

Inclusive Education: Need, Challenges and Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive Education allows different and diverse students learn in the same class room. Inclusive education values the diversity and appreciates the unique contributions of each student. In inclusive education Every child feels safe and has a sense of belonging in truly inclusive setting. Inclusive system aims mainly to provide better quality education for all children without any barrier or exclusion including those who may be potentially marginalized due to disability, giftedness, migrants, poverty, gender, emotional or behavioural problems, family background etc. At present more and more efforts have been made in order to enhance inclusive education. Now it becomes important to investigate the issues making obstacles in the field of inclusive education. It is necessary to think about needs and challenges for achieving the goal of inclusive education along with the ways to create an inclusive environment to meet the needs of all children including children with disabilities. This paper discusses in detail the need, challenges and strategies to face challenges in inclusive education.

1. Introduction

Education is not a modern practice; it has been a part of our lives since beginning although it has been updated time to time. Education is linked with survival and progress of human beings. Generally, education can be defined as a means of transfer of culture, religious heritage, habits and skills from one generation to another. Education means controlling and disciplining the behaviour of an individual. Thus, Education has an important role in the life of an individual.

The ways of imparting education are changing time to time. In previous times education was provided through Guru Shishya Prampara. This type of education was teacher centered education. Teacher was the center point of the teaching learning process as what to teach and how to teach the students was only decided by the teacher only. The teacher (Guru) used to set the objectives or goals of the education and showed the path to achieve those objectives. After that the concept of education got changed and the education was started imparting through the institutions like- schools, colleges, universities etc. Now in this changing scenario of education, the center of education has shifted from teacher towards the child. Now days we are grappling with a question in the field of education that What kind of education should be provided to the children? (The education that can include all the children even the children with special needs). Traditionally education used to impart in two ways- general education and special education. This question has been raised for some time now if this was a correct approach to provide education in a situation where there were children with differing abilities. It had been believed earlier that children with separate education should be provided to the children with special needs. These children were therefore initially segregated from other children. This had led to the rise of general schools on one hand and on the other, the establishment of 'Special Schools' for special children. But this isolation or segregation had been faced severe criticism in the field of education. It was started to think to integrate both education in the form of inclusive education. The efforts had

been made to provide inclusive education instead of continuing with segregated education. It is being felt by the educationists that each child should be included and allowed to learn along with his/her peer group in his /her own way. Hence Inclusive education is to be provided to all students including disabled students within the regular class room in regular education system with some extended support.

2. Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is widely discussed and debatable topic in the field of education currently. Inclusive education is about to look the ways to design programmes, classrooms, curriculum, and lessons, in order to include all the children so that all children may be able to learn and participate. Inclusive education also includes finding the ways to develop healthy relationships, friendships and mutual respect between children and also between teachers and students. Inclusive education is the way of creative thinking to explore the ways to make the school a place where all children have the opportunities to participate.

In the views of Mmbaga (2002), "Inclusive Education needs to be part of the whole school equal opportunity policy; in this case children with learning difficulties, girls' and boys' learning needs would be incorporated into the curriculum and the school-learning environment".

Inclusive education is based on the expectation that all children should be accepted and appreciated by all throughout the life

"An 'inclusive' education system can only be created if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become better at educating all children in their communities." (UNESCO, 2009).

Inclusive education is based on some beliefs and principles i.e.

- 1) All children can learn

- 2) All children can have appropriate regular classrooms according to their age in their local schools
- 3) All children can receive appropriate educational programs.
- 4) All children can have a curriculum according to their needs.
- 5) All children may be able to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities
- 6) All children benefit from cooperation among school and community

3. Need of Inclusive Education

In inclusive education all different and diverse students are allowed to learn in the same class room. Inclusive education values the diversity and appreciates the unique contributions of each student. All children feel safe and have a sense of belonging in truly inclusive environment. Inclusive system aims mainly to provide better quality education for all children without any barrier or exclusion including those who may be potentially marginalized due to disability, giftedness, migrants, poverty, gender, emotional or behavioural problems, family background etc. No school can refuse to give admission to any child on any grounds of discrimination (as per right to education act) and even children are not to be labeled or segregated before or after admission. According to this act each class room has to be an inclusive class room to welcome and accept all types of learners. The following need of inclusive education makes it inevitable in present scenario-

- ✓ To enable all the children to be part of their community.
- ✓ To develop a sense of belonging in children and make them better prepared for life.
- ✓ To provides better opportunities for learning by motivating the children with varying abilities through learning in regular classes surrounded by other children.
- ✓ To enhance the level of expectations of all the children by successful inclusion which attempts to develop an individual's strengths
- ✓ To allow children for working on individual goals while being with other students of their own age.
- ✓ To encourage the involvement of parents and teachers in the education of children.
- ✓ To aware the parents of other children to understand and accept all the children with individual differences.
- ✓ To foster a culture of respect and belonging.
- ✓ To provides opportunities to all children for developing friendships.
- ✓ To enhance the emotional quotient of students as patience, tolerance and compassion are developed in the students for peers while working in inclusive environment.
- ✓ To enable students to accept the strengths and weaknesses of others.
- ✓ To cater the needs of multicultural society.
- ✓ To make the students learn team work and collaboration in inclusive schools.

4. Challenges

Inclusive education allows children with special educational needs to get education along with other students. Thus, the inclusive education mainly demands to make changes in curriculum along with the methodology of teaching and learning. Inclusive education therefore requires to make changes in the culture of contemporary schools focusing upon applied curriculum, dynamic learning, suitable assessment methods and multi-level instructional approaches to increase attention to the needs and individualization of diverse students.

In India the problems of disabled people are so complex and available resources are so scarce. The process to achieve inclusive education is too long, difficult and varied. It has to face many challenges. Since the time of independence, the Government has been creating numerous policies around special education but still there are many challenges exist in educating the children with disabilities in regular classrooms.

These challenges can be on the part of teachers, parents, school management and society itself.

Some challenges emanate from the negative attitudes of the society as the people do not generally accept the children with disability. They do not consider those children as one of them. Either they have no concern about them or they show excess sympathy that makes them feel so helpless and feeble.

Some challenges arise because of negative attitudes and behaviour of parents. Many parents do not accept that their children should study with other children having any kind of disability as they think it would affect their performance. Even the parents of children with disability think that their children would not feel comfortable and have a feel of inferiority while dealing with other students.

In some cases, parents of disabled children are not able to pay the fee demanded by these inclusive schools so they do not prefer to get their child admitted in those schools. Das, Kuyini and Desai, (2013) reported that a large number of these children (children with disabilities) live in those families whose income is significantly below the poverty level.

Somewhere students do not co-operate the children with disabilities in their group. Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) found the children with disabilities an easy target for being teased and bullied by their non-disabled peers, in the study conducted by them to examine the skill levels of regular primary and secondary school teachers in Delhi.

There have been many challenges in preparing teachers for inclusive education as they are facing many problems in teaching special children and other children together in same classroom. Teachers in most of the schools, lack training in special needs education for special children. Somewhere schools suffer from a shortage of teachers. These schools have lack of trained teachers in the field of special needs education. The shortages of teachers who are trained in special- education along with the lack of teaching facilities negatively affect the quality of education in inclusive education setting. Apart from that it is also true that there are some students in the class who are very active or creative but because of having special children in the class a teacher is unable to justice with him/ her

because he/ she has to take care the needs of special children in the class.

Some challenges are faced on the part of management in inclusive education as because of RTE Act, schools do not reject the admissions of disabled children but do not pay attention to the facilities that should be provided to them. Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) found that nearly 70% of the regular school teachers had not received any training in special education and even they did not have any experience to teach or dealing students with disabilities. It was also reported by them that 87% teachers had not experience to access to the support services in the classrooms. Lack of teaching staff and resources, lack of trained staff, excessive charged school fee etc. are many issues which still exist in schools.

5. Strategies

At present more and more efforts have been made in order to enhance inclusive education. Ultimately the responsibility transfers on the shoulders of the teachers. A teacher dealing with the inclusive class children must be competent enough to face all the challenges of inclusion education. This competency is developed by the teacher training institutes by providing the proper training and developing the required skills in the teachers who suppose to deal with inclusive classrooms. The teacher education should enhance teacher trainees who supposed to teach in the inclusive class room. It should also create awareness in the society to accept children with special educational needs. Therefore, there is a need to introduce comprehensive special needs education in all teacher professional development-programs. However, children with developmental disability need extra attention in terms of curriculum adaptation, teaching methods, and availability of teaching and learning materials, assistive technology, assessment systems, as well as resources and funds for more assistance in adapting the school environment.

Apart from that there should be more facilities and programme for the in- service teachers too. There should be proper number of teachers to handle the students of both

categories. Teachers should be provided in house seminars and should arrange some workshops for them to train them to cater the needs of special children also. There should be good communication between parents and teachers to understand the problem of children. Every teacher should be provided with another trained teacher in special education to handle the special children in the class in order to face the challenges of inclusive education some other efforts can also be make as –

All the children should be accepted unconditionally in to regular classes and in the school as well.

Much more support should be provided to teachers and students to ensure the maximum participation of all children in their classes.

To look at all the students at what they can do rather than what they cannot do.

Education goals should be developed according to the abilities of each child; this means that children should not have the same education goals in order to learn together in regular classes. Classes should be designed in a way to enable children learn and achieve to their fullest potential.

6. Conclusion

The aim of inclusion in education is not confined merely to classroom walls or school compound; it also brings about changes in the attitude of individuals towards their life. Inclusive education makes them to learn to accept the strengths and weaknesses of others to get along and respect the differences of each other. Since the time of independence, the Government has been creating numerous policies around special education but still there are many challenges exist in educating the children with disabilities in regular classrooms. These challenges can be arising on the part of students, teachers, management and parents also. By adopting some strategies these challenges we can successfully face and foster inclusive education.

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