

Inclusion a Reality or Dream?

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Abstract:

Inclusive education has always been a debated model with Special schools. Special schools no wonder ensures an individual attention and need based curriculum for the student but the range of opportunities is varied in an Inclusive setup. Special schools segregate the student from a general education setup whereas the Inclusive school follows a common curriculum for all which ensures that every student will learn the same objective even if it is in a different manner. One true fact is no one wants to be left alone. An aware and sensitive society will brace everyone despite their differences. Similarly, an education system can be successful only if it caters to the different needs, skills and talents of students. A healthy education atmosphere is one which respects 'being different'. A school set up where everyone is included is an Inclusive setup. But in reality Inclusion is still a dream with certain constraints despite International laws and policies.

Keywords: why is Inclusion is still not a reality?

I. INTRODUCTION

Every child has the ability to learn, in many different ways. Every child has a unique way of learning. A favorable environment is one where every child's potential is nurtured and every skill is supported. Especially for children with special needs we owe them a chance to reach their potential. It has always been argued that a favorable learning is one where everybody learns together. Therefore, a setup where all children are together is supposed to be the best learning environment.

Inclusive education is a thought where all students are attended and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of life in school. Inclusive education is more about how to develop our classrooms, schools, teaching instructions to ensure learning for all. (Inclusion, BC, 2009)

International attention began focusing on areas that were perceived to present barriers of the full participation of persons with disabilities. One critical area of focus was education. In June 1994, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) drafted the Salamanca statement which included the following agreements:

- Every child has the fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed and educational programs implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within child centered Pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.
- Regular schools within this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory

attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all, moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii-ix)

In 2006, United Nations (UN) put forward the convention of the Rights of person with Disabilities (CRPD).

The CRPD has received 155 signatories and 127 ratifications.

“Every country more or less has taken up Inclusive education as one of the most dominant issues in education of SWSN (Students with special education needs). From a segregated paradigm of special education it is emerging as integration where Inclusion is central to contemporary disclosure”. (Mitchell, 2010, p. 121)

With the rapid development of Inclusion as a thought mainstream education emerged as an idea where children with special needs will be put together in a regular classroom (co-portland education). A separate school and confinement will no more be the reality for children with special needs but a society and environment which is for all.

If we look into the history of education we have always come across facts where education was an elitist affair. People with disabilities or non-elitist people were not a part of it. With changing time the non-elitist were included. With the International Convention that people with disability were included in the process of education. Every individual is worthy of education is a mindset that took years for people to realize. Even with the International and National rights Inclusion as a practice has its own drawbacks and strengths.

The fixed curriculum does not allow teachers to tailor teaching techniques suitable for different learners. The basic method of instructions restricts the high achievers in the class and curbs their scope for logical reasoning.

The common method of examinations does not cater to individual talent and skills. The special classes are conducted

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in a separate resource room which hampers the self-esteem of children with special needs. Even with curriculum exemptions and accommodations few children with special needs finds it difficult to cope up with a general curriculum causing social embarrassment. The performance pressure in an Inclusive setup is more compared to a Special school where the curriculum is entirely based on the needs of the child. The teacher's mindset towards a child with SEN plays a vital role in shaping a child's behavior.

Every education system has its own strengths as well.

An Inclusive setup gives space to a child to interact with peers the way a special school is an obstruction. It enhances self-esteem of the student. Gives a number of opportunities to cater to the different needs, talents and skills of the student. Every student learns the common curriculum which ensures common learning objective for all children with special needs enjoys accommodations and exemptions were their various methods of learning are attended to. Inclusion creates and promotes tolerance and awareness among other children which they carry lifelong. The self-esteem is boosted in an Inclusive setup where everyone is equal without any differences. Educators, community members, parents and students everyone benefits from an Inclusive model.

Although the international literature does not suggest that Inclusion works best for every student all the time. The overall trend indicates that students with special education needs generally fares well with Inclusive setup, having no negative impact on other students without special education needs.

Keeping in mind the International convention we must understand that an Inclusive society is far more beneficial than a segregated education system. Every country has the Right to Education policy. In spite of which Inclusion is not a reality. Many studies and research have brought into light the fact that many schools especially in developing countries are unwilling to include students with difficult background.

With this reality one must keep in mind that it is observed that Inclusive education is far more than just a change in terminology. It is an idea which has to be accepted by schools, educators and individuals. The fact that no one is left alone and everyone is welcome despite their different backgrounds, set of skills, talents and difficulties. The mindset, outlook and awareness play a major role to make inclusion a reality.

Research by O' Haulon in 1995 draws light to the fact that there are many definitions on Inclusion from an academic viewpoint and a human rights standpoint. In reality Inclusion will thrive the best where exist:-

- Collaborative teamwork
- A shared framework
- Clear role among professionals and educators
- Effective use of existing resources
- Meaningful IEP's
- Procedures for evaluating effectiveness

Another argument by Farrell and Hunt emphasize the importance of parent's perception in making Inclusion a reality.

No one wants to be excluded. Inclusion is about embracing every student in a community and every citizen in a democracy. The idea of belongingness is highlighted in Inclusion. The sense to accept everyone and the sense that every individual is different must be accepted with respect and dignity. Every diversity has to be accepted with an open mind to make Inclusion a reality.

II. REFERENCES

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