

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract :

The Paper analyses the current status of Inclusive education in India. Inclusive education lays the foundation to an inclusive society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity. The present paper traces the concept of inclusive education in Indian context. The paper throws light on the International and National level Policy frameworks and Legislations in inclusive education. The paper critically reviews need of inclusive education in India and role of schools in inclusive education.

Key Word : Inclusive Education In Indian Context.

Vision :

An evolving and systemic model of inclusive education where all children reach their full learning potential and decisions are based on the individual needs of the student and founded on evidence.

Definition :

Inclusive education is a pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allow each student to feel respected, confident and safe so he or she can learn and develop to his or her full potential. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centered on the best interests of the student, which promotes social cohesion, belonging, active participation in learning, a complete school experience, and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community. These values and beliefs will be shared by schools and communities. Inclusive education is put into practice within school communities that value diversity and nurture the well-being and quality of learning of each of their members. Inclusive education is carried out through a range of public and community programs and services available to all students.

Meaning

It is the implementation of the 'policy and process' that allows all children to participate in all programmes. 'Policy' means that disabled children should be accepted without any restrictions in all the educational programmes meant for other children. It denotes equality, and accepts every child with his own unique capabilities. This principle must be accepted by all the international, national and local programmes. The 'process' of inclusion denotes the ways in which the system makes itself welcoming to all. In terms of inclusion of disabled children, it means the shift in services from 'care of the disabled child' to his 'education and personal development'. Inclusive education goes one step further by defining these children as 'children with special needs' who need special attention, rather than children who are 'impaired' or 'handicapped'. Inclusive education is nothing but 'Making the programme for disabled children as an integral part of the general educational system rather than a system within general education'.

Student-centered	all actions pertaining to a student are guided by the best interest of the student as determined through competent examination of the available evidence.
	all students are respected as individuals. Their strengths, abilities and diverse learning needs are recognized as their foundation for learning and their learning challenge are identified, understood and accommodated.
	all students have the right to learn in a positive learning environment;
Curriculum and Assessments	the common learning environment, including curriculum and instruction
	assessment of student learning is diverse, authentic, appropriate, relevant, and sufficiently frequent to inform precision teaching
Educators and support personnel	skills, attitudes and knowledge required for the successful learning of all students are fostered in all personnel who work with students through ongoing professional development and adherence to professional standards;
Services and Community Partnerships	all students are provided with a range of programs, services and resources, including transition planning, that meet their individual goals and needs, and contribute to their cognitive, social, psychological, and cultural development;
	partnerships with parents and community groups which capitalize on the expertise and resources of these groups are cultivated

Government-wide Supports	systematic measures aimed at prevention, and early, timely assessment of need and evidence-based intervention are in place
	government departments collaborate to offer responsive and integrated services of professionals and paraprofessionals beginning pre-school.

Principles Of Inclusive Education

The provision of inclusive education is based on three complementary principles:

(1) Education is universal –

the provincial curriculum is provided equitably to all students and this is done in an inclusive, common learning environment shared among age-appropriate, neighborhood peers

(2) Education is individualized –

the success of each student depends on the degree to which education is based on the student's best interests and responds to his or her strengths and needs; and

(3) Education is flexible

and responsive to change. Recognizing that every student can learn, will provide a quality inclusive education to each student ensuring that

Objectives of policies on inclusive education

1. The governments have to give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties.
2. The governments have to adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
3. The training programmes for the teachers have to include the education of disabled children.
4. All children have access to general education system, to expand the coverage to reach the unreached population.

Importance

UNESCO (1994) states that 'All children learn together, whatever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must

recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuing quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities'. Inclusive education promotes child-to-child learning and participation of parents and community in planning and execution of services for children in general and disabled children in particular.

Role of Schools in Inclusive Education

Schools are being challenged to avoid traditional labels attached to specific groups (such as learning disabled, slow learner) resist static understandings of categories and recognise that there is a wide diversity in the student population and there are different patterns of achievement and social contributions that fit the various cultural, ethnic and gender differences that students bring to schools. In formal terms, schools are being asked to move away from a deficit model where the problem essentially was located within the individual to a social model that recognise that disability is created through social institutions that have discriminatory and disabling practices school are being challenged towards developing pedagogy of inclusion

The aim is to transform mainstream schools in ways that will increase their capacities to respond to all learners and not just children with special education needs It is really about creating and finding contexts that will enable children to experience success and feel competent Schools have to be more flexible in the way they are organised so that teachers can work together in teams and in this way teachers can learn to construct the meaning of inclusion for themselves, learn to adopt new ways of teaching and interacting with students as a part of the overall transformation of their schools .An inclusive approach to schooling requires that the perspective must be enlarged to all teachers, all policies, and all strategies for student assessment and so on "By developing an inclusive pedagogy, teachers are able to connect individual learners and their own way of learning to the curriculum and the wider school community.

Students too need to feel accepted and valued within their school. When they feel they are part of the school community, they are less likely to become alienated and are more likely to want to participate and be included (Finn, 1989). When teachers are willing to connect on a personal level with students who are potentially at risk of dropping out or becoming alienated, they can make a difference in reversing this trend and preventing student failure

Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms

In any rural setting there may be just one or two teachers in a primary school. These teachers may find their work extremely challenging. To be a good teacher means reacting to the interests different children and building teaching on what the children already know, which may sometimes prove to be difficult. As mentioned earlier, inclusion basically is an attitude of acceptance of diversities. For teaching in an inclusive classroom, a teacher needs to possess competencies that help him/her to plan and implement strategies that provide student wider access to regular curriculum.

Also the teachers must be able to :

- 1) Recognise and respond to the Diversity of student in their classrooms.
- 2) Accommodate to students different learning styles and rates of learning by employing Range of teaching methods, including cooperative group.
- 3) Learning, peer tutoring, team teaching and individual is instruction.
- 4) Be aware of the rights of students with education support needs.
- 5) Locate appropriate material, equipment or specialists.
- 6) Identify and overcome barriers to learning.
- 7) Consult with and develop partnership with parents / caregivers and colleagues.
- 8) Use appropriate forms of assessment.
- 9) Adapt their instruction to the prior knowledge and beliefs of students.
- 10) Create an inclusive community that extends beyond the walls of the school.
- 11) Seek to enhance the self-esteem of all students.

CONCLUSION

The equal importance of cognitive and procedural components to any professional development for inclusive education needs to be addressed for enduring change in the school and the classroom. Rethinking and planning for inclusive schooling often represents a substantial departure from teachers prior experience, established beliefs and Present practice. Indeed, they are encouraged to provide conditions of learning for children that the teachers themselves have rarely experienced'

Out of small number of studies conducted in area of inclusive education only one thing emerges i.e. the beginning has been made but the researches are either at the awareness level or exploratory in nature. More specific, precise and scientific researchers are needed to make inclusive education a reality in practice on a much larger scale. More teaching training modules need to be developed so that not only pre-service but also in- service teachers also could be trained in inclusive practices. The administrative and management aspects of inclusive education need to be studied at the micro and macro levels both in rural and urban setting so that the model thus developed could be replicated in varied situations. To conclude, including children with disabilities in education is a challenging task. It involves providing appropriate responses to wide spectrum of learning needs in both formal and non-formal settings.

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