

Different Perspectives of Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs

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Abstract

This paper puts a glance on importance of inclusive education for children with special needs in different perspectives. It discusses the reason for promoting the inclusive education. What does it matter? What are the reasons for justifying inclusive education for children with special needs? Main objective of this paper is to understand the importance of inclusive education in different perspectives. This paper is a part of Ph.D. in Education entitled, "Understanding nature of Discrimination through the voices of the marginalized: A study with reference to children with special needs"

Keywords: Children with special needs (CWSN), Inclusive Education, Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD), Perspective.

Introduction

Education considered as a key ingredient in social and economic development. Individuals require education not only for organized information but also as an apparatus for picking up abilities, skills, values and attitudes. The reasoning that has created during the last 50 years in the field of special education has huge impacts on special education, yet additionally on practice in regular education system. Till 1990s 90% of India's estimated 40 million children in the age group-four to sixteen years with physical and mental disabilities were excluded from mainstream education. In the ongoing past, there have been several initiatives taken by the countries of world including India to bring the children with special needs to the fold of mainstream education so they are given an opportunity to develop and get schooling in an inclusive environment. Which can be justified from educational perspective, humanitarian perspective, sociological perspective, economic perspective, democratic perspective, constitutional and legal perspective. Attitude of Special Educators towards Electronic Learning (Sharma, S & Das, A.K. 2019), Inclusion Practices of School Management Committees (SMCs) In Secondary School for Students with Learning Difficulties (Sharma, S & Sarkar, B. 2019), Vocational Training on Behavioural Skills in Mild Intellectually Disabled Person: An Empirical Study (Sharma, S & Das, A.K. 2017), Effect of Spiritual Attitude of Parents of Mentally Challenged Children (Sharma, S & Das, A.K. 2017), Accessible technological devices for people with disabilities: Divyangjan (Sharma, S & Kumar, S. 2017), Use of CAI in Special Education: An Approach Towards children With Mental Retardation (Sharma, S & Kumar, S. 2016), Children with Special Needs and their Educational Aspirations (Sharma, S & Dilbag. 2015) are the various references which describes in one or another way of the requirement of inclusion for CwSN.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to understand the importance of inclusive education for CWSN from different perspectives. In order to achieve the objective, this research paper has tried to look at inclusive education from different perspectives.

Research Methodology

In the light of literature review, this paper describes the importance of inclusive education for children with special needs from different perspectives in descriptive manner.

Inclusive education for Children with special needs from different perspective**Educational perspective**

Inclusive schooling is the practice of including everyone-irrespective of talent, disability, socio-economic background or cultural origin-in supportive mainstream schools and classrooms where the needs of all students are met. By educating all students together children with special needs have the opportunity to prepare for life in the community, teachers improve their professional skills and society makes the conscious decision to operate according to the social value of equality. The justification of inclusive education can be discussed in terms of benefit to students, teachers and society. In the words of Vandercook (1988), in inclusive classrooms all children are enriched by having the opportunity to learn from each other, develop to think about each other and gain the abilities, attitude, skills and values necessary for our communities. At the point when legitimate plans are available, inclusion works for all students with and without disabilities in terms of mutually held positive attitudes, gains in scholastic and social aptitudes and groundwork for living in the community.

Sociological Perspective

According to Stainback and Stainback (1990), "if a society supports integration of all individuals, then segregated schools and classrooms have no place in that society. There is no defensible rationale, excuse, nor will scientific research that can be concluded that in the final analysis, justify segregation". In the opening address to the Victorian Federation of State School Parent's Club Seminar On Integration of Children with disabilities into local schools (November, 1981) Dr. Graham Clunies-Ross stated that "Societal attitude towards the child with disability may be altered positively through integration". What Grahams expressed in 1981, holds for inclusive education even today.

Economic Perspective

In a nation like India, Inclusive Education for children with special needs is justified from economic perspective. This is clear from the following facts. There are an estimated 650 million people with one type of disability or the other everywhere on the world and 10% of this number is assessed to be in India. That implies we have 65 million people with disability (Disability kar, April, 2007). In developing countries 97% of disabled children are without any form of rehabilitation and 98% of special children are without any education (Disability kar, 2007). Kenneth Eklindh states over 90% of special children in developing countries are not in the school (Education today, Oct-Nov.2007). Their participation in economic activities contributing to national development is as important as that of the normal people. Therefore, education of people with special needs assumes a lot of significance.

Humanitarian Perspective

The framework for action (Salamanca Statement, 1994) says: Inclusion and participation are essential to human dignity and to the enjoyment and

exercise of Human Rights. In the field of education, this is reflected in achieving a genuine equalization of opportunity. Human differences are normal and that instruction must be adapted to the needs of the children, rather than the children are fitted into the process. The fundamental principle of inclusive school education is that all children should learn together, where possible and that regular schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students.

Democratic Perspective

In democracy, all children whether they are special child or not have the right to education as they are the future citizens of the nation. Inclusive education is a human right. All children have the right to learn together. Children should not be de-valued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability. Even disabled adults describing themselves as special school survivors are demanding an end to segregation. They don't need to be protected from one another. If integration and equity for all in society is desired, then segregation in the schools can't be justified. If we truly want someone be important part of our lives, we should do whatever is possible to invite that individual and accommodate his/her needs.

Equal opportunity to education is one of the parameters of democracy. Without fair and equal educational opportunities there is no democratic society. People's rights of educational equality can be protected powerfully in a society with solid democratic thoughts. In actuality, in a society which lacks democratic thoughts, people lack the knowledge of democratic ideas and the quest of equal rights. This makes it hard to guarantee justice and equality in the field of education. This likewise shows up of exclusion of the disadvantaged groups and decreases their awareness of active participation, which can reflect the democratic view of inclusive educational thought and requires each individual who gets education to participate in the social decision-making in order to reconstruct the society. Inclusive education advocates that everyone has the right to get education equally. Inclusive education assumes that every student is remarkable and has his/her own interests, characters, capacities and learning needs. These distinctions should be foundation to think about them and provide suitable learning conditions from equalitarian perspective.

Constitutional Perspective

The constitution gives all residents, including the disabled, the right to education. Article 29 (2) of the Constitution gives that no resident will be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or accepting aid out of state funds. This additionally implies that each child has right to get education in an educational institution of his/her choice which is ideally the local/neighbourhood school. This also infers that each child with a disability has the right to get education in inclusive setting and the authority concerned can't deprive the child of his/her rights unless there are compelling reasons to do as such.

Article 41 notices people with disabilities and says partially “the State shall within the limits of its economic development make effective provisions for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement and in other cases of undesired want”.

Article 45 of the constitution guides the state to provide free and compulsory education for all children (including the disabled) until they achieve the age of 14 years. Recently compulsory primary education Acts have been sanctioned by different States including Delhi. In Delhi, this Act expects guardians to send their children to school. Obviously, guardians of children with special needs may like to send their children either to inclusive schools or to special schools. Inclusive education is justified in view of financial constraints of parents to send their children with special needs to special schools and/or unavailability of special schools in the neighbourhood.

Legal Perspective

Inclusive doesn't mean including children with special needs into regular classrooms of the neighbourhood school. In order to serve the purpose of inclusion, CWSN must be provided with support from qualified and trained professionals. In fact, children with special needs have the right to be served by trained and qualified rehabilitation professionals. Until 1992, an enormous number of institutions were running a variety of training programmes dependent on various models. To manage all such training of experts and rehabilitation professionals, Govt. of India enacted the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 (RCI Act, 1992). It was revised by Rehabilitation Council of India (Amendment) Act, 2000 to accommodate for monitoring-

1. The training of rehabilitation professionals and personnel, promoting research in rehabilitation and special education as additional objectives of the Council.
2. Recognition of qualifications in the field of disability and rehabilitation granted by institutions, universities, etc., in India for rehabilitation professionals.
3. Recognition of qualifications granted by institutions outside India under reciprocal system.
4. Granting/withdrawal of recognition to institutions on the basis of approved standards.
5. Set minimum standards of education/training/curriculum.
6. Maintenance of Central Rehabilitation Register (CRR) for rehabilitation professionals/personel.
7. Arrangement for inclusion/removal of names from CRR.

The RCI through its linkages with training colleges/institutions and universities has been undertaking standardization of educational plan, monitoring and assessment, evaluation of teacher training, research and innovative work in the field of disability and rehabilitation. The RCI doesn't work just with the objectives stated above. It looks forward, it works for creating awareness about and promotion of inclusive education. It is assessed that there are

about 30.28 lakh children with special needs have been identified in India (Annual Report: 2011-12, MHRD) and we can't have special schools for every one of them.

Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995: Landmark legislation in the history of special education in India is the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995. This comprehensive Act covers seven disabilities, namely blindness, low vision, hearing impaired, loco-motor impaired, mental retardation, leprosy cured and mental illness. Chapter V (Section 26) of the Act, which deals with education, mentions that the appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall:

1. Ensure that each child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he accomplishes the age of eighteen years;
2. Try to promote the integration of students with disabilities in normal schools;
3. Promote setting up of special schools in government and private sectors for those in need of special education in such a way that CWSN living in any part of the nation have access to such schools; and
4. Endeavour to equip the special schools for children with special needs with vocational training facilities.

National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 Another landmark legislation is the National Trust Act, 1999. This Act seeks to protect and promote the rights of persons who, within the disability sector, have been even more marginalized than others. Though the National Trust Act of 1999 does not directly deal with the education of children with special needs, one of its thrust areas is to promote programmes, which encourage inclusion and independence by establishing barrier-free environment, creating functional skills of the disabled and promoting self-help groups. The object of the National Trust is to empower families to retain their disabled members within the family and the community. The Trust connects with disabled persons and their families and provides a range of relief and care services.

The Right of children to free and compulsory education Act, 2009. The 86th Constitutional Amendment was passed in December 2002. It provided for insertion of Art 21A, emanating from Art 21 being the Fundamental Right to Life. Art 21A provides for free and compulsory education to children in the 6-14 age group as a Fundamental Right in the Constitution of India. Consequent to this insertion the existing Art 45 in the Directive Principles was replaced and made applicable to children in the 0-6 age group. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 provides free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education for each and every child.

The RPWD Act- 2016, enacted to operationalize human rights, this act provides that “the appropriate Government will ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy the right to equality, life with dignity, and respect for his or her own integrity equally with others.” The Government is to take steps to utilize the capacity of the PWD by providing appropriate environment. In this act, the categories of disabilities have been increased to 22 and the identification of various types of disabilities of children is considered very important.

Conclusion

Different perspective of inclusive education shows the significance of equality in education of children with special needs. Constitutional and legal provisions provide free and compulsory, barrier free education to children in the 6-14 age group, setting up schools in the neighbourhood and providing additional classrooms and learning facilities to all children. Seeing education of CWSN with different perspectives, it can be understood that the system of inclusive education is as important as the education for other children and it is mandatory to make efforts to be effective at different levels.

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