

Inclusive Education in India: Issues, Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out all learners. It involves restructuring the culture, policies and practices in schools so that they can respond to the diversity of students in concerned region. It is one of the most effective ways by which we can promote an inclusive and tolerant society. Inclusive education is a strategy of making education universalized irrespective of any disability within the learner and to maintain equity in the society. It accentuates that children with special needs can be included in holistic platform without any kind of isolation. Avoiding the option of segregation and making them confined within the boundaries of special schools, experts of inclusive education are advocating an inclusion of children with special needs in to the common schools. We only then can claim the provision of equal opportunity particularly in education. However, for achieving success in inclusive education in India we are facing several obstacles and challenges. Many problems such as, lack of positive attitude among teachers, non-inclusive curriculum, lack of resources, infrastructural problems, unawareness among parents, irregular plans, improper execution of policies are creating hurdles for extending the concept of inclusive education in India. In paper an attempt has been made to put focus on issues, challenges, and prospects regarding inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusion, Education, Inclusive Education, Issues, perspectives

Introduction

There are many reasons for the success of teaching process. One of these is inclusion. Inclusion is one of the most widely studied topics in the teaching and learning process in the educational fields. A lot of researches have been done about its importance, its effect and the way it is applied. The Chinese proverb, (irc, 2006), says, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn." The classroom is built upon interaction, cooperation, group work, and participation. These can be done through inclusion. If there is exclusion, teaching process would not be successful. Inclusion is one of the elements which, if applied properly, school achieves success. Inclusion lexically means the act of including or the state of being included. Therefore, Hudson (2009) explained that successful teachers should include their students as well as making their students included. Inclusion is about equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils should all be included regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background. It gives attention and concentration to all pupils. In my opinion successful inclusion is a must inside the classroom. When pupils are included properly, they will equally have the same chance to achieve, learn and acquire new experiences inside their school. But exclusion means bias, failure and drawback. Pupils should be taught, assessed, evaluated and supported equally. But teachers should consider that some pupils need more support or provision to have an equal chance of success. Inclusion needs planning and teaching inclusively. Therefore, each unit gives supported tasks to reach inclusion inside classrooms. To achieve a high rate of inclusion, teachers should put no limit for pupils' involvement. Broadly, inclusion not only means to include pupils inside their classrooms but it also means to include classrooms inside their schools. (Hudson 2009)

Issues and challenges:

Inclusion is an International buzz word in education and Indian education has no exception. The Universal Declaration of human rights, the United Nations General Assembly charter, and United Nations Convention on the rights of the child all acknowledged education as a human right. It may also be seen as a continuing process of breaking down barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people. Inclusive education should create opportunities for all learners to work together." according to national education's ministry regulation "inclusive education is an educational system that provides opportunities for special needs and talented students to pursue education at mainstream schools along with other normal students.

Issues in Inclusive Set-Up:

Less Students Enrolment: Enrolment rate of children with disabilities at least on par with that of nondisabled children in the mainstream education system.

Lack of Competencies among teachers: Teachers are the key actor to successfully implementing inclusive education. There is Lack of Competency, Proper knowledge and educational qualifications which are required

from teachers in order to fulfill the predetermined purpose.

Large class sizes: Large classes are the big hindrance for the special students in order to take full advantage in the mainstream classes.

Rigid Curriculum: Rigidity in curriculum does not allow the special students to go at par in learning with the normal ones. No special curriculum is here to fulfil the diverse needs of special students.

Inadequate pre- service training and professional development: Lack of training and professional development of mainstream teachers at all levels are the big issues in inclusive education.

Negative Attitude of Parents and Teachers: Negative Attitude of Parents and Teachers towards disability, differently abled and marginalized children is also one of the major issue in inclusive education set-up.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Lack of infra structural facilities in our institution is one of the big issue which hinders us to realize the dream of inclusive education.

Lack of Assistive devices: In inclusive classroom there is Lack of Assistive devices which may assist the special students to take full advantage from the classes.

More use of Power Point Presentations in the Class: Nowadays we use technology in order to make our teaching learning process effective but at the same time when we have different types of students in the same class we ignore the diverse needs of special students.

Methods of Teaching: In most of the institution only some stipulated methods are used to teach by which different abled students are unable to take full advantage from teaching learning process.

Lack of Community Will and Participation: Lack of Willingness of parents as well as community seems there in order to send their wards to main stream institutions.

Lack of Political Will towards Implementation of Inclusive Education: Lack of Political Will towards Implementation of Inclusive Education is one of the biggest issues in order to realize the dream of inclusive in practical manner.

Retention of children with disabilities in schools: Unavailability of support from peer group students to disable students by which they are unable to retain themselves in main stream institutions.

Challenges in Inclusive Set-Up:

Execution of policies: Concerned authority should be sincere and committed enough to execute policies regarding inclusive education, implement the constitutional rights and provisions without considering the loop holes and technicalities.

Social Attitude towards Disability: we have to organise programmes regarding the spread of awareness related disabilities and should creating a positive social attitude towards disability and differently abled and marginalized children.

Resistance of parents: The parents and families of such children should be made aware of such provisions and rights through awareness programmes and advertisements on printed and electronic media

Increase skill based teaching: Trainees of mainstream teacher education centres also should be provided skills for handling such children.

Link research and practice: Disability focused research and interventions in universities and educational institutions and should be setting up of centers for disability studies and chair disability studies in universities.

Peer coaching: There must be Peer Coaching for Improvement of Teaching and Learning in inclusive educational set up.

Prospects of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a strategy to make education universalized irrespective of any disability within the learner and to maintain equity in the society. It emphasizes that children with special need can be included in general school system without any demarcation and differentiation. Inclusive education is a developmental approach seeking to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. An increasing number of publications, policy papers, workshops etc. have supported the ideology of inclusion. Some organizations and people, however, doubt whether the ordinary classroom can provide quality education for disabled children. The major goal of inclusive education is the Flagship goal. Recognizing the right to education, the Flagship seeks to unite all EFA partners in their efforts to provide access to quality education for every child, youth and adult with a disability. The Flagship has been formed by an alliance of diverse organizations, including global disability organizations, international developmental agencies, intergovernmental agencies, and experts in the field of special and inclusive education. In order to reach this goal, all the parties have to take the full participation with disabilities and families in the design of all Flagship activities. Promote the full participation of persons with disabilities and families in the development of policies and guidelines related to the education of persons with disabilities at local, national, regional and global levels. Seek to ensure that all governmental entities, donors and NGOs endorse the universal right to education for all children, youth and adults with a disability. Availability of specialist teacher supports, if possible to the regular classroom teachers. Thus, we as teachers, parents, teacher-educators etc. have to facilitate

the implementation of inclusive education not only as a program but also as an ideology- an ideology based on the principles of human rights approach wherein stress is laid on giving importance to the individual and respecting his/her potentiality in the teaching learning process.

Conclusion

There are several obstacles and challenges related to educational system which hinders to promote inclusive education. It is not impossible to attain success in inclusive education in nation through effective strategies and other means but at the same time there are some issues as well as some challenges which we have handle by soft hands. To make inclusion appropriate teacher preparation, awareness and attitude towards disabilities, retention of special children etc. must be made compulsory in all programmes irrespective of elementary, secondary level and higher education. Further quality resources, faculties and facilities must be supplied to each institution to make inclusive education Programme successful.

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