

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDIA: IMPLEMENTATION, CHALLENGES AND CONCLUSION

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Abstract:

“Disability brought my life into focus. Someone had to make the first move and push for inclusion of disabled people in the mainstream.” Deepa Malik

Deepa Malik is an Indian athlete. She is the first Indian woman to win medal in Paralympics games and win a silver medal at 2016 Paralympics in the shot-put. Paralyzed from wrist down, Deepa Malik went to set records for biking and swimming. She is a set model before us that disability does not mean that person has some type of curse from God. Sometimes a child is denied admission to school that he/she cannot see properly and at same time he/she is also denied admission in special school as the child can see partly. Recent years have witnessed a growing recognition of right of children with disabilities to inclusive education. Since 2002 Education for all partners have committed to promoting a goal of inclusion. Inclusive education embraces the principle of school adapting to and accommodating all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. Out of 2.9 million children with disabilities in India 999,000 children aged 6 to 14 years (34 percent) are out of school. The percentages are even higher among children with intellectual disabilities (48%), speech impairments (36%) and multiple disabilities (59%). India has made tremendous efforts to make its education system more inclusive. Under the Right to Education Act ‘all children have right to go to school. To accommodate a greater number of children with disabilities, further progress is needed.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, disability, Education for all

1.0 Introduction

Education for all (EFA) is a global movement led by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. Over declaration as human right in 1948. The following education policies focused on inclusive education; Integrated education for disabled children (IEDC), Project Integrated education for disabled (PIED) District primary education programmer (DPEP), Janshala, Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). There are many International, national and local NGOs involved with disability issue in India. There are at least 1000 NGO's and voluntary organizations actively engaged in education. While there are policies in place to address the perceived educational needs of children with disabilities, there appear to be a number of issues that are leading to sporadic policy, implementation, alongside several institutional and attitudinal constraints.

2.0 Inclusion and Need of Inclusion

Inclusion secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their nondisabled peers in general education classrooms. Why integrate children with special needs into a general classroom? Who benefits? What results? Special education professional Gretchen Walsh who runs the Academic Support Center at Notre Dame College, gives a concise synopsis when she says “Inclusion is important because through our diversity we certainly add to our creativity. If you do not have a diverse classroom or a diverse world, you do not have the same creative levels and I think our strength lies in diversity”. The journey to becoming an Inclusive School may be long and challenging at times, but ultimately this journey can strengthen a school community and benefit ALL children. “Inclusion” does not simply mean the placement of students with disabilities in general education classes. This process must incorporate fundamental change in the way a school community supports and addresses the individual needs of each child. As such, effective models of inclusive education not only benefit students with

disabilities , but also create an environment in which every student, including those who do not have disabilities ,has the opportunity to flourish. We need responsible Inclusion alongside special schools for fruitful results.

3.0 Steps Towards Inclusion

It is thus imperative that schools and local authorities take responsibility to ensure that right to education for all is implemented. This involves;

1. Initiating debates to understand human rights.
2. Identifying practical solutions such as how human rights can be made part of school curriculum.
3. Fostering grassroots action to promote education for all.
4. Developing community – school mechanism to identify children not in school and ensuring their enrollment in school.
5. Welcoming diversity.
6. Reduced discrimination(e.g. gender, disability, caste, minority status)
7. Development and strengthening of education system, technology and pedagogy to include all learners.
8. A variety of teaching styles and strategies is used.

4.0 Indian Scenario

In mid -1980 many NGOs implemented integrated Education of disabled children (IEDC) with grants from government of India .This project is implemented by Ministry of Human Resource Development. This is basically an itinerant resource teacher was given to every 8 children with special needs. There are around 60000 children with disabilities getting access to education under this scheme. Although the goals and objectives of the IEDC program were laudable, the number of children with disabilities enrolled was small. For example in Karnataka state about 2% of all children with disabilities acquire education ‘About 1% of these children are enrolled in special schools and the balance 1% are in the integrated education system. In line with the new policy of inclusive education special schools begin to function more and more as resource centers. They involve in outreach programmes, where they draw on vast experience and knowledge. They link their activities with those of regular schools, the families and the communities. Inclusive education services allow children with disabilities to stay with their family and to go to the nearest school, just like all other children. This is of vital importance to their personal development. Interrupting a disabled child normal development may have far more severe consequences than disability itself. One of the major initiatives from government of India to promote integrated education of disabled children. The programme is designed to promote retention of children with disabilities in the regular school system.

5.0 Seven Principles of Inclusive Learning

Seven principles of inclusive education is the underpinning for all of Tanenbaun curricula and teacher training programs . Seven principles can be applied to any classroom or lesson plan to increase equity and decrease exclusion.

1. TEACHING ALL STUDENTS; Educators should take several different approaches to teaching the same material so that information becomes more interesting and tangible to a greater number of students.
2. EXPLORING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES; Students who are proud of themselves and excited by the world around them will be more compassionate and understanding the same is true for educators.
3. PREVENTING PREJUDICE; Educators should take proactive approach to debunking, preconceived stereotypes and preventing them for escalating into prejudices and negative biases.
4. PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE: Students are good judges of what is fair. Educators should talk to them about social justice and injustice in terms of fair versus unfair, respectful versus disrespectful.
5. CHOOSING APPROPRIATE MATERIALS: Inclusive classrooms use books and materials that reflect accurate images of diverse peoples and challenge stereotypes.
6. TEACHING OF LEARNING ABOUT CULTURES AND RELIGIONS: Educators should create curiosity and expand students horizons by teaching about others in positive manner.
7. ADAPTING AND INTEGRATING LESSONS APPROPRIATELY: Educators should be flexible.

6.0 Responsible Inclusive Education

As a system, inclusive education should be flexible. Its principle should be education in the regular classroom whenever possible. This need for flexibility must be reflected in the methods and materials used to give these children the widest possible access to the regular curriculum. When discussing the kind of service needed, the starting point should always be what is best for the particular child. Emphasizing inclusive education does not rule out special schools or centers. They would still be required to cater to children with profound and complex difficulties in need of more specialised and extensive help, including e.g. many deaf children. This alternative should, however, not be considered, unless classroom placement cannot meet their needs.

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In this context, it is important to stress the role parents have. They have a right to be involved in all decision-making concerning their child. They should be seen as partners in the education process. Where there is such co-operation, parents have been found to be very important resources for the teachers and the schools.

As a rule, there are a number of practical problems that have to be solved before a child with special educational needs can go to school or take part in school activities. The arrangements it takes are fairly simple, provided co-ordinate local and unconventional initiatives are stimulated. One should also remember that the child's schoolmates represent a valuable potential partner who is ready and able to help in overcoming some of these problems.

7.0 School reform needed which facilitating learning of every child

Traditional Approach	Inclusive Approach
Education for some	Education for all
Static	Flexible
Collective teaching	Individualized Teaching
Learning in segregated areas	Learning in Integrated areas
Emphasis on teaching subject-orientated	Emphasis on learning child-centered
Diagnostic / prescriptive	Holistic
Opportunities limited by exclusion	Equalization of opportunities for all
Disability view	Curricular view
Labels children disability wise	Planning is made on ability levels and opposes all kinds of labeling

8.0 Conclusion

The government of India is trying to improve their education system and make it completely inclusive. However it is important to be realistic about the time span in which this change will occur. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

or the Education for all initiative was created not only for people with disabilities but because of discrepancies in the education sector. In the country with the second largest population in the world , with 25% of the population living under poverty line with a government only 62 years old, with a complicated social hierarchy, implementation might take a bit longer in comparison to countries with less poverty and more infrastructure for change . The importance of intention and effort should be recognized in this situation, as well as the immense improvements that the country has already made towards inclusion. Jangira, an Indian scholar in education writes: I would like to see the distinctions between words like special education; regular education and inclusive education disappear. The practice in this movement will be absorbed into the word education. The education system in India is changing. It is time for polices to start aligning with realities on the ground, and for students of all ability level of the receive the education they deserve.

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