

Concept of Inclusive Education and their challenges and suggestions in India

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Abstracts - Right to Education Act 2009 ensures education to all children irrespective of their caste, religion, ability, and so on. It is essential to build an inclusive society through an inclusive approach. In doing so, we have challenged commonly held beliefs and developed a new set of core assumptions. Inclusion is more than a method of educating students with disabilities. It stresses that each child, regardless of the intensity and severity of his or her disabilities, is a valued member of society and is capable of participating in that society. A good inclusive education is one that allows all the students to participate in all aspects of classroom equally or close to equal. To meet the challenges, the involvement and cooperation of educators, parents, and community leaders is vital for the creation of better and more inclusive schools. The Government of India is trying to improve its education system focusing on the inclusive approach. The challenges can be overcome by raising awareness of human rights in communities and publicizing positive examples of disabled children and adults succeeding in inclusive education and in life beyond school as a result. We need to develop an inclusive design of learning to make the education joyful for all children so that the education for them is welcoming, learner friendly and beneficial and they feel as a part of it not apart from it. Therefore, Inclusion arose as a good solution to the question of how to educate these children more effectively.

Key –words- Inclusive Education, Challenges, and Suggestion.

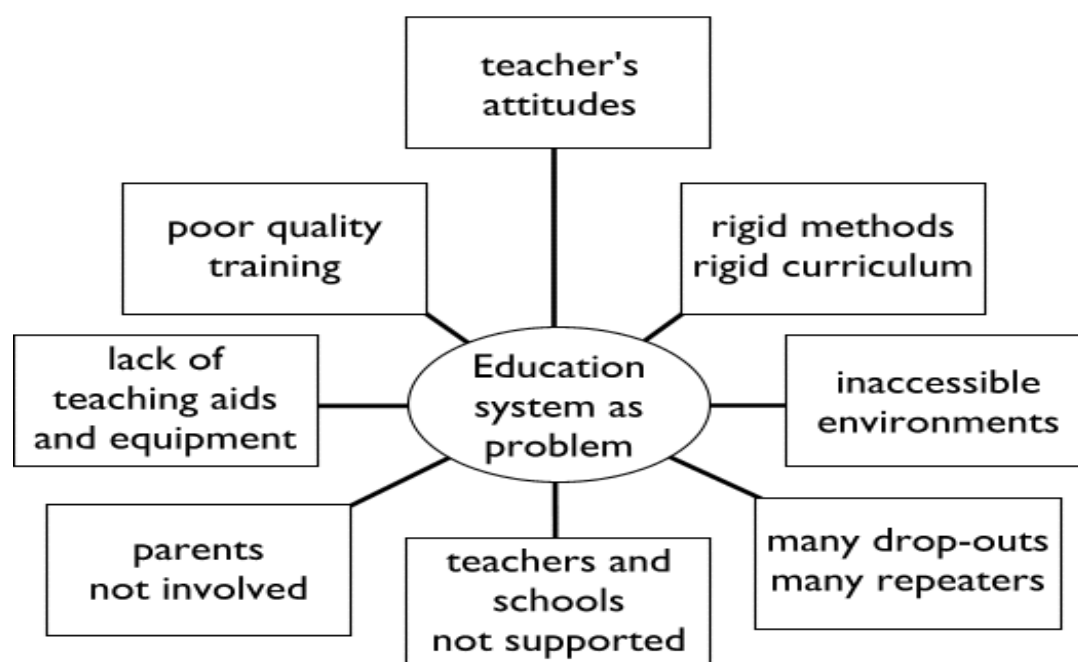
Introduction - Over the last few decades the field of education has witnessed use of many concepts and terms which have often caused much confusion and even controversy. Some of these terms continue to be used in the context of emerging educational philosophy especially in the context of Education for All philosophy. The terms and concepts such as Segregated Education, Regular Education, Special Education, Special Needs Education, Education of the Disabled, Mainstream Education, Integrated Education and Inclusive education have become more important due to their direct bearing on Education Policies for the new millennium. In order to properly understand the concept of Inclusive Education it becomes imperative to look at the meaning and import of the other related terms and concept such as Segregated Education, Regular Education, Special Education, Special Needs Education, Education of the Disabled, Mainstream Education and Integrated Education. Terms such as Disability, Impairment and Special therefore also gain significance in the context of Inclusive Education and merit at least brief reference and explanation. Terms such as Impairment, Handicap, Disability, Mainstreaming, Integration and most importantly Inclusive merit attention and study. The terms Impairment, Disability and Handicap are the terms that often crop in the discourse on Inclusive Education. Inclusive education is based on the principle that schools should provide for all children regardless of any perceived difference, disability or other social, cultural and linguistic difference. The diverse needs of these learners and the quest to make schools more learning-friendly requires regular and special education teachers to consult and collaborate with one another as well as with family and community in order to develop effective strategies, teaching and learning within inclusive setups. With the right training, strategies and support nearly all children with SEN and disabilities can be included successfully in mainstream education.

MHRD (2003) uses the following definition: "Inclusive education means all learners, young people - with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary pre-school provisions, schools and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services."

Inclusion in RPWD ACT 2016-A system of education where students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different type of students with disabilities.

Inclusion in (UNESCO)-

- Inclusion is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, communities and reducing exclusion within and from education.
- It involves changes and modification in content, approaches structures and strategies, with common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.
- Inclusion is a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupils diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning.

Inclusive Education**FORMS OF INCLUSION**

Physical Inclusion: that receive consistent promotion, support, and facilitation from the government. All the policies and regulations have made education free and compulsory for all children. No institution can deny admission to a child with disability on account of his/her disability. The universalization of elementary education (UEE) focuses on enrolment, retention and achievement of all children.

Social inclusion: it is only happening in the sections of the society. In the lower socio-economic strata research studies have revealed that there is a greater acceptance of person with disabilities with minimum expectation. Gradually the efforts are being made by educating people through direct instruction and media to bring attitudinal changes in the society.

Cognitive Inclusion: The educational institutions try out cognitive inclusion by allowing the children with special educational needs to study in general classrooms with non-disable children. Cognitive inclusions is possible only if the subject matter is broken down into smaller learning units and teachers make sure that all the children to the expected level of mastery learn each of the micro units of a lesson. Each child is given equal opportunity to learn, understand, retain, and reproduce the information at an appropriate time and inappropriate manner.

PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

The UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for action on Special Needs Education(1994) articulated and underlying principles on which inclusive Education is based.

- Every child has a fundamental right to education;
- Every child has a unique characteristics, abilities, interests, and learning needs;
- Education systems need to accommodate this diversity in student population;
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools;
- Regular schools with inclusion orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all

CHALLENGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDIA

Inclusive education is a binding and priority for government of India. However, a wide gap in policy and practice exists in the country with respect to inclusive education. There are a number of barriers that hinder proper practice of inclusive education in our country. Based on the literature and personal experiences, the authors believe these barriers to include the following:

a. Skills of teachers -Skills of teachers which are responsible for implementing inclusive education are also not up to as desired and necessary for inclusion. The inefficiency of teachers to develop and use instructional materials for special child is also a problem issue.

b. Attitudes towards inclusive education and disability among teachers, administrators, parents, peers and policy planners-In addition to many other requirements, implementation of inclusive education immensely requires positive attitudes towards inclusive education among teachers, parents, peers, administrators and policy planners. However, negative attitudes are still persisting among these in many cases. This is adversely affecting inclusive education scenario in India. Mainstream teacher attitudes may be a contributory barrier to successful inclusive.

c. Lack of awareness about children with disabilities among general teachers-The general teachers, at all levels, lack basic awareness about children with disabilities. They have their own socially and culturally constructed notions about certain obvious disabilities but lack scientific and educational knowledge about the disabilities such as classification, labeling, special needs and adaptations etc.

d. Improper curriculum adaptation-For practicing inclusive education, curricular adaptations suited to special and unique needs of every learner, including children with disabilities, are necessary but there is a lack of proper curriculum of special children in school. Concepts like 'Universal Instructional Design' are to be properly developed and incorporated into the curriculum. However, needed curricular adaptations are either missing altogether or are improper.

e. School environment including difficulties in physical access-School environment needs accommodations for truly practicing inclusive education. However, such accommodations are not there in majority of the schools. Facilities like ramps, lifts, and directional cues etc. are mostly absent in schools.

f. Lack of support services-For implementing inclusive education in all educational institutions, at all levels, we need strong support services. Their strength should be both quantitative and qualitative. But, existing support services are scarce and inadequate.

g. Family collaboration-Keeping in mind the nature of Indian society and culture, it can be safely stated that family has a very important role in implementing inclusive education in India. Family is considered having sole

responsibility for their children in India. Hence, inclusion can only be realised by motivating and involving family in the process.

h. Insufficient and improper pre-service teacher education-The pre-service teacher education programmes being run in the country are failing to sensitize and equip prospective teachers in inclusive education practices. Modifications are needed to make these teacher education programmes more effective. Currently, teacher education programmes producing special teachers are controlled by Rehabilitation Council of India whereas these producing general teachers are controlled by National Council for Teacher Education. These two apex bodies need to collaborate and devise measures for producing skilled teachers capable of implementing inclusive education.

i. Negative self-perceptions of children with disabilities-For practicing inclusive education, negative self-perceptions of children with disabilities pose a great challenge. These negative perceptions are often strengthened by neighbors, peers, and teachers. Without wiping out these negative self perceptions, true inclusion of such children is not possible.

j. ICT unavailability and related competencies -Present age is the age of information and communication technology (ICT). ICT is providing great help in almost all endeavors of human life including education and training. There are a number of ICT-enabled pedagogical and assistive devices are available particularly useful for children with disabilities. Their use can ease and expedite inclusive education. These should be made available and competencies for their use should be developed among all stakeholders.

k. Improper policy planning and lack-luster implementation-Government of India claims that it has implemented inclusive education everywhere and at all levels. However, the policy planning is improper and measures to assess the degree of implementation have not been developed. Furthermore, implementation of inclusive education in private sector has not been enforced and ensured.

l. Expenses involved-For a huge and diverse country like India, implementation of inclusive education at all levels requires a lot of money to be spent. The government does not seem willing to incur this huge expenditure. Being a developing country, the apprehensions of the government can be very well understood.

SUGGESTIONS

- Our government has taken a number of initiatives to improve the enrolment, retention and achievement of children with disabilities. There is a need to establish inter-linked and collaborations among various organizations to prevent overlapping, duplication and contradictions in programme implementation.
- Most of services for children with special needs are concentrated in urban areas and big cities or close to district headquarters. The majority of children with disabilities who live in rural areas do not get benefit from these services. There is need to –established inclusive schools in rural areas.
- Due to absence of consistent data on the magnitude and educational status of disabled children, it is very difficult to understand the nature of the problem, and to make realistic intervention.
- Community involvement and partnerships between government agencies and NGOs had been instrumental in promoting inclusive education.
- Many regular schools have a large number of children in each classroom and few teachers,. As a consequence of this, many teachers are reluctant to work with children with disabilities. They consider it an additional workload.
- There should be a special teacher in each school who can implement the policy related to inclusive education.
- The curriculum should be flexibility so that it cater to the needs of children with disabilities. There are limited developmentally appropriate teaching learning materials for children both with and without disabilities. The teaching-learning needs of children in a limited way.
- Families do not have enough information the support system in the disability which the child is suffering from. This often leads to a sense of hopelessness. Early identification and intervention initiatives sensitize parents and community members to the education of disabled children.
- The training of general teachers at pre-service levels should address the issues of education of disabled children, so that teacher are better equipped to work in an inclusive environment

CONCLUSION –

It is important to remember that Inclusive Education is at a very early stage of conceptualization and implementation in India. The fact that it is being discussed, debated and in some places implemented although falteringly, demonstrates a willingness to engage with elements of a new concept that has the potential to be developed in the future in a positive manner.

Without inclusive education, all special need children may not be able to fulfill their rights as a Citizen in the largest democracy of the world. Inclusive Education thus needs to be implemented with full rigor in order to fulfill the mandate of Education for all as guaranteed by the Fundamental Right to Education declared by the Constitution and enacted as a law (2009). Now as we are familiar with the causes, challenges, and probable ways to overcome these hurdles, time is to motivate people in the field of education, make some of the effective changes in system, make some new decisions and policies, implement them effectively, create relation among the social, political, economic, cultural and historical contexts that are present at any one time in a particular country and/or local authority, and an intention of taking everyone together. Inclusive Education should go far beyond the physical placement of children with disabilities in general classrooms, but requires nothing less than transforming regular education by promoting school/classroom cultures, structures and practices that accommodate to diversity. We know there is no magic wand, which can remove these hurdles immediately, but if efforts are made then one day we will be close to aim and objective of Inclusive Education.

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