

Inclusive Education for Pre- Service Teachers- Need of the Hour

¹Aarti Joshi, ²Anika Moudgil

¹Assistant Professor, ²Student

^{1,2}Lyallpur Khalsa College of Education for Women Jalandhar

ABSTRACT

Inclusive Education is a key strategy to ensure education for all. Inclusive education means all students irrespective of their caste, age, creed, gender, locality, disabilities etc. study in same school, under same environment, with equal opportunities without any segregation and discrimination. Inclusive Education enables the educators to respond to the diversity of their students and to treat them equally. It requires that teacher should take responsibility in creating an inclusive environment of learning. For taking responsibility, it is must that proper training should be given to the teacher trainees, which will help them in actual workplace. So this article suggest various ways to promote special education to teacher trainees.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Teacher trainees, Differently able

Introduction

Inclusive Education is a key strategy to ensure education for all. Inclusive education means all students irrespective of their caste, age, creed, gender, locality, disabilities etc. study in same school, under same environment, with equal opportunities without any segregation and discrimination. One of the major concern nowadays is to provide equal opportunities to all the students i.e. inclusion of all into the mainstream without any discrimination. As we strive to meet these challenges, the involvement and cooperation of educators, parents, and community leaders is vital for the creation of better and more inclusive schools. So the concept of including all in the same classroom have changed the scenario as major adjustments have to be made to prepare teachers for more diverse student populations. Philosophies regarding the education of learners with disabilities have changed dramatically in recent years and the movement towards normalizing education has led to a range of alternative education programs. One of the alternative is to include them in their local regular school. Inclusive education is related to the effort of overcoming barriers that prevent the participation and learning of all children, regardless of their race, gender, social background, sexuality, disability or attainment in schools (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). Inclusive Education enables the educators to respond to the diversity of their students and to treat them equally. It requires that teacher should take responsibility in creating an inclusive environment of learning. For taking responsibility it is must that proper training should be given to the teacher trainees which will help them in actual workplace. In Pre-service training, they have to develop concern for children with disabilities, and change their negative attitudes into positive ones in order to eliminate the prejudicial aspects of a teacher towards these children. To impart such training it is must for the universities and other educational bodies to make proper changes in the curriculum. Without changes in the curriculum no special effort can be done to impart education to teacher trainees as educators are just busy in developing the intellectual part and providing materialistic human beings and ignoring the other aspects of the personality. Chhabra, Srivastava, and Srivastava (2010) reported that a lack of

prepared teaching materials was a major issue that surfaced in their study of 103 practising teachers in Botswana. Inflexible timetabling, inadequate time for planning and meetings, and a lack of specialist support were also factors reported to negatively impact on the success of inclusion.

Jordan, Schwartz, and McGhie-Richmond (2009) noted that one of the most pressing concerns towards successful inclusion is that the time available for students without a disability is taken up by those with disabilities.

Eckhart, Haeberlin, Lozano and Blanc (2011) found that attendance in a special school reduced one's chances of obtaining an apprenticeship, or access to a profession after graduation.

The principal premise of IE is that schools are about belonging, nurturing and educating all students regardless of their differences in ability (Kozleski, Artiles, Fletcher & Engelbrecht, 2007). In an inclusive school, children are given equitable support so that every child can be able to participate physically, socially and academically with their peers (Pearce, 2009).

Many researchers have demonstrated that participation in a pre-service program positively influences the attitudes, self-efficacy and professional efficacy of pre-service teachers to work with students having special educational needs (Burton & Pac, 2009; Novak, Murray, Scheuermann & Curran, 2009; Susan, 2009; Lambe, 2007).

Inclusion has two sub-types:

- **Regular inclusion** : In this the student is treated like a regular member of the classroom and only specialized services are provided outside a regular classroom. In this case, the student occasionally leaves the regular classroom to attend smaller, more intensive instructional sessions in a resource room, or to receive other related services, such as speech and language therapy, occupational and/or physical therapy etc.
- **Full inclusion.** Full inclusion is the integration of all students, even those that require the most substantial educational and behavioral supports and services to be successful in regular classes and the elimination of special, segregated special education classes.
- Students with mild or moderate disabilities, as well as disabilities that do not affect academic achievement, such as using wheelchair, are most likely to be fully included. However, students with all types of disabilities from all the different disability categories have been successfully included in general education classes, working and achieving their individual educational goals in regular school environments and activities.

Practices followed in Pre-service Teacher Education

- **Inadequately designed preparation programs:**

Pre-service teacher education Programs are inadequately designed to meet the needs of special children. Special training is not given to teacher trainees to cater to needs of all segments of the society. Proper focus on practical knowledge and skills should be there to enhance learning and also criteria for admission should be perhaps raised to a higher level in order to make sure that only the best are admitted and effective teachers are gifted to the society by educational institutes.

- **Response and expectations of pre-service teachers:**
If educators hold positive attitudes towards inclusive education it may allow and encourage practices that will further, to a large extent, promote successful inclusion of all students (Hobbs & Westling, 1998; Wilczenski, 1992, 1995). But the teachers are not concerned the students issues rather they are just interested in completing their degrees and getting job for themselves. So there is need to change their attitude as Pre-service training is the best time when modification of negative attitude of the teachers can be done to achieve the aim of inclusive education.
- **Lack of Focused efforts:**
An organization's journey to become inclusive initiates with various preplanned action plans to foster an inclusive education program where uniqueness of beliefs, backgrounds, talents, capabilities, and ways of living are welcomed and leveraged for learning but these reequipped and focused efforts have to be realistic. So, Pre service teaching practice should be such that it produces direct and influential results.
- **Inflexible time table**
To include all the children under same education system there is need to have flexibility in time table but as a matter of fact rigid time tables are followed and teachers are not given any authority to deviate from such time tables.
- **Change in government policies**
As the tenure of B.Ed programme has been extended upto 2 years by the government, but the motive of attaining inclusive education is still not attained. No doubt legal laws have been made to include all children and provide same education to all children but practically it is not followed..
- **Lack of support**
For implementing inclusive education as an important aspect in B.Ed programme, teachers have consistently supported the philosophy of inclusion while arguing that resources and support for integration are inadequate.

Need of Inclusive Education in Pre Service teacher education

- **Access to education, knowledge, skills by all:**
Children with disabilities are not gaining equal access to education although many of the children have expressed a desire to go to school. According to a National Disability Survey report (2005) Right to education was established to ensure that education is accessible to all. To make it accessible for all the learners its mandatory that concept of inclusive education should be implemented in the education system.
- **To transform general educators to special educators**
In order to attain inclusion at all the levels there is a need to equip every teacher psychologically and physically with various techniques and ideologies so that teacher can appropriately handle all the learners in their classrooms

- **To accept each student as unique**
As uniqueness is human nature and right to attain education is not partial so every student irrespective of any disability should be included to normal schools and this can only happen by sensitizing pre service teachers regarding inclusive education
- **Emphasis on higher order thinking skills**
Inculcating the Inclusive education in the curriculum not just theoretically but practically will lead to establishment of variable technique based and high order thinking skills among the pre service trainees
- **Legal issues**
The new anti-discriminatory climate has provided the basis for much change in policy and statute, nationally and internationally. Inclusion has been enshrined at the same time that segregation and discrimination have been rejected.
- **New developments in ways of thinking**
Thinking emphasizes the actions. The teacher educators can play an influential role in changing the ways of thinking of pre service teachers and can bring in their creativity to include all learners in the learning activity.

Improving communication and social skills,

Effective social problem solving requires reading one's own and others feelings, and being able to accurately label and express those feelings. Such skills are aspects of social and emotional learning (Zins, et al., 1998). Interaction makes procedure implementation more effective and easy because if interaction happens then only problems can be analysed and remedial procedures can be followed

- **Training in methods and techniques of learning:**
As the general as well as special educational teachers are not adequately prepared to handle students with emotional and behavioural disorders or severely emotional disorders and emotional disorders. So the pre service teachers needs to be trained in methods and techniques of learning to impart education effectively according to individual needs of the learners.
- **Cooperative and collaborative learning**
Collaboration is an interactive process that enables people with diverse expertise to produce creative solutions to commonly defined problems, (Friend and Cook (2010). The chances of the success of the programme or the course in problematic conditions can be attained by joint efforts of all. Various collaborative strategies like peer collaboration, co-teaching and teaching assistance can be used by regular teachers to deliver effective instructional programs to differently abled students by assigning various role to be played in various tasks and enhancing learning and team work.
- **Imparting quality education to all**
According to national curriculum framework for school education NCFSE 2000, carried out by the NCERT, "suggested inclusive school for all without exact reference to pupil with special education needs as a way of providing quality education to all learners." So for increasing quality an enriched and inclusive curriculum is a prerequisite needed of an B.Ed programme .
- **Helpful in understanding needs and adjustments of the students.**

A teacher has to deal with a lot of students and a teacher is said to be effective only if he can understand the needs and adjustments of the students which require special skill and training to be provided by the educational institutes.

- **Teaching students to look for ways to help each other**

Peer help is the most convenient measure for the students having various disabilities as a child is more open to the peer group .so inclusive education make the pre service teachers capable enough to give value education to children to help each other

- **Utilizing physical therapy equipment such as standing frames**

Students with special needs sometimes needs special equipments. So proper training should be provided to the teacher trainees in handling these equipments so that proper help can be provided if needed by the children with special education needs.

Various ways to promote special Education in Pre Service training

- **Teachers should be given special incentives for teaching the Differently-able students:**

Special allowances should be given to the trainees or teachers who caters to the needs of special children as it will motivates them to get training in providing special education.

- **Recruitment of teacher candidates with disabilities and with diverse cultural, migrant and other backgrounds.**

As there is ethnic diversity in the society so with diversity in recruitment of teachers, all will feel united. Due to “cultural synchronicity”, minority students or students with disability feel more comforatble with the teacher having the same background. The assumption is that synchronicity is a valuable resource in teaching and learning (Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Gandara& Maxwell-Jolley, 2000; Valencia, 2002; Haycock, 2001; Foster, 1994; Achinstein& Aguirre, 2008).

- **Differently-able students should have the option of selecting subjects**

Every child being unique has unique interest and abilities. Due to unavailability of resources, inefficient trained staff, “Fairness isn't about treating everyone the same; it's giving everyone what they need.” Deb Watkins. So the scenario is such that mostly skill based education is emphasized and imparted to special children and they are not encouraged for taking science, mathematics and various other subjects which are more complex on intellectual level which create sense of being discriminated from all and hindrance in proper usage of potential of the child .

- **Inclusive education need to be socially accepted**

Effective inclusion is a group effort. The inclusive education should be socially accepted at all levels so that various efforts can be done for promoting it on various higher levels.

- **Inclusive education should be encouraged by all the members of the society**

Only acceptance of inclusive education will not serve the cause, encouraging each and every effort at various levels will lead to long term behavioral change and for this various measures can be taken like conducting class meetings, values clarification, praising as often as possible, utilizing peer mediation etc.

- **To view diversity as an asset**

Students are the building blocks of our future and the teachers are the creators. It is often said that God creates and teacher recreates. So diversity is created by God and one should view it as an asset to the society and not as a burden on the society. If diversity in a classroom is enjoyed and well handled by a teacher, this will inculcate the value of treating everyone equal and include all in the students as well.

- **Positive outlook**

Children having special needs should not be treated as a burden, rather should be given an equal access to everything. Positive outlook toward such learners is the need of an hour. Psychological alterations of viewpoints and removal of negativity towards the concept will promote acceptance of inclusive education traditionally.

- **Special provisions should be made in every school for Differently-able students**

Article 14, Article 21A, The 86 Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 of the Indian Constitution clarifies that when law says about providing education to all in that, "all" includes children with disabilities as well. But equality alone cannot serve the cause, some equity measures and special provisions at school level is required have a free way for inclusive education.

- **Training in handling special equipments like magnifying glasses and hearing aids to be provided**

Now if we demand implementation of inclusive education in all schools then pre-service teachers are needed to be so well equipped and trained that they know how to use various instrument so that proper and emphasizing instructions can be provided to students having various disabilities. Technology has played a wonderful role in combatting the exclusion but using that technology for attainment of goal of inclusive education is still just theoretical, so practical training is to be given to handle special equipments.

- **Participate with the university in lesson plan development and classroom instruction with a diverse group of children.**

Special education will be practically implemented if teaching practice is organized for pre-service teachers in inclusive school settings and lesson planning for specialized inclusive education is involved in the curriculum. Enriched curriculum with various activities promoting inclusive education is a must measure for increasing quality access to inclusive education.

So in nutshell there is growing need to make the teachers sensitize about the individual differences and thus finding suitable ways to cater to these individual needs and for this it is must that special training should be given to teacher trainees so that they should be well prepared to handle such diversity in actual classroom situations which can bring a revolution in the field of education and in my views only way to have inclusive education in real sense.

References:

- Achinstein, B., & Aguirre, J. (2008). Cultural match or cultural suspect: How new teachers of color negotiate socio-cultural challenges in the classroom. *Teachers College Record*, 110(8), 1505-1540.
- Ahsan, M. T., Sharma, U., Deppeler, J. (2011). Beliefs of pre-service teacher education institutional heads about inclusive education in Bangladesh. *Bangladesh Education Journal*, 10 (1), 9-29.
- Ahuja, A., & Ibrahim, M. (2006). *An Assessment of Inclusive Education in Bangladesh*. Dhaka: UNESCO.
- Burton, D., & Bartlett, S. (2005). *Practitioner research for teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Carroll, A., Forlin, C., & Jobling, A. (2003). The impact of teacher training in special education on the attitudes of Australian preservice general educators towards people with disabilities. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 30(3), 65-79.
- Chhabra, S., Srivastava, R., & Srivastava, I. (2010). Inclusive education in Botswana: The perceptions of school teachers. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 20(4), 219-228
- Forlin, C., Loreman, T., Sharma, U., & Earle, C. (2009). Demographic differences in changing pre-service teachers' attitudes, sentiments and concerns about inclusive education. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 13 (2), 195-209.
- Gandara, P. & Maxwell-Jolley, J. (2000). *Preparing teachers for diversity: A dilemma of quality and quantity*. Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for the Future of Teaching & Learning.
- Novak, J., Murray, M., Scheuermann, A., & Curran, E. (2009). Enhancing the preparation of Special educators through service learning: Evidence from two preservice courses. *International Journal of Special Education*, 24 (1), 32-44.
- Susan, S. (2009). A Literature review: Pre-service teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities. *Education*, 130 (1), 53-62.
- Valencia, R.R. (2002). The plight of Chicano students: An overview of schooling conditions and outcomes. In R.R. Valencia (Ed.), *Chicano school failure and success, second edition* (pp. 3-51). New York, NY: Routledge-Falmer.
- Villegas, A.M., & Irvine, J.J. (2010, April). Diversifying the teaching force: An examination of major arguments. *Urban Review*, 42:175-192.