and modify the examinations system for the benefit of children with special needs (Virk, 2012)²⁶.

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP)

DPEP was launched to achieve the objective of education for all. The scheme was initially launched in selected clusters and blocks. It has now been expanded to more blocks and districts in the country. The advantage of this scheme is that it takes care of all areas from identification, assessment, enrolment and provision of appliances to total integration of disabled children in schools with resource support, teacher training and parent counselling.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

SSA was launched to achieve the goal of UEE. SSA advocated that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability is provided meaningful and quality education by adopting a zero rejection policy. The emphasis is that no child having special needs is deprived of his/her right to education and should be taught in an atmosphere best suited for his/her learning needs. This includes mainstreaming into the formal system, special schools for the needs, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS), Alternative Innovation Education (AIE) and home based education. SSA provides up to Rs. 1200 per child with disability for inclusion per year. The interventions include:

- a) Early detection & Identification
- b) Functional & formal assessment
- c) Educational Placement
- d) Provision of aids & appliances.
- e) Support services
- f) Teacher Training
- g) Resource support
- h) Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- i) Parent training & community mobilization
- j) Planning & management
- k) Strengthening of special schools
- l) Removal of Architectural barriers
- m) Research
- n) Monitoring & Evaluation
- o) Focus on Girls with disabilities

Inclusive Education and Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act

Inclusive education is a worldwide movement which is transforming the educational system. Inclusive education addresses a real need, is a readily understandable concept, and in most countries required no new major resources, but primarily involves changes in attitudes, behaviour and ways of working in addition; it has the potential to make a very effective starting point for addressing the rights of the child (Booth, 1998)⁵. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE)¹⁴ which was passed by the Government of India in the year 2009, and was implemented by states in 2012. It now makes it mandatory for all children between 6-14 years in India to receive free and compulsory education.

With this Act being passed, India became one of the 135 countries to make education as fundamental right of every child. This Act for the first time in India ensured that all children irrespective of any gender, social category, economic status and learning differences had access to any school. The Act enforced that no child will be held back, expelled, or required to pass board examination until the completion of elementary education. There is also a provision for special training of school drop-outs to bring them at par with students of the same age. A critical documentation in 2011 was to extend the right to education till class ten or to include 16 years olds too. The Right to Education of Persons with Disabilities until 18 years of age is

laid down under a separate legislation—the persons with Disabilities Act. A number of other provisions regarding improvement of school infrastructure, teacher-students ratio and faculty are made in this Act. The RTE Act requires surveys that will monitor all neighbourhoods' schools, identify children with a requirement for education and set up facilities for providing it. The World Bank Education Specialist for India, Sam Carlson, has observed that RTE act is perhaps the first legislation in the world that puts responsibility of ensuring enrolment, attendance and completion of education on Government as compared to other countries where the responsibilities lie with the parents.

RTE Act also provides for a special organization, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, an autonomous body set up in 2007, to monitor the implementation of the Act, together with the Commissions to be set up by the states. As general mainstream schools become less discriminatory, the capabilities of the vast cross sections of school going population would be varying. The most crying need at present therefore, is to empower our teaching community to realize their educational needs of the children who may have a need to learn differently along with their more able peers in a mainstream classroom. Thus, the awareness and exposure and skills building training may become the focal point of teacher training from the perspective of the implementation and true realization of the RTE Act.

In this regard, the Act further states that norms and standard of teacher qualification and training are also being laid down by the authority. Teachers in all school have to comply with these norms within the next 05 years starting from the inception of the Act. It is a well recognized fact that well aware teachers who are not only capable of teaching their subjects but also knows how to cater to the needs of the4 divergent educable school population, the significance of effective teaching to be realized and delivered is of utmost importance.

Nearly after two years after the RTE Act was implemented in some of the other states, the Government of Andhra Pradesh framed rules for implementing the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. In keeping with the provisions of the Act, the age of admission to Class I has been raised to 06 years as opposed to 5 years. The notification specifies that the Government will have to ensure the availability of a primary school (class 1 to 4) to a child within a 1 km in rural areas and within half a km in the urban areas. The notification proposes to set up Right To Education Protection Authority (REPA) in the state till the Government comes up with State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) to supervise the implementation of the Act in Andhra Pradesh. The newly framed rules also specify that the State Government, through local authorities like the panchayats and municipalities will keep a record of all children from 6-14 years to ensure that they are provided compulsory and free elementary education.

The overall goal of RTE Act is to ensure that school is a place where all children participate and are treated equally. This involves a change in how we think about education. Inclusive education is based on the right of all learners to a quality of education that meets basic learning needs and enriched lives. Focusing particularly vulnerable and marginalized groups, it seeks to develop the full potential of every individual. Inclusive education has established itself as an important element within the general context of education.

The ultimate goal of RTE is to end all forms of discrimination and foster social cohesion, which is in consonance with social work goals.

Problems and Challenges towards implementing Inclusive Education in India

Some challenges and problem in implementing inclusive education in India are:

1. Challenge of poverty associated with disability:

With an estimated 1,027 million people, India is the world's second most populated country. It has 17% of the global population and 20% of the world's out of school, children. Despite impressive gains in the last few decades, India still has more than 260 million people living in poverty. A large number of children with disabilities live in families with income significantly below the poverty level.

Disability causes poverty. The combination of poverty and disability results in a condition of "simultaneous deprivation". Recently, the Ministry of Rural development, Govt. of India, has allocated 3% of funds in poverty alleviation programmes targeting families of children with disabilities (Sharma, B.L.2004)¹⁶.

2. Challenge to modify deeply held attitudes

Attitudes of the non-disabled are proving to be a major barrier in social integration of PWDs. "The more severe and visible the deformity is, the greater is the fear of contagion, hence the attitudes of aversion and segregation towards the crippled" (Desai, 2002)⁷. Such attitudes are hurdles in path of any attempts to include students with disabilities into regular schools. Alur, M. (2001)⁴, in her study found that disability in India is not seen as something "normal" or "natural", rather it is seen as an "evil eye". She further concludes that "the contradiction here was that the Indian society, although integrated in accepting and valuing diversity in so many ways has a social role construct of disability which is negative, discriminatory and exclusionary". Parents of disabled children think that disabled and handicapped are not educable. Teacher's attitude is not positive towards the implementation of inclusive education in the regular classroom, as it gives extra burden on them without any incentive.

3. Challenge of providing adequate levels of training to key stakeholders

Majority of school personnel in India are not trained to design and implement educational programs for students with disabilities in regular schools. Most teacher training programs in India do not have unit on Disability Studies (Myreddi & Narayan, 2000)¹². Universities, which do not cover some aspects of special education in their teacher training programs, fail to train teachers adequately to work in inclusive settings. For example, there is limited coverage of information about practical strategies (Myreddi & Narayan, 2000)¹². Placement of pre-service teachers in special or integrated schools is rarely given consideration (Jangira, Singh)⁸. Greater variations are noted in the content, process and examination of existing special education programs as well in the country (Myreddi & Narayan, 2000)¹². However, the situation may improve in the coming years as the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) will periodically evaluate special education programs to ensure that each program meets minimum standards (RCI, 2006)¹³.

4. Lack of Trained Teachers

The report of the RCI (2006)¹³ states that the number of trained special education teachers is extremely small, considering the number of children with disabilities that require their services. In 2011,

there were only 9,492 specially trained teachers. Of these, 4,295 were trained to teach children with mental retardation, 1,079 were trained to teach students with visual disabilities, 4,011 were trained to teach students with hearing impairments; and only 107 were trained to teach students with locomotor disabilities in India. To address, this severe shortage of trained teachers, RCI recommended that an additional 44,000 teachers would be needed to be trained by the end of Eleventh five year plan (2007-2012). However, even if these targets are to be achieved, only 10% of the population of children with disabilities would be served (RCI, 2006)¹³.

6. Inadequate Resources

Majority of schools in India are poorly designed and few are equipped to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. The lack of disability friendly transport services and inaccessible building are considered by some to be far greater problems than social prejudice and negative attitudes (Chatterjee, 2003)⁶.

7. Rigid methods & Curriculum

Teaching methodology and curriculum in the present educational system are rigid and not in accordance with the special educational needs of children. There is a need of coordination between the educational institutions/ universities and schools for the flexible teaching methodology and curriculum development.

8. Poor Coordination between Parents and Schools

Poor coordination between the school and parents cause to problems of identification of educational needs of children. Implementation of current concept of inclusive education and information regarding its importance is quite difficult without proper coordination between parents, teachers & schools (Virk, 2012)²⁶.

9. Drop-out Rate

Drop-out rate of special educational needs children is very high. Drop-out is greatest in the early grades. Pre-cursors to drop-out include repetition, low achievement, poor teaching, degraded facilities, very large classes, household poverty and poor health and nutrition. The Total enrolment of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) at Elementary level is shown in Table-1

Table -1 Enrolment of CWSN at Elementary Level (in million)

Year	Elementary level (I-VIII)		
	Total	Boys	Girls
2003	0.97	0.63	0.34
2004	1.75	1.04	0.71
2005	1.39	0.83	0.56
2006	2.12	1.16	0.96
2007	2.39	1.32	1.07

Source: Analytical Report: NUEPA (2007)

Strategies Adopted to cope with Emerging Problems and Issues regarding Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

Possible strategies adopted so as to address and tackle some of the emerging problems and issues regarding inclusion of children with disabilities are:

i) Qualitative Teachers Training

The educational authorities in India may adopt a policy of training one teacher from each school or a cluster of schools. The teacher would need to be provided with intensive training to work with various disabilities and would then act as an integration specialist or an inclusion facilitator for one or a number of schools located in close proximity. A similar strategy has worked well in certain parts of India when several school teachers were specifically trained to work in integrated settings under the Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) program launched in 1987 by MHRD and is recommended by several researchers in India (Jangira, 1995; Myreddi & Narayan, 2000)^{8, 12}. Sharma, K (1992)¹⁷ suggest that the curriculum for pre-service training programs should be carefully developed, incorporating feedback from special and regular educators.

ii) Classroom Practices in Inclusive Education

Teachers can use the following numbers of techniques in the inclusive classroom:

- Using games designed to build community.
- Involving students in problem-solving.
- Sharing songs & books that teach community.
- Openly dealing with individual differences by discussion.
- Assigning classroom jobs that build community.
- Utilizing physical therapy, equipment such as standing frames, so students who use wheelchairs can stand when other students are standing.
- Encouraging students to take the role of teacher and deliver instruction.
- Focusing on the strength of a student with special needs.
- Peer tutoring, Co-operative learning, Multidisciplinary Approach, Collaborative Teaching, Whole Class Teaching and Activity Based Learning should be used for the better results in the present scenario.

iii) Need to Design innovative system of training

The number of persons who need training are very large and the conventional training methods cannot meet the requirements. Therefore, there is a need to design some innovative models to train educators at mass level. One way to educate such a large number of teachers is by using Distance Open Learning or DOL. IGNOU, in association with RCI is offering various courses to train special education teachers.

iv) Need for collaboration between different ministers

Different ministries in India administer services for persons with disabilities. For example, while “integrated education” is the responsibility of MHRD, education in special school is the responsibility of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. So, there is a need for streamlining administrative

arrangements so that funds provided to different ministries for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) can be used effectively.

v) Involvement of NGO's in implementing inclusive Education programs

NGO's can play a significant role in implementing integrated education because they are widely located in India and can serve both urban and rural school communities.

vi) Involvement of Private-Public Partnerships in the Mobilization of Communities and Community Development in implementing Inclusive Education programs

The Sikshit Yuva Sewa Samiti (SYSS), an NGO in partnership with the government, participates in the implementation of the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) and DPEP projects, and strengthens the programme through community-based and community mobilization intervention initiatives. It also provides resource teachers as a support system to general teachers, and a back-up team of physiotherapists and occupational therapists at the district level.

vii) Establish an alternative system of examination

Most school educators in India are concerned that inclusion of students with disabilities would result in lowering school standards because these students won't be able to pass exams (Desai, I, 2002)⁷. Thus, it is necessary to establish an alternative system of examination for students with disabilities. Such a system is already in practice in USA.

viii) School-University Partnership

Multi lingual, multi-cultural and multireligious nature of India is cited as a challenge in implementing any educational reform. Local universities in each of the States and Union territories may play a significant role in overcoming this challenge. Evidence from a number of western countries indicates that such collaborative projects can produce positive results for students with disabilities as well as for school educators. For example; one such project is the Learning Improves in Networking Communities (LINC) program that was conducted in partnership between the Catholic Education Commission, Victoria (CEVC) and Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. The project was geared to identify the factors within the school environment that most effectively contribute to successful integrated practices.

ix) Establishment of National Resource Centre

There is need to have a National Resource Centre for Disabilities. Such a centre would work to collect, and disseminate information on various aspects of disability through various TV and radio programs as well as through internet (Sharma, B.L. 2004)¹⁶. The centre would also fulfil the role of scrutinizing all mass communication programs to ensure that disability is not portrayed in a negative manner.

x) Individualised Education Plan (IEP)

An individualized Education Plan must be tailored so as to cater to the individual student needs as identified by the evaluation process and must help teachers and related services providers to understand the students disability and how the disability affects the learning process.

xi) Educational Concessions and Facilities

There is need of educational concessions and facilities for the education, occupational training, placement and rehabilitation of the disabled persons with the main objectives as following:

- To develop their potentialities in academic, occupational and social spheres.
- To help slow learners to work on inclusion to general stream programmes.
- To make partial integration programmes a success to bridge the gap between special education and general education pattern.
- To provide remedial or supportive help and training on time to the disabled children (Virk, 2012)²⁶.

Role of Teachers and their Training in Promoting Inclusive Education

It is a fact that regular schools and regular classroom environment often fail to accommodate the education needs of many students, especially individuals with disability. This is the reason that so many pupils with disabilities do not attend regular schools. As Tesfaye (2008)²¹, reported that, the regular classroom teacher is responsible for any adaptation that may be necessary for students' success in this environment. Consequently, these teachers must have the skills to develop and adapt curricular to meet individual needs. Necessary skills for the regular classroom teachers include an understanding of how a disability affects the ability to learn academic skills or to adapt in social situation. According to Abate (2005)¹, it is unrealistic and unfair to expect that the regular class teacher will be able to include children with disability in regular classroom without receiving adequate training. It is through training that teacher could bring the necessary adaptation required to meet the special needs of their students. A number of researches have concluded that successful implementation of inclusion depends largely on the good will of educators in addition to the skill they required to have. Teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion more readily change and adapt the ways they work in order to benefit students with a range of learning needs (Tilahaun, 2007)²². Smith & Merry (2005)¹⁹ have shown that when teachers are not trained adequately in techniques for including children with disabilities and when planning and training have not taken place, teachers develop negative attitudes towards inclusion which in turn affect their roles.

Training of teachers must be done at pre-service and in-service levels. This includes training at teacher training colleges and universities at both the national and provincial level. In pre-service training programs, inclusive education should be a compulsory subject for all teacher candidates & an integral part of teacher training curricula. Fundamental knowledge and skills of inclusive education, such as understanding needs and abilities of children with special needs and pedagogic skills such as instructional accommodation and activity differentiation should be provided to teacher candidates. Training of teachers at in-service level includes professional development of teachers who are already working in the classrooms. In-service training programs offer an effective strategy to improve the quality of an entire education system for all children regardless of their needs. In-service training of teachers equips teachers with methods for community mobilization, community development, community participation and child centred pedagogies, employing active and participative learning techniques that improve teachers' capacity to teach children both with and without disabilities. Through, in-service teacher education programme, the concept, meaning, strategies of team teaching, various instructional strategies to suit challenged learners in inclusive school etc. will be introduced by orientation programmes and refresher courses.

Teachers teaching in an inclusive classroom should have the following abilities:

- 1.) To problem-solve, to be able to informally assess the skill a student needs.

- 2.) To take advantage of children's individual interests and use their internal motivation for developing needed skills.
- 3.) To set high but alternative expectations that is suitable for the students. This means developing alternative assessments.
- 4.) To make appropriate expectations for each student, regardless of the students' capabilities. If teachers can do this, it allows all students to be included in a class and school.
- 5.) To learn how to value all kinds of skills that students bring to a class, not just the academic skills.
- 6.) Recognize and respond to the diversity of students in their classrooms.
- 7.) Accommodate to students different learning styles and rates of learning by employing a range of teaching methods, including cooperative group learning, peer tutoring, team teachings and individualized instruction.
- 8.) Be aware of the rights of students with education support needs.
- 9.) Locate appropriate material, equipment or specialists.
- 10.) Identify and overcome barriers to learning.
- 11.) Consult with and develop partnerships with parents/ caregivers & colleagues.
- 12.) Use appropriate forms of assessment.
- 13.) Adapt their instruction to the prior knowledge and beliefs of students.
- 14.) Create an inclusive community that extends beyond the walls of the school.
- 15.) Seek to enhance the self-esteem of all students.

Thus, at least one teacher educator from every Teacher Education Programme is supported to have short term training in the area of special education and all teacher educators have to receive a week-long orientation about inclusive education.

Recommendations for Integrating Inclusive Education in Teacher Education Programmes.

Teachers who can teach in settings that are inclusive, meeting the needs of all students, must be prepared. If teacher education programmes are to prepare educators to be successful in the inclusive classroom of the future they must reconceptualize and redesign their approach to pre-service preparation of teachers. Inclusive education in teacher education for pre-service should lay more emphasis on the process subsystems, which includes collaborative experiences through simulation, Role-playing, field-based activities, multiple opportunities to observe and work in actual classrooms where inclusive practices are being implemented etc.

Inclusive education in Teacher Education Programme is not so easy because it is community-based program and it depends upon the extent of interaction with the general community. Success of inclusive education in Teacher Education Programme depends upon combining efforts of teachers, teacher educators, peers, administrators, volunteers, parents and in general all members of society. More special needs departments in colleges and universities need to be opened so as to meet the staff requirement to teach special needs component in teacher training institutions. Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), which has a

statutory status can revise the norms for the maintenance of standards, curricula and can bring about improvement in teacher education.

Conclusion

The success of inclusive education in any context depends upon many factors. Teachers themselves are an essential component to ensure the quality of students' inclusion in the school and teacher education institutions. Preparing teachers with essential knowledge and skills for inclusive education requires the commitment of all actors. The literature has identified many of the challenges that face the full and successful implementation of inclusion out of small number of studies conducted in the area of inclusive education, one thing has been confirmed that successful inclusive programs exist, but are still a range of conditions that must be in place. It presents a challenge to government funding bodies to provide the resources that will facilitate inclusion and it identifies a successful mode of professional development. One needs to reiterate the importance of training and empowering our teaching community as per requirement of an inclusive set up of education. The teachers' challenge to deal with the student population with various disabilities with which experts may feel an inclusive education in mainstream school ambience is quite possible will remain ever daunting.

With the passage of National Policy for Person with Disabilities Act, 2006, India has joined the few countries that have legislation to promote inclusive education. This is a landmark step as India had now overcome a major legislative hurdle. A number of unique challenges still need to be overcome in order to implement the key objectives enshrined in the legislation. Altitudinal barriers engrained as part of India's historical response to disability must be changed through education programs for both teachers and the general population. These programs require financial and collaborative commitment from key national and state education stakeholders, and partnership with universities to support research-based initiatives. Success in achieving inclusive education will ultimately depend on how Indian educators and educational systems can collaborate to deal with difference in India's culturally charged context. More and more teaching training modules need to be developed so that not only pre-service but also in-service teachers could also be trained in inclusive practices. The administrative and management aspects of inclusive education needs to be studied at the micro and macro levels both in rural and urban settings, so that the models thus developed could be replicated in varied situation. In-fact, inclusive education is the need of the hour. Unless barrier to access and gaps between inclusion and exclusion are taken care off, access to all children, and an assurance of success of inclusive education and its implementation would remain a far cry.

Thus, to conclude it can be said, that, including children with disabilities in education is a challenging task and needs a stricter government control, policies, legislative framework, mass community mobilization and involvement and above all provision of appropriate responses to wide spectrum of learning needs of special children in both formal and non-formal settings.

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