

ARTICLE

Inclusive Education: Concept & Importance

* DR. BINITA PRAKASH, *Principal*
PM College of Education, karsua Aligarh
Email – binita.prakash72@gmail.com , Mob.-9456255932

Key words: encouraging, positive, happiness, achievement, contribution, safety and success etc.

Introduction

“Inclusive Education” has emerged as a guiding principle to envisage this vision .*Very encouraging and positive move indeed! Every child is the concern of its nation.* They are the future citizens of the country Development of a nation calls for the contribution of individual citizens. For this the nation is concerned with the health, happiness, achievement, contribution, safety and success of all the children. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE Act 2009) is one of the very recent steps towards achieving this goal. Our contribution as teachers is crucial in fulfilling this national mission. In this process, our active participation to empower every student irrespective of their diversity is important. Diversity among learners could be with reference to their learning abilities, socio economic backgrounds, cultural variations or even emotional behavioral characteristics. The system of education calls for providing equal opportunity to every child for optimal development.

CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In our democratic country, equality of opportunity is guaranteed to the citizens. In spite of this constitutional right bestowed upon us, informal discrimination is commonly observed in our society. Restrictions are imposed upon individuals based on their deviation in social, economical, cultural, physical, intellectual and behavioral attributes. This is not only undemocratic but also unnatural.

Segregation is against the law of nature. The Sun has no restriction on giving its heat and light, the wind never says no to anybody on this earth. Nature provides equal opportunities for its members to develop to their fullest abilities without any

discrimination. Some schools say no to some children, why? Some children are deprived of educational opportunity, who are they? The practice of segregation in education and inability to be in school in the school going age snatched away the right of children to equality and participation in the society. The value of the individual capacity is totally neglected in this kind of situation. Realizing this, national and international declarations have expressed support for including all the children without any discrimination in the schools. Hence all the recent education plans and policies have supported a system of education which provides equal opportunity to all the children for education. The democratic system of governance worldwide is in tune with this philosophy. The same principle is initiated in the field of education in the name of inclusive education. Inclusion is about building the inner strength and mounting confidence among children. It is valuing difference, immaterial of the limitations imposed due to external factors. “The problem is not to wipe out but how to unite with the differences intact” — Rabindranath Tagore.

MEANING AND NATURE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

As a professional, a doctor is expected to deal with one patient at a time; a lawyer with one client at a time; due to the diversity of the problems for which individuals seek assistance from them. But, as professionals we deal with a group of young minds. This idea of providing quality education by valuing the individual need in a group as a unit is called as inclusive education. You may be wondering as you are doing it already but there was no name specifically given to such a practice. You are right; we have been giving education to every child despite their diverse backgrounds since ancient times. We would prepare them according to their ability and make them self dependent and socially productive. Of late we have moved away from this democratic practice due to pressure from various sectors in education. Let us learn now as to what is this inclusive education as conceived by the visionaries in the field of education. Inclusive Education is an approach to educate all children who are at risk for neglect in education system. It expects that all learners learn together through access to common educational provisions. The crucial people in the system are the parents, and community, teachers, administrators and policy makers. All these people have to be supportive towards the diverse needs of children. It should be seen as an experience rather than a problem.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

It is the right of every child to get education. The society needs variety of people for the progress of humanity. Inclusive education becomes important to fulfill this. Let us observe the need for inclusive education from different angles.

Human Rights

- All children have the right to learn together.
- No one can discriminate children because of their learning ability and social, economical, cultural and family background.

Education

- Research shows children do better, academically and socially in inclusive settings.
- Given commitment and support, inclusive education is a more efficient use of educational resources.

Social

- All children develop relationships with variety of people around them and this prepares them for life in the mainstream.
- Inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and build friendship
- Mutual respect, understanding and compassion increases among the fellow individuals.

Psychological

- Development of safe and secure feeling in the group
- Confidence in the individual ability among the diversity

Inclusive education helps the development of children in different ways. Students with specific challenges make gains in physical, cognitive and social development and motor skills. They do well when the general environment is adjusted to meet their needs. Children in the schools develop higher levels of tolerance for people with diversities in general and those who are disadvantaged. When we exclude children from the education system, there begins a demarcation in the society. It is

very difficult to include them in the later stages for any purpose in the community. Thus, inclusive education lays the foundation to an inclusive society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity (MHRD, 2005).

BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- Inclusive education can help break the cycle of poverty and exclusion• It encourages children to stay with their families and communities
- The school atmosphere can improve to the benefit of all the learners
- The practice can help overcome discrimination which is widespread in every sphere of society
- It promotes wider inclusion of individuals for the development of the nation You may add to the list based on your understanding of inclusive education.

FACTORS AFFECTING ENCLUSIVE EDUCATION

As we all know, inclusion is a global trend in education. For the success of this program implementing agencies have to accept the rights of children. Schools should provide for the needs of all the children in their communities, regardless of their ability. The idea seems simple but there are significant barriers to achieving these goals. There are several difficulties on the path of fulfilling the vision of inclusive education some of which are discussed in this section.

DIVERSITY AMONG THE LEARNERS

There is so much of diversity among a group of children belonging to the same age group. Children differ with regard to their home background, motivation and ability to learn, personal attributes contributing to success in academics, attitudes, interests and commitments. This wide variety to be addressed as a group for instruction is a difficult task.

PREPAREDNESS OF TEACHERS

Identifying that the child has a different need itself is a skill which a teacher has to be equipped with. But the teacher preparation program hardly addresses this issue. To tackle diversity in the classroom on a daily basis, certain specific training is required by teachers. In our country this requirement is not fulfilled. Hence it poses a threat to the implementation of inclusive education.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The location, space and arrangement of a classroom are essential factors to help inclusive education. Most schools of our country are devoid of basic facilities suitable for learning. The location away from noise, rooms with proper ventilation, space for free movement inside and outside of the classroom, grounds to play and provision for other co-curricular activities are very essential to support inclusive education.

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

Our schools have not yet explored the availability of resources to support children in their process of learning. The teacher is not equipped with the skill of making use of the variety of learning materials. Teachers find it difficult to tackle the diverse learning need in the classroom without appropriate materials. The support of professionals is very essential to handle some categories of children. Clinical psychologists, social workers, audiologists, speech language pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists are required to help in the process of education of some of the children. But we have limited people working in the field. Getting expertise to schools is a remote chance especially in rural areas. “Alone we do so little, together we do so much” — Helen Keller

EVALUATION SYSTEM

There is so much of rigidity in our pattern of evaluation, that the child is assessed wrongly. For diverse learner, there is need to use diversified evaluation system. If a child is not able to write, all other abilities of the child will go unnoticed. If the child requires some other mode of evaluation other than reading and writing, we are not giving that option to children. This leads the learner to frustration and they drop out of the education system, a major deterrent to the cause of inclusive education. *Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb the tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.* – Albert Einstein

SUM UP

Thus inclusion is all about effective learning by all children. It is based on the social model of equality of opportunity. The practice is based on the principle of respect for difference and acceptance of diversity as part of nature and humanity

is held at the helm. The nation is committed to provide equal opportunity to every child for optimal development. "Inclusive Education" has emerged as a guiding principle to envisage this vision. All the recent education plans and policies have supported a system of education which calls for a halt to saying no to some children for education. Inclusion is about building the inner strength and mounting confidence among children. It is valuing difference, immaterial of the limitations imposed due to external factors. The focus of the teacher has to be on a practice in school to respond to the diversity of students. The term integration was used to describe the participation of children with disabilities in the educational program existing for all the children. No doubt integration prepared us for the implementation of inclusion. Inclusion focuses upon changes within the system than changing a child. Diversity among the learners, preparedness of the teachers, poor infrastructure facilities, non availability of resources and rigid evaluation system are the major factors that causes hurdle in the path of achieving the goal. Teachers have to be geared up to take major role in creating an inclusive classroom. Children with disability, children who are gifted and creative, children belonging to minority community and economic deprivation are the ones who face problems in schools. Their learning needs have to be addressed in the classroom by making use of appropriate materials and with simple management techniques.

REFERENCE

1. Jhulka, A. (2006) "Including children and youth with disabilities in education – a guide for practioners" NCERT, New Delhi
2. Right to Education Bill (2005 Draft, enacted 2009) Available online.
3. Internet Source, SSA (2002). 'Basic features of SSA', Inclusive education in SSA, Retrieved from [www.ssa.nic.in / inclusive education / ssa planmanual](http://www.ssa.nic.in/) available online
4. Mani, M.N.G. (2000). Inclusive Education in Indian Context. International Human Resource Development Center (IHRDC) for the Disabled, Coimbatore: Ramakrishna Mission Vivekannanda University.
5. Swarup, S. (2007). Inclusive Education, Sixth Survey Of Educational

Research 1993 N.Delhi.: 2000. NCERT.

6. Hallahan, D.P., Kauffman, J.M., Pullen, P.C. (2009). Exceptional learners:

An Introduction to Education (11th Ed.), USA: Allyn & Bacon, Pearson

Education, Inc.

7. Alur, M. & Batch, M. (2005) "Inclusive Education – From Rhetoric to

Reality. The North South Dialogue II" Viva Books Pvt Ltd. New Delhi

8. Hwang, Y. S., & Evans, D. (2011) "Attitude towards Inclusive Education:

Gaps Between Belief and Practice". International Journal of Special

Education, Vol 26, No. 1

Kalyanpur, M. (2007) "Equality, Quality and Quantity: Challenges in

Inclusive Education Policy and Service Provision in India". International

Journal of Inclusive Education, 2007, Vol 20, No 1.

*** Corresponding Author:**

DR. BINITA PRAKASH, Principal

PM College of Education, Karsua Aligarh

Email – binita.prakash72@gmail.com , Mob.-9456255932