

Inclusive Education – Concept and Form in India

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Abstract:

Etymologically speaking, 'inclusive' signifies in one word an all embracing societal ideology. Regarding individuals with disabilities and special education, inclusion secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in general education class-room. The pupils in this concept thus attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood school. They are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of life of the school. It ensures individual's right in every field of education, emphasizing equity merely as laying the foundations for quality education. Inclusion in Education has become a global phenomenon and it is noteworthy that 'Sustainable Development Goal 4' and 'Education Framework 2030' for action give stress on it. This present article is about to focus the need of inclusiveness in present decades and the problem to face in practical field.

Key-words : Inclusive, Education, Class room, school.

Introduction

Inclusive Education as recorded by the 'Salamanca statement in 1994' –

“Scholar should accommodate all children regardless of their physical intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote population, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.”

[Salamanca statement, 1994]

It is when all students regardless of many challenges may have, are placed in age – appropriate general education classes that are in their own neighbourhood schools to receive high quality instructions, inventions and supports that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum. The school and classroom operate on the premise that students with disabilities are as fundamentally competent as students without disabilities. Therefore, all students can be full participants in their classrooms and in the local school community. Much of the movement is related to legislation that students receive their education in the 'Least Restrictive Environment' (LRE). This means that they are with their Peers without disabilities to the minor degree possible with general education the placement of first choice for all students.

Successful inclusive education happens primarily through accepting understanding and attending to student differences and diversity, academic social and emotional. This is not to say that students never need to spend time out of regular education classes, because sometimes they do for a particular purpose- for instance for speech or occupational therapy. The driving principle is to make all students feel welcomed, appropriately challenged and supported in their efforts. It is also critically important that the adults are supported too. This

includes the regular education teacher and the special education teacher as well as all other staff and faculty who are key stake-holders and that also includes parents. It is about ensuring access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive. Students participate in the education progress in a common-living environment with support to diminish and remove barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion. It is carried out in a common learning environment- that is an educational setting where students from different backgrounds and with different abilities learn together in the same environment. Common learning environments are used for the majority of students' instruction-hours and may include classroom, libraries, play grounds and local community. A common learning environment howbeit is not a place where students with intellectual disabilities or other special needs learn in isolation from peers.

The term 'Exclusion' is also necessary to understand for the better concept of inclusion. There are various definitions, quotes of different men of letters on and about exclusion. One such definition is given by Gore and Figueiredo (1997-98) according to whom exclusion is the condition when – "individual and group are denied access to the good services, activities and resources which are generally associated with citizenship." The European Foundation thinks exclusion from different angles "Exclusion is the process through which individual and group are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live." [Web search – wiki/20.04.2018]

There are various types of exclusion. The noted Indian Nobel laureate Prof. Amartya Sen (2000) Categorizes exclusion into two and they are- 1. Active 2. Passive.

'Active Exclusion' as Prof. Sen opines, is that type which is done with law. The exclusion of refugees in any land is an instance in point. They are not given any type of constitutional right that a legal citizen generally enjoys in any nation. Passive exclusion is again something different from the former – it is that specific type which is done through social change. The condition of poor people in society is a social reason and the law has nothing to do with it. The poor are many where excluded from society for different reasons. This one is strictly a passive exclusion.

India is a country which is rich in heritage. It has its noted past. It is one of the ancient civilizations of the whole world. But at the same time, the concept of exclusion dates too back here. With the slow progress of humanity, social consciousness comes. The concept of all powerful and less powerful, rich and poor emerged. Slowly and gradually the ill-fated people have been excluded from common and general rights. At every step, they face social problem, political problem, religious problems. Naturally do they face the problems of education, Howbeit, situation begins to changes with the dawn of Indian Renaissance which begins with the arrival of British people and goes zenith with their departure. Now the concept of exclusion is back-dated. Inclusive education is a direct offshoot against it.

The concept of inclusion reaches its Peak at the fag end of 20th century. It has been given a prestigious position in modern system of education by organizations like ILO, UNDP, world Bank etc. It has few features, which can be summed in the following way- At first, it is one kind of education that allows learners of all types to sit together and learn together. Pupils belonging to different religion, sex, culture, religion do come and share the same class room atmosphere. Naturally the concept of inclusion is literally the very opposite to that of exclusion. In this broad concept, every individual learner can be a part of neighbourhood school. S/he can never be

humiliated or subject to harassment for social reason. Rather, the educational institution must welcome him or her, ensuring also to provide with every type of help in case of need.

The fact is that government thinks a lot and performs a lot for the proper utilization of inclusive education in schools and colleges. It has stretched its sympathetic hand for the better atmosphere of school. Students here are motivated to learn and perform. At the same time, the percentage of inactive or slow teachers goes down day by day. Here the teachers are psychologically and socially uplifted. They are ready to admit that students are from different psychological zones. They have individual needs which can or cannot be matched with others. Naturally, they must be humble as well as flexible in dealing every individual. Despite, the teachers in inclusive education have to know the process of dealing with individual problem – They have to know how and which way to follow. At the same time, they have to make out the definition of gender discrimination and how it functions in society and school. They must make the teachers understand that sex is biological, whereas gender is socially constructed. The facilitator in an inclusive class-room hence must be aware of psychological implications of these roles and discrimination on the individual. Above all the facilitator makes everyone know how gender roles may influence career choices.

It is noteworthy that a challenged learner who is about to come to the normal course or flow of life has been given a golden opportunity to come and share the normal class room in neighbor school. The guardians of these polarized learners also become assured about the possibility of their children's future. Inclusive education becomes thus able to cope with all those problems faced by guardians. Apart from assuming the guardians regarding prosperous life of their children, it gives a challenged child a very normal life. It assures everyone's right in every field of life. Hence the learners in this system of education ultimately come to know that everyone is equal and no disparity would come. It stresses on equality and equity of life. It also keeps focus on those who are below average, poor-I.Q. level or challenged with physical or psychological deformities.

The Individuals with Disabilities (IDEA) is a federal law that requires students to be educated in the 'Least Restrictive Environment' (LRE). They must receive an education with support set forth in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is different for each student. The federal laws that govern the education of special needs children do not require that they receive an inclusive education. Categorically speaking, there are two types of inclusion and they can be- 1) Partial inclusion II) Complete inclusion

In a partially inclusive class-room atmosphere, the facilitator gives lesson to all the students in general without giving any special importance to individual or group. In such cases, child with special needs spend most of the time in general class room atmosphere and very few time with special educator. Complete inclusion on the other hand specifies that class-room atmosphere where every child-even child with special needs- takes lesson from the teacher in general class-room. What is more is that complete inclusion denies the need of special class by specialized teacher. The fact however is that complete inclusion is really challenging to execute in practical field. If the facilitator is not competent to handle and tackle with sympathy and tactfully, the total learning hours would be a mere wastage. Despite, other types of challenges may come from the children with personal needs.

It is an undisputable fact that the concept of inclusive education is new one. But its emphasis to give everyone normal class room atmosphere is not at all new in Indian context. India is a country which has its glorious past in the field of education. From the dawn of civilization it has initiated or done at least something which the other countries later imitate. Few instances are there that went against the education system but they are too little to mention. After the independence, the Indian constitution is formed and it lays emphasis on quality

education. It starts thinking not for the sake of particular tribe or class or race but everyone. It secures proper justice, equality, fraternity for every citizen. They also realize that the inequitable forces embedded in the socio-economic system and also political organization had resulted in deprivation and disadvantages for the poor and weaker sections of the society. Therefore, considering as necessary to provide specific safeguards in the constitution for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribes, these sections of the society were not deprived, The various safeguard and protective measures sought to ensure for them all-round development and freedom from exploitation and social injustice so that they would form part of the of the society.

The preamble of the constitution of India provides for securing to all the citizens, social, economic and political justice and equality of status and opportunity. The Directive principle as contained in 'Article 46' of the constitution provides that "the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people." Apart from Constitutional safeguard, for the depressed sections of society, the Ministry of social welfare of 1960 takes the burden to look after the poor and the depressed sections of the society. It also inspires many NGOs and organizations to stretch their helping and sympathetic hands for the healthy life, better-education, for those ill-fated ones. The year 1971 is a landmark in this context when planning commission welcomes education for all as its project. In 1974, a great project for the integration of child with special needs has been adopted in the name of ICDS (Integrated child Development scheme) The fact is that this scheme is successful and still goes on smoothly.

The effort to take every child in the mainstream of education has thus a long history. It not only ensures everyone about quality education but thinks children with special needs. Accordingly a school is organised in 1983 in Bombay specially for the deaf. Later on, such special institutions have been installed around the nation for children with special needs. A historical step is taken in favour of inclusive education by Education commission of 1986, ensuring every child to live a free-life in society like common man. It stresses on the inclusion of poor-deformed child with special care in general class-room. A final step has been taken by Indian Government in the year of 1992 in POA that speaks about the bringing of child with special care to the mainstream of life and society by giving them quality education in general class room. Two years later, in 1992, 'RCI- Rehabilitation' has been accepted in the parliament. In recent time, a series of programmes have been launched for inclusive education. In 2005, 'IECXD' (Inclusive of children and youth with Disability) is taken for children and youth. In the year 2006, inclusive education has become a part and parcel of 'Sarva Shiksha Mission' and finally the 'Right to Education Act' (RTE) includes Inclusive Education as its main branch in the year of 2009.

In spite of all these, the real picture of education in context of India however goes against inclusive-education. In India, the number of disabled people is so large, their problem so complex, available resources so scare and social attitudes so damaging. The road to achieving inclusive education is a long and coveted one on which challenges and opportunities will arise. India is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi religious country and its people are stratified along sharp socio-economic and Caste lines. With an essential 1,210 million people, India is the world's 2nd most populated country after China. It has 17 percent of the Global population and 20 percent of the world's out-of-school children. The aim of inclusion is to bring support to the students. The key purpose has become more challenging as school-accommodate students with increasingly diverse background and abilities. According to official estimates from the census of India(2011), the number of people with disabilities in the country is 26 million or 2.1% of the total populations. However UNICEF'S Report on the status of Disability in India(2000) states that there are around 30 million children in India suffering from some form of disability.

10% of the world's population lives with a disability and 80% of these people with disabilities live in developing countries. But 75% of people with disabilities live in rural areas in India. The government has created necessitous policies around special education around the country. But still there many hindrances.

A large number of children with disabilities live in families with income significantly below the poverty level. Most of school personnel in India are not trained to design and implement educational programs for students with disabilities in regular class. Most teacher-training programme in India do not have a unit on disability studies (Myreddi & Narayan, 2000), The majority of schools in India are poorly designed and few are equipped to meet the unique needs of the students with disabilities. It is also worthnothing that there are challenges around procuring and resourcing for assisting devices. Despite various efforts for inclusive education in India, about 94% of children with disabilities did not receive any educational services. Over and abroad some of these challanges that India shares with other developing countries are some distinective features that will make the implementation of educational reforms particularly difficult. The commitment of the government of India for universalization of Education cannot be fully achieved without taking care of special educational needs of the physially and mentally challanged children. Inclusion is hance becoming a cant and doing the rounds in education circles, there are still a lot of cobwebs surrounding it.

Making education inclusive is not a cost-getting measure. Government must be prepared to invest substantial sources at the outset on system reforms such as teacher and staff training, improving infrastructure, learning materials and equipments and receiving curricula to implement inclusive education successfully. Howbeit by eliminating redundancy and the high costs of running parallel systems such investments are an efficient and effective use of funds and hold the Potential to improve education for all students. Funding mechanisms must be reformed so that schools that enroll students with special needs receive the necessary additional financial resources. When students move from special schools to mainstream schools, the funding should also follow.

Open society foundations support inclusive education. We can promote of ways including the following-

- a) Advocate for the recognition of children's legal rights, such as supporting organizations of Parents with children, with special educational needs and disabilities in India.
- b) Fund empirical research including support for an organization of young people with disabilities that is documenting barriers to education.
- c) Support sustainable services like networking and learning opportunities for schools and NGOs such as Teacher associations and Parent-groups.
- d) Strengthens civic-society groups that give young people, parents and educators a voice including parent led organizations advocating for the rights and inclusion of children with disabilities.
- e) Engage with civic society and other actors in policy development by- for instance, providing technical support to the development of key inclusive education- related laws policies and strategies at the national level.
- f) Support governments and system services to pilot models of successful inclusive education provision that could be scaled up and replicated.

Conclusion : Inclusive systems therefore provide a better quality education for all children and are instrumental in changing discriminatory attitudes. Schools provide the context for a child's first relationship with the world outside their families, enabling the development of social relationship and interactions. Respect and

understanding grow when students of diverse abilities and background play socialize and bath together. Education that excludes and regregates perpetuates discination against traditionally marginalised group. When education is more inclusive, so are concepts of civic participation, employment and community life.

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