

Inclusive Education in India



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Abstract

Many efforts have been taken to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream at international and national level. Different NGO's are also working for the enrolment, preparation of material, supply of assistive and adaptive aids for the disabled children, but this vast population of children with disabilities can only be facilitated with the help of using alternative strategies and programmes in schools rather than only special school settings. There are many challenges around negative attitudes and behaviour, on the part of both teachers and parents, in relation to the ability of disabled children to learn. Presently, there are many special schools addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in India. But these schools are not sufficient to fulfil the needs of entire population. A school-based support team along with parents and student volunteers should be made for the whole school to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs. Students with disabilities may create long-lasting friendships that would not be otherwise possible, and these friendships can give them the skills to navigate social relationships later on in life. Differently abled children always need respect and support instead of sympathy from society. They want that their talents and abilities should be recognised properly for their self-respect and welfare of the society.

Keywords: Inclusion, Integrated, Children with special Needs, Inclusive Education.

Introduction

Inclusive education involves restructuring the culture, policies programmes and practices in schools so that it can respond to the diversity of students in the society. It brings all students together in one classroom, without any discrimination of their 'strengths or weaknesses in any area, which maximizes the potential of all students'. Inclusive education has been defined at different ways that addresses the learning needs of the differently abled children. The efforts of the Government of India over the last six decades have been improving for providing maximum services towards inclusive education. The centrally sponsored scheme for Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) was introduced for providing equal opportunities to children with disabilities in general schools. National Educational Policy, 1986, suggested inclusive education, 'to integrate the handicapped with the general community at all levels as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence'. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992 recommended training programme for 'the development of professionals to respond to the needs of students with disabilities'. National Policy for Persons with Disability, 2006, also suggested the framework under which the state, civil society and private sector must operate in order to ensure a dignified life for persons with disability. The Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education (2009) also provides right to free and compulsory education to all children between ages six to fourteen. Keeping in view, Govt. of India had introduced the new scheme of Inclusive Education for achievement of the target of Education for All (EFA) by 2010. It is clear that education policy in India has gradually increased the focus on children and adults with special needs, and that inclusive education in regular schools has become a primary policy objective, yet a lot to be required now. In almost every country, inclusive education has emerged as one of the most dominant issues in the education. After Salamanca Statement in 1994 (UNESCO), mostly developing countries started introducing or reformulating their policies to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream schools'.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the present paper is to highlight a school-based support team along with parents and student volunteers that should be made for the whole school to meet the needs of learners with special

educational needs. It recommends that team should also be a part of each and every organisation so that all can share their experiences concerned to the disabled students and even give maximum submission about the general problems and requirements of the students. It also highlights some basic practical changes in school infrastructure for creating better environment so that all children should be treated equally with respect and support instead of sympathy from anyone for their self-respect and welfare of the society.

Inclusive and integrated education

Inclusive education means that 'school should accommodate all children without any discrimination of their physical, intellectual, social emotional linguistic and other conditions'. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas of groups'. (the Salamanca statement and framework for action on especial needs education, 1994). Inclusive school setup demands that regular classroom learners should be equipped with skills to provide favourable learning environment to meet the educational needs of the children with SEN with minimum or no assistance of special teacher. In India, the term 'Inclusive education has not been defined formally but the draft scheme on inclusive education, The national Curriculum framework, 2005 viewed that a policy of inclusion needs to be implemental in all schools and throughout our education system. The participation of all children needs to be ensured in all spheres of their life in and outside the school. (NCF 2005)

Integration may be the process of 'reducing social distance, a progression towards segregation to social integration'. In the reference of disability, integration have the provision of education system opportunities for the children with SEN in general education system at all levels as equal partners. Integration is the process of providing educational opportunity for children with SEN to uplift along with the children without SEN as equal partners in the same general education system. It provides the channel and helps to place children with SEN in mainstream classrooms with the help of policies, programmers and legislation. Special education section lies in it and viewed as a part of general education system, whereas inclusive education goes one step further, and made the special education component as integral part of the general education system, i.e., both special and general education components interact with each other by inclusive setting the facilities and the flexibility among programmers and practices in education.

Challenges of Inclusive Education

Presently, there are many special schools addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in India. But these schools are not sufficient to fulfil the needs of entire population. Different NGO's are also working for the enrolment, preparation of material, supply of assistive and adaptive aids for the disabled children but this vast population of children with

disabilities can only be facilitated with the help of using alternative strategies and programmes in schools rather than only special school settings. There have been efforts internationally to include children with disabilities in the educational mainstream. In order to achieve the aim of inclusive education, we need to think about and incorporate children with special needs into regular schools. Especially, because these children face some sort of barriers to learning and participation in the classroom. As normal education classrooms include more and more diverse students, teachers realize the value of accepting each student as unique. In effective inclusive programs, teachers adapt activities to include all students, even though their individual goals may be different. Inclusive education is a better way to help all students succeed. Most of the students learn, understand and perform better when inclusive settings and Inclusion provides opportunities to develop relationships. Classmates of students with disabilities also experience growth in social cognition, and often can become more aware of the needs of others in inclusive classrooms. An interesting side effect is that these parents report that they also feel more comfortable with people with special needs because of their children's experiences. Students with disabilities may create long-lasting friendships that would not be otherwise possible, and these friendships can give them the skills to navigate social relationships later on in life.

There are particular challenges around negative attitudes and behaviour, on the part of both teachers and parents, in relation to the ability of disabled children to learn. Another serious challenge is the fact that most disabled people are still excluded from equal access to mainstream education. Large class sizes, traditional methods of teaching, lack of teaching aids, lack of expert teachers, uncooperative school environment etc present another challenge for the implementation of inclusive education in India.

Advantages of inclusive education for Students with Special Education

1. Can utilize more time for leisure and recreational activities.
2. Friendly atmosphere in and outside classroom can be developed.
3. Can develop a sense of confidence, dignity and respect for all as equal partners.
4. Children can think over more better options for career advancement in life
5. Easily oppose the activity restriction
6. Can be aware of the new inventions, technologies and expanding general knowledge in the knowledge based society.
7. Can maintain a good physical and mental health
8. Active and participating approach help students in developing positive personality traits.
9. Can acquire different skills to enhance learning and improved performance especially in academic areas.
10. The student with SEN learn communication skills as well as develop social competence.

Advantages of Inclusive Education to non-disabled Students studying in inclusive classes

1. Can enhance their knowledge and skill by acquainting different skills e.g. Braille or sign language.
2. Can serve as a link between community and school. Help to be a responsible member of society.
3. Can get the exposure about new career options in knowledge based society Know about their strengths and weaknesses and learn many positive characteristics in their personality.
4. Can do peer tutoring according to their interest
5. Can learn to respect individual differences and human diversity.
6. Can serve as a helping hand for children with SEN.
7. Sharing and caring of each others feelings, attitude, knowledge and skills.
8. Opportunities to interact with children with SEN i.e. variety of experiences can be sought.
9. Can develop moral values.

Some Basicpractical Changes in School Infrastructure for Creating Better Environment

1. Consider installing urinals along with toilets in restroom.
2. Convert a classroom into an efficiency apartment so that students can learn how to use kitchen appliances such as dishwashers. Install other appliance to help students learn how to take care of themselves.
3. For students with intellectual disabilities, the school is a laboratory to learn how to junction better in both public and private spaces. For this reason the more experience a school building can offer, the more opportunities these students will have to learn both self-care and vocational skills.
4. Crowded hallways can be dangerous for students with physical disabilities because they can easily be knocked off-balance. Typical traffic control measures, which need not be costly, will improve matters. Paint a line down the center of a hallway and have students keep to the right. Make Hallways "one-way" during heavy traffic periods.
5. Create easily-accessible storage for mobility equipments. Students with physical disabilities came with an array if positioning and mobility devices, such as wheel chairs, special chairs and go it trainers. Since a student can only use one device at a time, the rest should be stored in easily accessible but out of the way locations.
6. Use building signs in Braille and easy to read lettering, known as redundant cuing. Also use color coded wings, floors or pods and landmarks which could feature art displays or photographs or a bright color for walls or moldings. Set up alcoves for small group activities. Anything to distinguish one hallway from another is helpful.
7. Ordinary schools had been physically upgraded to be environmentally accessible to serve as models of full service schools.

8. The specifications were incorporated into the national infrastructure norms for application in all new classrooms and buildings.
9. Specifications for making ordinary schools environmentally accessible to the disabled had been developed and were used by infrastructure planners.
10. Auditoriums should have a ramped stage and wheel chair spaces intermixed with fixed seating, to enable student switch mobility devise to sit with peers. If these students must use an elevator, allow them to choose one or more peers to accompany them so the trip becomes comfortable, rather than stigmatizing.
11. Large public spaces give students the opportunity to become comfortable in spaces surrounded by much activity. A library media center might offer learning opportunities with electronic equipment libraries with wide aisles and bookcases at heights accessible to everyone not one encourage reading but allow students to learn to check out and re-shelve books. Create flexible and versatile classrooms, ideal classrooms permit multiple activities to occur simultaneously.
12. The key requirement for inclusive education are barrier free school environment so that education available to children is accessible to all. The aims of accessibility is Availability, orientation, safety and usability.
13. Transportation is one of the barriers in inclusive education. By providing free transportation in the morning and at noon and in the afternoon help the children to access the education.
14. Material conditions (e.g. lack of school building insufficient equipped classrooms, insufficient learning material)

Suggestions

Differently abled children should be treated equally as the normal children.They always need respect and support instead of sympathy from society .They want that their talents and abilities should be recognised properly for their self-respect and welfare of the society. Some of the suggestions for inclusion of all children in mainstream are following:

1. In-service training programmes like refresher courses, winter school programmes, workshops of at least three to three weeks' duration for general educators and special educators in all the disabilities and in specific areas of disability should be mandatory.
2. Evaluation of the teaching programmes and curriculum to meet the challenges of changing situation and requirements in special education should be necessary part of the planning of teacher preparation.
3. Transport facilities should be modified, so that these children can move around with more comfort and ease. Architecturally, there should be ramps and wheelchair access constructed in school buildings.There should be laws on the development of infrastructure public transport, school infrastructure school building programme etc.

4. Students teaching oriented aids, such as medical and educational assessment, books and stationery, transport allowance, reader allowance and stipend, initiatives, support services, assistive aids, therapeutic services like Braille, audio aids teaching learning materials, etc should provide according to need of the students.
5. Necessary school supports such as audio learning or textbooks in Braille should be made available. Suitable modification to examination system as arrangement of separate writers for blinds, comfortable sitting arrangements and flexibility of extra time etc, may be arranged.
6. Teacher student ratio and availability of trained teachers who will meet the needs of the children is also required.
7. Children and adolescents with disability may need special retreat or therapy room, where they can have some time off to better cope with the requirements of the schools environment.
8. For accessing the education available to all curriculum must take into consideration the carious needs of Inclusive education. Its flexibility must be reflected in the methods, planning approaches strategies and materials used to give these children the with maximum possible access to the regular curriculum.
9. Providing a flexible time-frame for pupils studying particular subjects
10. Giving greater freedom to teachers in choosing their working methods.
11. Allowing teachers the opportunity of giving special support in practical subjects over and above the periods allotted for more traditional school subjects.
12. Allotting time for additional assistance for classroom based work. Emphasizing aspects of pre-vocational training.
13. Inclusive education should be flexible especially materials, methods and approaches used for these students regarding to curriculum.

Conclusion

The Govt. of India has started many steps, policies, plans in the field of inclusive education for involving all children in mainstream by focussing on inclusive Education, yet result are not satisfactory,

Presently there are many special schools addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in India. But these schools are not sufficient to fulfil the needs of entire population. A school-based support team along with parents and student volunteers should be made for the whole school to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs. This team should also be a part of organisation so that can share their experiences concerned to the disabled students and even give maximum submission about the general problems and requirements of the students. Parents should have right to be involved in all decision-making activity concerning their children. Volunteers and parents may be very important resources for the teachers and the schools. We need to create an inclusive design of learning with supportive and motivating environment to make all children welcoming in society. Differently abled children should be treated equally with respect and support instead of sympathy from anyone for their self-respect and welfare of the society.

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