



Inclusive Education and Equity in Learning

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Abstract

An education system that includes all students and welcomes and supports them to learn, whoever they are and whatever their abilities or requirements. This means making sure that teaching and curriculum, school buildings, classroom, play areas, transport and toilets are appropriate for all children at all levels. Inclusive education means all children learn together in the same neighboring schools. No one should be excluded. Every child has a right to inclusive education, including children with disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) both clearly express the aim of guaranteeing quality education for all and the importance of providing the required support to develop each child's potential. Inclusive education is a broad concept that includes all groups of children who are at risk of being excluded from education. Such as children with learning disabilities, street children, working children, differently abled children, children of migrant laborer and girls living difficult circumstances.

Inclusive education means a philosophy of education that promotes the education of all pupils in regular school where disabled children study with normal children in their locality. They learn and play together and enhance their capacities both. It is about how we develop and design our schools, classroom, programs, and activities for the benefits of all students. A common learning environment is not a place where students with intellectual disabilities learn in isolation from their peers but it is an environment where instruction are design to delivered to students of mixed abilities and with their peer group in community school. While being responsive to their individual needs as a learner.

Keywords: Quality education, differently abled children, inclusive education, excluded learning disability

Introduction

Inclusive education is defined as “a learning environment that promotes the full personal academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of ability, race, class, color, gender, disability, sexual preferences, learning styles and language”.

Meaning

UNICEF defined inclusive education as “a process of addressing and responding to diversity of needs of all learner through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modification in content, approaches, structures and strategies with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of state to educate all children”. Inclusive education refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and process that seek to make a reality of universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education.

Concept

In a democratic county like India, every child has the Right to education. All the children should be given an equal opportunity to learn to the limits of their capacities.

Inclusive Education can be seen as a stepping stone for future inclusive society. It is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse need of all children, youth, and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities. Thus, reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education. Inclusive education is basically the provision of services to the children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children can access and enjoy. Inclusive education is a system in which all children from a community learn together in the neighboring school. It enables the children to participate together in the society from the very beginning. Provision of such form of education inculcates a feeling of confidence and offers them to access the formal system of education. Inclusive Education in the society is a process that runs in two directions, to prepare children with special needs to becomes a part of society and to prepare society to accept them.



Inclusive Education is the responsibility of the whole society, including parents, teacher, administrator, community, and government.

Inclusive Curriculum

An Inclusive curriculum includes locally relevant themes and contributions by marginalized and minority groups. It allows adapting the curriculum to the learning styles of children with special education needs.

As communities and cities become increasingly diverse and nations become more globally connected, schools should ensure there is an inclusive curriculum already in place.

Curriculum should be periodically updated to ensure it is reflecting the current state of society. When all children, regardless of their differences are educated together, everyone benefits. This is cornerstone of inclusive education.

It gives them a sense of belongingness. It helps them to understand that all walks of life are relevant and important and that they are in a safe environment where everyone is accepted. When everyone feels welcome and included, the students will feel more willing to learn independently. It will motivate them to stay in schools and pursue further education instead of dropping out.

The focus of the government is to develop learner centered curriculum which consider the individual needs of students. Curriculum should be flexible and relevant to their local needs, helpful in their day to day life so that they can feel connected and satisfied. Students participation is also especially important can make small groups of students and give them small tasks to perform. In this way the entire class will be involved in all activities.

Education for all

Right to education act (Article 21A): provision of free and compulsory education to all children of age 6 to 14 years.

Education for all UNICEF represents an international movement led by UNESCO commitment to ensure that every child and adult receive basic education of good quality. It is based on the belief that education is central to individual well-being and national development, governments, development agencies, civil society, non-government organizations are working towards achieving the goals of quality universal primary education

Education for all is an international initiative first launched in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to every citizen in every society. A broad coalition of national government, civil society groups, and development agencies such as UNESCO and the world bank group committed to achieving six specific education goals. These are

- 1) Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- 2) Ensure that all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances and children from minority communities have access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- 3) Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning life skills programs.
- 4) Achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- 5) Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education and achieve gender equality in education with a focus on ensuring girls fall and equal access to basic education of good quality.
- 6) Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcome are achieved by all.

In India, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is India's flagship elementary education program. SSA is one of the largest programs of its kind in the world. The government of India is providing major financial and technical resources into the program for achieving the goal of education for all.

Major schemes of government

The tenth plan laid emphasis on universalization of Elementary Education guided by



five parameters i.e. I) Universal access II) Universal enrolment III) Universal retention IV) Universal achievement and V) Equity. The major schemes of education sector during the tenth plan included SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) national programme of nutritional support to primary education, commonly known as Mid-Day-Meal-Scheme (MDMS), Teacher Education Scheme and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has been the single largest holistic programme addressing all aspects of elementary education covering over one million elementary schools and education guarantee centers.

The scheme of inclusive education for disabled at secondary stage has been launched from the year 2009-10. This scheme aid with the inclusive education of disabled children in a class IX-XII. This scheme now subsumed under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) from 2013. The scheme covers all children studying at the secondary stage, with one or more disabilities as defined under the Persons with Disabilities Act (PWA-1995) and the National Trust Act (NTA-1999) in class IX-XII. Setting up of model inclusive schools in every state is envisaged under the scheme.

NCF 2005

- Disability is a social responsibility.
- Failure of a child is an indication of failure of school.
- No selection procedure to be adopted for denying admission to learner with disabilities.
- Accept differences and elaborate diversity.
- Inclusion is not confined to the disabled, it also means nonexistence.
- Learn human rights and conquer human wrong.
- Make provisions and not restrictions, adjust to needs of child.
- Partnership is our strength such as school-community, school-teacher, teacher-children, teacher-parents, school system and outside system.
- All good practices of teaching are practices of inclusion
- Learning together is beneficial for every child
- Support services are essential services
- If you want to teach, learn from the child, identify his strengths, not limitations
- Inculcate mutual respect and inter-dependence

Approaches to education for children with disabilities

There have been three broad approaches to the education of children with disabilities. They include:

- 1) Segregation, in which children are classified according to their impairment and allotted a school designed to respond to that impairment.
- 2) Integration, where children with disabilities are placed in the mainstream system, often in special classes, or in a general classroom with provision for extra help for them.
- 3) Inclusion, where there is recognition of the necessity to transform the cultures, policies and practices in school to accommodate the different needs of individual students and an obligation to remove the barriers that possibility.

Role of teacher in inclusive education

It is responsibility of the school to manage teaching in such a way that the needs of all the students are met. Teacher has multiple responsibilities. These teachers regularly need to review and develop individualized education plans and hold meetings to discuss these plans with parents, administrators, and counselors. They need to administer skill tests and other assessments to determine the progress of children with special needs.

- 1) Identification of the children with disability at early stage.
- 2) Accepting the children with disability and inculcate the sense of belongingness in all the students.
- 3) Involving all children in maximum possible activities of the class.



- 4) Be aware and sensitize of the diverse needs of all students
- 5) Developing positive attitude towards normal and disabled students
- 6) Make the school a safe place for disabled students so that they can move independently.
- 7) Making suitable modifications in the curriculum so that all the students can learn according to their abilities.
- 8) Use of suitable teaching aids for the clarity of concepts
- 9) Give adequate time to perform the tasks to the slow learners.
- 10) Provide remedial classes to the students who are in need.

Conclusion

Education is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of discrimination and poverty that children with disabilities and their families often face. A teacher's role is pivotal in imparting quality education and bringing qualitative changes in the lives of students. A collaborative effort of teachers, parents, administrators, community, and government brings a ray of hope in the lives of disadvantaged children and paves the way for a bright future.

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