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Devoted to Disability, Discussing its Present Scenario and Futuristic Challenges for the Development of Persons with Disabilities

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Including Children with Disabilities in General Education System

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Abstract

The process of including children with disabilities is quite challenging. The concept including children with disability in regular classroom becomes a big topic for debate between lawmakers, school administrators and teachers. To make it simpler I would like to share the basic concept of inclusive education. As we aware that inclusive education is nothing but educating everyone under one roof through a common educational setting. In another word, it is a process for establishing and implementing a system for educating children with disability as an integral part of the general educational system rather than a system within a system. Being included them is not something that a child must be ready for, at all times they are ready to attend regular schools.

Keywords: *Disability, Inclusive Education, conceptualization of Inclusion*

In India, according to the 2011 census, out of 121 crore population, 2.68 crore persons are disabled which is 2.21% of the

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total population. Around, 1.86 crore disabled persons are resided in rural areas where 0.81 of population is resides in urban areas. In total population of disabled persons 69% are resided in the rural and 31% are in urban areas. Out of these, only 61% of the population is attending schools where 12% are dropped. Interestingly, the rate of school attendance of disabled at rural area is 60% where 65% is for urban. Even though, the record shows the rate of school attendance, what about the facilities getting in the school. Do we have the answer for this? What about those disabled persons, who are not enrolled or attend the school in their life?

Providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs is the major concern of Inclusive setting in the form of formal and non-formal settings. Inclusive Education is an approach that concerns about how to transform the system of education and other aspects of learning environments to fulfill the diversity of learners. It aims towards enabling teachers and learners both to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment of the learning environment, rather than a problem. Inclusion emphasizes providing opportunities for equal participation of persons with disabilities whenever possible into general education, but leaves open the possibility of personal choice and options for special assistance and facilities for those who need it.

According to UNESCO, inclusive education is seen as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education." The goal is that the whole education system will facilitate learning environments where teachers and learners embrace and welcome the challenge and benefits of diversity. Within an inclusive education approach, learning environments are fostered where individual needs are met and every student has an opportunity to succeed.

Inclusion is about welcoming diversity and extending services by

not only targeting to the excluded group or individual. It aims to provide equal access to education or making certain provisions for certain categories of children without excluding them.

In particular, four key elements have tended to feature strongly in the conceptualization of inclusion. They are

1. Inclusion is a process: That is to say, inclusion has to be seen as a never-ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity. It is about learning how to live with difference and learning how to learn from difference. In this way differences come to be seen more positively as a stimulus for fostering learning, amongst children and adults.

2. Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers. Consequently, it involves collecting, collating and evaluating information from a wide variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice. It is about using evidence of various kinds to stimulate creativity and problem-solving.

3. Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all students. Here "presence" is concerned with where children are educated, and how reliably and punctually they attend; "participation" relates to the quality of their experiences whilst they are there and, therefore, must incorporate the views of the learners themselves; and "achievement" is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results.

4. Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. This indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those groups that are statistically most "at risk" are carefully monitored, and that, where necessary, steps are taken to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in the education system.

Looking at education through an inclusive lens implies a shift from seeing the child as a problem to seeing the education system as a problem. Initial views, which emphasized that the source of difficulties in learning

came from within the learner, ignored the environmental influences on learning. It is now being strongly argued that reorganizing ordinary schools within the community, through school improvement and a focus on quality, ensures that all children can learn effectively, including those categorized as having special needs.

Figure: Education through the Inclusion Lens

Seeing education through the inclusion lens implies a shift from seeing the child as a problem to seeing the education system as the problem that can be solved through inclusive approaches
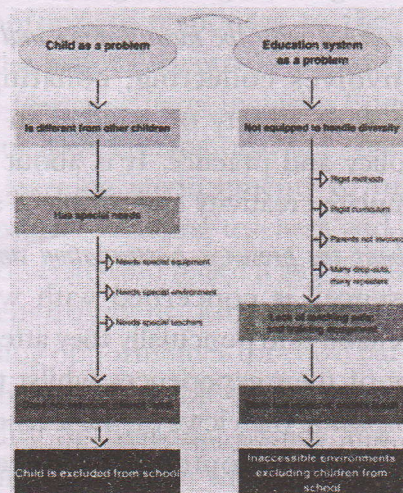
Source: Guidelines for Inclusion, UNESCO

Every individual is born with full freedom and equal rights. But, children with disabilities are excluded from schools due to disability condition, inappropriate behavior, unable to cop up with the class, complain from parents and to protect the prestige of the institute. Including and educating children with disabilities is not a charity but it is their right. In the Rights of Persons with Disability (RPWD) Act 2016 it is clearly mentioned that children with benchmark disability age between 6 to 18 years shall have the right to free education. Government

funded or recognized educational institutions will have to provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities. There shouldn't be any kind of discrimination in providing education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities. It is our responsibility to make building and other facilities accessible to children with disability.

In a study conducted by Sharma U. (2016) it was found that most of the teachers are having opinions that CWSN can compete with others in extra talent of skills however there is a need for modification of the way of evaluation in regular schools and removal of restrictions. Further it was suggested for the need of sensitization and orientation programme for the school management and regular teacher on modification of the curriculum and the evaluation system.

Inclusive education is something new to think about how to be creative to make our classrooms a place where every child can participate and enjoy. Creativity may mean to teacher's skill or learning about how to design a lesson so that all children can be involved and learned together. Inclusive education provides better opportunities for learning to every learner not only to children with special needs. Now this is the time to introspect about the attitude shown towards the inclusion of disability in regular classrooms. Let's try to learn something new that will help in creating situations where everybody can participate and enjoy.

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