

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Education for all is an international commitment to ensure that every child receives basic education of good quality. But education for all has not given sufficient attention to some marginalized groups of children in some of the underdeveloped nations. Inclusive Education (IE) is a new approach toward education the children and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. It brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or Weaknesses in any area, and seeks to maximize thru potential of all students. In this paper an attempt has been made to look at inclusive education issues and challenges

INTRODUCTION :

According to WHO and World Bank Report (2011) an estimated 15% of the world's population has a disability. Globally, 93 million children are estimated to have moderate and severe disabilities and many of these children are out of school. That means they are not being given the chance to become empowered as individuals and support their communities. The exclusion of children with disabilities from education and from fair life chances requires urgent and sustained attention. In particular, attention need to be paid to preparing teachers who are capable of including children with disabilities in the education process.

Disability:

Disability indicates lack of power or ability to do something. It refers to any limitations experienced by the disabled in comparison to able persons of similar sex,



age, and culture. World Health Organization (1978) proposes the assumption of three-tier classification system including impairment, functional limitations, and disability. Impairment leads to functional and functional limitations leads to disability, Disability is the consequence of an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these. A disability may present from birth, or occur during a Peron's lifetime.

A disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

An individual is considered as disabled if he or she has any impairment in the past or is seen as disabled based on a personal or group standard or norm. Such impairments may include physical, sensory, and cognitive or developmental disabilities. Mental disorders (also known as psychiatric or psychological disabilities) and various types of chronic disease may also qualify as disability.

Learning Disability:

Learning disability refers to a group of disorders that affect academic and functional skills of the children including ability to listen, speak, write, read and organizing information systematically, Learning disability is disorder in the processing of information involved in understanding and using language (spoken or written); and difficulties in learning particularly reading, writing mathematics, and/or spelling.

Cause a Learning Disability:

Some learning disabilities appear to be passed down from generation to generation occasionally certain medical conditions, such as neurological illnesses or



chronic childhood ear infections, may also alter the neurological development or structure of the brain as well, creating a learning disability.

Types of Learning Disability : Dyslexia, Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia are thee basis types of learning disability.

Dyslexia :

Which refers to difficulties in reading “Dyslexia is a disorder in children who despite conventional classroom experience fail to attain the language skills of reading writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual” More recently, however,, it has been used as a general term referring to the broad category of language deficits that often includes the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words as well as the ability to read and spell words accurately and fluently when breakdowns occur in these foundational reading skills, dyslexic students often struggle to understand what they read as well as develop vocabulary at a slower rate.

Dysgraphis is a written-language disorder that involves mechanical writing skill. The term dysgraphia refers to more than simply having poor handwriting. This term refers to those who struggle with the motor skills necessary to write thoughts on paper, spelling, and the thinking skills needed for vocabulary retrieval, clarity of thought grammar, and memory.

Dyscalculia means difficulty with calculations and mathematics. This term refers to those who struggle with basic number sense and early number concepts as well as have difficulties with math calculations and math reasoning.

Inclusive Education:

Inclusive education is an approach to educating children with disabilities. Inclusion is, “a dynamic approach for responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning” (UNESCO-2005). Shapiro-Barnard (1998) defines inclusions as, “all students being educated where they would be educated if they did not have a disability (i.e., in



age appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood school) with necessary supports provided to students, educators, and families so that all can be successful” (as cited in Dukes and Lamar-Dukes, 2006) In the past, integration (or mainstreaming) was the term used to describe the incorporation of children with special needs into normal education set-ups.

Owing to lack of knowledge, educational access and technology, disabled children were initially treated as unwanted and segregated from other children. Later their education was carried in special schools. In recent times there has been a shift towards having children with disabilities attend the same schools as ably challenged children. The educationists now feel that each child should be allowed to learn in its own way. The concepts of inclusive educations have been spelt out in the Salamanca statement and the framework for action on special needs education 1994. It states that all governments have been urged 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” The basic premise is that the school should meet the educational needs of all children irrespective of their disabilities or challenges.

Why inclusive Education? One of my friends Mr. Kotore wanted to admit his six year old son Amit in the school we went to the school for admission. The general school refused to give him admission because he could not see fully. Then we went to a special school for admission. They also refused admission because he could see partly. There are some individuals who find it difficult to learn without special inputs. There are the individuals who have special learning needs, which arise out of sensory, intellectual, psychological or socio-cultural deficits. For example, persons with a low level of intellectual functioning and those with disorders in psychological process. These conditions, impairments or disabilities impede the normal development of individuals-intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically Needless to say, the discrepancy in their development and development of those without such impairment depends on the type and degree of disability. There are however, ways to reduce this discrepancy through restorative and rehabilitative inputs including education. Thanks to significant developments in medical science technology and education. The lives of disabled persons can be normalized through special inputs. These persons can also be educated using special instructional methodology and instructional material, and



learning aids and equipment specific to special learning need. It also requires additional teaching competencies in the general teacher and in some cases special teachers are indispensable. These needs have given rise to the component of education known as special education.” (M.B. Buch. 1988-92)

UNESCO (1994) states that, all children learn together, whatever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of the students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curriculum, necessary 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. Children with disabilities form a significant proportion of the out-of-school population in the region and their right to access equal opportunity of education is too often violated. Hence, students with disabilities especially the sensory (Visual and hearing) and mobility disabilities need to enjoy their right to receive education along with their normal counterparts.

Rights of persons with disabilities bill 2016 :

Right of persons with disabilities bill -2016 was passed by parliament in December 2016. This is the amendments of Persons with disabilities Act-1995. Now there will be 5% reservation for disabled persons in the Govt. Service and academic admission previously it was 3%. The Rajya Sabha has already passed the bill on 14.12.2016. The salient feature of this act is as follow.

- Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities. The 21 disabilities are Blindness, Low-vision, Leprosy Cured persons, Hearing impairment (deaf and hard hearing). Locomotors Disability, Dwarfism, intellectual Disability, Chronic Illness, Autism Spectrum disorder, Cerebral



palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Chronic Neurological conditions, Specific Learning disabilities, Multiple Sclerosis, Speech and Language disability, Thalassemia, Hemophilia, Sickle Cell disease, Multiple disabilities including deaf blindness, Acid attack Victim, and Parkinson's disease.

- Speech and Language Disability and Specific Learning Disability have been added for the first time. Acid Attack Victims have been included. Dwarfism, Muscular Dystrophy have been indicated as separate class of specified disability. The New categories of disabilities also included three blood disorders, Thalassemia Hemophilia and Sickle Cell disease.
- In addition the Government has been authorized to notify any other category of specified disability.
- Responsibility has been cast upon the appropriate governments to take effective measures to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others.
- Additional benefits such as reservation in higher education, Government jobs, reservation in allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes etc. have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities and those with high support need.
- Every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.
- Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education to children with disabilities.
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Issues and challenges of inclusive education in teacher education :

Experts in the field of inclusive education point to teacher education and school leadership as essential for the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom yet the standard of teacher training courses across India varies massively, and they usually approach the inclusion of children with disabilities from a deficit perspective.



As per NCTE Regulation 2014, inclusive education is an integral part of teacher education programme curriculum (B.Ed. and M.Ed.) It is implemented from academic session 2015-16 in most of the Universities. While implementing the new curriculum of teacher education particularly inclusive education the teacher educators facing the following issues and challenges.

- There is a global shortage of teacher particularly of teachers who are sufficiently trained and motivated to include children with disabilities (and children from other marginalized groups) in regular schools. Yet such inclusion is vital for achieving education for all goals and bringing the millions of currently excluded children into education.
- Teacher educators are not aware about how to implement inclusive education subject at B.Ed. or M.Ed. level.
- In order develop the skills, experience and confidence to be inclusive of all children, Teachers need to learn about and practice inclusive education during preservice and in-service training and they need to be given opportunities for continuing professional development (which extends beyond simply attending training courses) throughout their careers.
- Every teacher also needs opportunities for inclusive education practicum during their training, and to feel supported (for instance by specialist colleagues) to continue trying new ideas throughout their emoloyment. There needs to be an effective balance of theoretical and practical learning for teachers at preservice and in service stages.
- NCTE have provided curriculum framework along with a list of reference books. But most of the reference books are not available in the market or on website. Also, in Maharashtra some university followed yearly pattern and some semester. There is no uniform syllabus for all the universities. Also in most of the institutions teacher educators with insufficient knowledge of the subject will have to teach new curriculum and also reference books are not available in the library.



- It is expected that the professional degree B.Ed. be offered only in face to face (F2F) mode. But F2F mode of teacher education is not that realistic as it used to be. Nowadays students are seeking admission conditionally in teacher education institution that will not attend college regularly.

Remedies:

Though there are many challenges in implementation of inclusion education as integral part of two-year teacher education programme, following remedies are suggested.

- Special in-service training programs namely workshop, orientation of short-term course on effective implementation of inclusion education as integral part of two year teacher education programme need to be organized for teacher educators by the respective universities.
- At least one of the teacher educators must have M.Ed. in special education.
- Initially University should borrow renowned special teacher educator from the Government Institute of Special Education for teaching the inclusive education part at B.Ed. or M.Ed. level.
- Without having registration number from Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) no teacher educator can render his/her service in the field of special education.
- The unfavorable attitude of the society towards the disabled should be eradicated and the personality of the disabled should be so shaped as to make them creative citizens working for the progress of the nation.

Conclusion:

There is change in every field of education. NCTE has come out with a changed structure of teacher education programmes along with inclusive education as an integral part of the curriculum. It is our moral responsibility to implement the new regulation efficiently. Today Through many questions need to be answered and all of us to find more alternative solutions to the various issues. Now we have to maximize the strength



and minimize the weakness of the teacher education programmes. We hope for better quality in present teacher education programme.



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