

Inclusive Education in India: A Developmental Milestone from Segregation to Inclusion

Dr. Sumita Chakraborti-Ghosh

Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, Tennessee State University, Nashville, USA

***Corresponding Author:** *Dr. Sumita Chakraborti-Ghosh, Professor, Department of Teaching and Learning, Tennessee State University, Nashville, USA.*

ABSTRACT

Inclusion of individual disabilities has been a societal challenge for research and practice. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview to the readers of the developmental process of inclusion services for individual with disabilities in India. The paper also provides a comparative picture of inclusive services across the world in order to depict the progression of inclusive services for children with exceptional needs in Indian schools since its independence. The author made an attempt to highlight the key issues and challenges against successful inclusive education, and made some suggestion that may assist in providing appropriate inclusive education for individual with disabilities in India

Keywords: *NGO; Exceptional Needs; Role of Media; Segregation, Special private schools and public schools.*

INTRODUCTION

The term inclusion refers to an approach wherein students with special need spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusion_\(education\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inclusion_(education))). Inclusive classrooms might contain several students with special needs who are mainstreamed full time into the general classroom, or one or two students who spend time each day in both a special education classroom and a general classroom (<http://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/inclusion/>). As Yell (2010) clarified that the terms least restrictive environment, inclusion, and mainstreaming are often used interchangeably. They are not, however, synonymous concepts. Least restrictive environment refers to the IDEA's (1990, 2004) mandate that students with disabilities should be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with peers without disabilities. The LRE mandate ensures that schools educate students with disabilities in integrated settings, alongside students with and without disabilities, to the maximum extent appropriate. Least restrictive environment is not a particular setting (Yell, 2010).

The general population in India is still struggling with the awareness on the needs and services of students with disabilities. Adding to the legacy of colonialism, 80% of India's population lives on less than about Rs. 100, or two dollars a day.

Even when adjusting for purchasing power parity, this amount puts hundreds of millions of people below the global poverty line. Then, people with disabilities need to account for the "conversion handicap," a term coined by Amartya Sen.

"The conversion handicap is when people with disabilities derive a lower level of welfare from a given level of income than the rest of the population, due to additional costs incurred in converting income into well-being."

In India, services for individual with special need are still provided in segregated settings, i.e., special schools, special programs by non-government organization (NGO) etc. Educators, researchers, and even movie makers are attempting to develop a public awareness concerning the spectrum of services for students with special needs. In India, with an understanding of the importance of including children with disabilities in mainstream society, individual with disabilities can achieve more functional independence that can promote productive living. According to Balasubramanian (2012), "the awareness on inclusive education in schools throughout the country is still at an infancy stage, educational institutions are somewhat skeptical about having both normal and special children studying in the same classroom. And in circumstances, where a former excluded child is given admission into a

mainstream classroom, the outcome of the action is questionable”.

Currently, many children with disabilities are instructed in separate educational settings, but professionals and parents are calling for more equitable inclusive education for these students. It is imperative that inclusion in schools (including students with disabilities with non-disabled peers in educational settings) takes place to promote equity of students with disabilities in society's settings. To this end, Indian schools should work collaboratively with parents and other community leaders to prepare productive citizens. This can generate an understanding of an inclusive society that can support the social value of equity and to minimize the stigma of disability for students who are served in separate special schools. Since school is one of the main contributor to the society, it is important to develop a knowledge, and understanding of the existence of the term “Inclusion or, inclusive education” in Indian society!

THE EMERGENCE OF THE TERM INCLUSION

Throughout the world, Children with Special Needs (CWSN) was neglected till the 18th century. The political reformers of France and America inspired political reformers and leaders in medicine and education to turn their attention towards the educational needs of such individuals with the idea of fraternity, equality and liberty (Chadda, 2003). According to UNESCO - at the UN-Committee on Rights of the Child, - Centre for Human Rights inclusion is: a) a philosophy built on the belief that all people are equal and should be respected and valued, as an issue of basic human rights; b) an "unending set of processes" in which children and adults with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in ALL community activities offered to people who do not have disabilities (October 6, 1997 Geneva),.

In the United States, PL. 94/142 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, education for children with disabilities were mandated to provide free and appropriate education (FAPE) in least restrictive environment (LRE) with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent as possible. Consequently, with the assistance of the Regular Education Initiatives (REI), regular education teachers also became instrumental in inclusive practice in the United States of America. Gradually laws and legislation such as Individual With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 (rename EAHCA) ,1997 and 2004 (<http://idea.ed.gov/>); Assistive

Technology (AT) Act of 1998 (<http://www.ata.org/itqa.asp>) Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act etc. advocated more and more inclusive education for children with disabilities in public schools (<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/CTE/legis.html>).

As the world was beginning to experience the success of placing children with disabilities in regular schools, in 1971, The Planning Commission of India, included in its plan a program for integrated education (IE). The Government launched the IEDC (Integrated Education for Disabled Children) scheme in December 1974. The aim of IEDC are:

- To provide educational opportunities to CWSN in regular schools,
- To facilitate their retention in the school system, and
- To place children from special schools in common schools.

The scope of the scheme includes pre-school training, counseling for the parents, and special training in skills for all kinds of disabilities. The scheme provides facilities in the form of books, stationery, uniforms, and allowances for transport, reader, escort etc (Chadda, 2003). Now the question is, in spite of this joint initiative by the government of India and other Non-Governmental-Organization (NGO), is Indian parent or, society ready to accept the IE with CWSN?

With the knowledge and understanding of inclusive education, the researcher hopes to unveil the concept of inclusive education in India. As it stands today the term Inclusion in the US means to provide LRE to the children with disabilities with non-disabled peers with maximum extent as possible, and it is still a struggling and controversial issue to some educators, parents, and researchers, the paper attempts to present an analytical report of the role of media, and government in understanding inclusive education for individual with disabilities in public and private sector in India.

THE ROLE OF MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT

Along with the inclusion movement around the world, the media in Indian society has taken steps to promote inclusion practices and acceptance of individuals with disabilities. A recent Bollywood movie “Tare Zameen Paar: Every Child is Special (2007) ” hit blockbuster addressing Dyslexia as part of Learning disabilities. The movie made a sincere effort in describing the needs, and characteristics of a young boy who struggled throughout his early elementary grades with dyslexia. The message

was very well delivered. As per Dasgupta's (2007) interview with the director/actor of this movie, Aamir Khan, this movie hopes to bring a positive role model among at-risk children... "the role model does not have to be stars, it could be anyone from the child's family or, in the neighborhood." In the process of convincing the audience the director Khan made references of several famous people who had/has dyslexia including Leonardo Da Vinci, Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Winston Churchill, Keanu Reeves, Albert Einstein, and last but not least popular hot Bollywood Star Abhishek Bachhan (Dubey, 2007).

This was not the first effort of media in delivering messages about individual with special needs children. Movies such as 15 Park Avenue (addressed schizophrenia) on severe emotional disabilities issues and services were released and awarded by film industries, but still there is no sign of inclusion of these children in public or private schools. A hit reality show "Sa Re GA Ma PA" hosted by ZEE TV (www.zeetv.com) promoted several gifted and talented musician with disabilities such as visual impairment, autism, multiple disabilities etc. May be with proper musical training and chances the girl could have had a career in music or, in music industries. Another TV soap "Aap Ki Antara" produce by Sony TV (www.setindia.com) address the challenge of societal un-acceptance of an Autistic child (2009)

These steps taken by the media to show some signs of progress for inclusion of students with disabilities in society; however, larger strides can be made only when students in schools are prepared to participate in an inclusive society. The Indian media has helped set the stage for acceptance among Indian audiences, and it is imperative for schools to not only mirror this progress, but to prepare all children for their roles on the inclusive stage. This paper asserts that Indian schools implement inclusive education so that students with disabilities benefit from increased social interactions and access to general curriculum, and so all students can be prepared for inclusion in future environments.

HISTORY OF SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN INDIA

Along with other parts of the world, India too witnessed the emergence of special schools for individuals with special needs. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (2000), brought out by the NCERT, recommended inclusive schools for all without specific reference to pupils with special education

needs (SEN) as a way of providing quality education to all learners According to NCFSE: Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with disabilities nor for general learners without disabilities. Societal requirement is that learners with special needs should be educated along with other learners in inclusive schools, which are cost effective and have sound pedagogical practices (NCERT, 2000)

According to Chadha (2003) the first school for the deaf was set up in Bombay in 1883, and the first school for the blind was established in Amritsar in 1887. There was a rapid expansion in the number of such institutions. Today, there are more than 3,200 special schools throughout India. However, these special schools have certain disadvantages which became evident as the number of these schools increased. These institutions reached out only to a limited number of children, largely urban, and they were not cost effective. These special schools segregated Children With Special Needs (CWSN) from the mainstream, thus developing a specific disability culture (Chadha 2003). Such institutions made an effort to educate these children with hearing impairments and other disabilities within their comfort zone; thus, the choice for functional freedom stayed limited. According to Rehabilitation Council of India, special education in India was present since pre-independence (before 1947) with very few schools and NGO organized services for intellectually impaired children. With difficult and struggling journey, today India has come a long way. Currently India has four national institutes for effective implementation of special education through government schemes (<http://rehabcouncil.nic.in>).

INTEGRATED EDUCATION IN INDIA

The emergence of the concept of integrated education (IE) in India during the mid 1950s was seen as a solution to the problem of segregated services. The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind and the Christopher Blind Mission began small experiments in this area. The Ministry of Education, too, launched a comprehensive scholarship scheme in 1952, a rudimentary beginning of the integrated education initiative by the Government (Chadha, 2003). Same initiative also presented that consequent on the success of international experiments in placing children with disabilities in regular schools. As a result, The Planning Commission, in 1971, included in its plan a program for integrated education. The Government launched the Integrated Education for Disabled Children

(IEDC) scheme in December 1974 (Chadha 2003). Despite all these facilities and planning, IEDC had limited success — only a little more than one lakh (around 100,000 children) CWSN were covered. However, it was successful in creating awareness on the importance of integrating CWSN in the mainstream of education, a fact noted in the National Policy on Education — 1986 (Chadha 2003).

The next step taken by the government of India involved another project investigation on IE. There was a shift in strategy, from a school-based approach to a Composite Area Approach. In 1987, the Ministry of Human Resources Development, along with UNICEF launched another task: Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) (Chadha 2003). In this approach, a cluster, instead of the individual school approach is emphasized. All the schools in the area are expected to enroll children with disabilities. Training programs were also given to the teachers. This project was implemented in one administrative block each in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Mizoram, Delhi Municipal Corporation, and Baroda Municipal Corporation. The approach is an improvement over the special schools and appears to be the only way towards universalizing education of the children with disabilities. It was more cost effective and easier to organize, since existing school infrastructure is to be made use of (Chadha 2003). PIED of 1987 was a gateway to freedom for individual with disabilities in India.

Chadha (2003) also discussed another important paradigm shift in PIED. The concept that was initiated, that any difficulty a child exhibits in learning was to be attributed not as a problem within the child, but primarily due to the inefficiency in the school system. The organization and management of schools and the various programs of teaching and interventions could also be one of the areas that can be attributed to children's learning difficulties. The new school-wide policy is also referred to as the social or environmental model and rests on the theory that the child is a product of his/her experiences. This theory also considers the interventions that the child has with various environments that impinge upon him/her. Thus to a great extent a child's growth and development depends upon this (Chadha, 2003).

The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was another major step towards universalization of primary education wherein children with special needs are also included

(Chadda, 2003). A number of districts are implementing the program. Inclusive education being the concept world over, the DPEP aims at including the children at primary level (up to Class V) with suitable teacher preparation, infrastructure facilities, aids, and appliances. In addition, there are over 1100 special schools run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with government support (Natarajan, 2000).

The aforementioned programs are collaborative efforts by Government and NGOs of India that provided functional independence through appropriate facilities, aids, and appliances. However, educating the general public about inclusive education has continued to be a difficult task. Including individuals with disabilities with non-disabled children is a major step of educating parents of non-disabled children concerning inclusion. But what about the rest of the population who do not have disabled children? With a desperate need of competing with each other to secure personal wealth and prosperity, quite often the need of others' personal well being is neglected. Therefore, one's choice of freedom or independence may impede others' needs, especially the special needs of individuals with disabilities. Does Government of India Support Inclusive Education?

In 1947 the Government of India began an initiative in the education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. However progress was slow until the entire disability sector received a boost in 1981 with the declaration of the International Year of the Disabled Persons by the United Nations (Singh, 2004). Another major initiative was taken by the Government of India to provide an opportunity for functional independence for individuals with disabilities. According to Singh (2004), after wide consultations with experts the Government of India decided in 1986 that a body should be set up to standardize courses at different levels and that brought the Rehabilitation Council into being as a registered society. However, due to lack of enough authority to enforce standardization rules on other organizations of similar nature, the Rehabilitation Council was given the status of a Statutory Body through a Parliamentary Act (1992) which came into effect in June, 1993. The new body was called the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). RCI was given statutory powers to enforce the standardization and regulation of all training policies and programs in the field of rehabilitation and special education over the whole country. The 1992 RCI Act was reauthorized in 2000 with

an amendment to make the Council more broad based by including important duties such as the promotion of research in rehabilitation and special education services. The Act also amended the maintenance of uniformity in the definitions of various disabilities in conformity with the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act, 1995, cited in Singh, 2004).

On a same note, Singh (2004) also mentioned that through RCI's collaborative efforts with the Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open University (MPBOU), 67 study centers all over the country are now conducting B.Ed. special education programs. A foundation course has been initiated through 173 institutions as professional development of in-service teachers. As a result of collaborative efforts between RCI with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), 25 prominent training institutions in the field of disability have been recently recognized as tele-study centers. Another recent RCI development has been the introduction of a credit-based modular system for its courses. The Modular and Credit System has been common practice in developed countries for many years and in India, IGNOU and other institutes of repute have practiced this system successfully for a while. RCI too has now started offering courses through this system in order to make fast strides in human resource development (Singh, 2004).

With a notion of inclusion in mind, RCI also has designed 80 different curricula to meet the challenges of manpower development. For example, the Ministry of Human Resource Development requested the RCI develop a short-term course for the professional development of teachers in the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). This 45-day Foundation Course was developed for resource teachers working under DPEP for Integrated Education for the Disabled (IED). This course is a prime example of attempts being made for inclusion of disabled children in the general education system and of RCI's efforts to gear itself up to meet specific challenges (Singh, 2004). RCI and other institutions like IGNOU, MPBOU made a major collaborative effort in preparing the in-service teachers of individual with disabilities to prepare their students to be productive and independent to function with the mainstream society.

According to Kumar (2007) the Indian Parliament, for the first time, has legally endorsed the right of access for people with disability to education, vocational training and employment through the

Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunity, Protection of Rights and full Participation) Act, 1995. The Act established the responsibility of society to make adjustments, so that people with disabilities are able to overcome various practical hurdles, either created by their disability or by society itself. The Act places people with disabilities at par with other citizens of India, in respect to education, vocational training, and employment (Kumar, 2007).

Kumar (2007) also discussed that the understanding students with disabilities and accommodating their needs has become a central focus for higher education. Obtaining higher education can certainly lead towards functional independence. The students' experience of disability is in the margin of higher education's focus. Given enrollment trends, this status is ironic, but despite their increase in number, many students with disabilities in many campuses/universities are viewed as different in ways that fails to affirm diversity or to facilitate their inclusion (Kumar 2007). In this background, the University Grants Commission (UGC) in India stipulates its policy paper on education in the Ninth five-year plan. The plan has stated that persons with disabilities should not be ignored in the higher education system. The plan also recommends that development of special education teacher preparation program and laid out a scheme to provide special assistance to disabled persons to facilitate better accessibility in higher education (Kumar, 2007). In collaboration with UGC, and with the enforcement Person with Disabilities (PD) Act, the Equal Opportunity office of the **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in India** has set up the Disability Unit. The unit established with an expert review committee to consider the purchase of special equipment to augment educational services for individuals with disabilities and to advise on other matters (Kumar, 2007). This development opened the door for functional independence of individual with disabilities.

WHERE DOES INDIA STAND NOW ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

It is known that 73 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2010, down from a high of over 110 million out-of-school children in the mid-1990s, according to new estimates by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). About Eighty percent of Indian population lives in rural areas without provision for special schools. It means, there are an estimated 8 million children out of school in India (MHRD

2009 statistics), many of whom are marginalized by dimensions such as poverty, gender, disability, and caste.

According to Deepa (2006) “inclusion may be the key word in India's current education policy, but there is a world of difference between the law and its implementation.” Deepa also mentioned that a majority of the schools don't have special educators or counselors, even if they have students with disabilities, though the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 says that children with disabilities have the right to be taught by a qualified teacher. In the survey conducted by the National Centre, 55 percent of the 89 schools were found to have admitted students with disabilities, but only 20 employed special educators while twelve provided training to teachers for working with students with disabilities (Deepa, 2006).

Another study by Chatterjee (2003) mentioned that the Constitution of India which is dominated by the sentiment of social justice and equity. Led by this sentiment the constitution demand that India's 35 million physically disabled, if not the 5 million mentally challenged, children should be given preferential access into primary and secondary schools, instead nine-tenths of them are systematically excluded. Chatterjee (2003) also mentioned that the parental community is also resistant to the idea of inclusive education. Lack of awareness, sensitiveness and education of inclusive education within the parental community made a negative impact on integrated education. In spite of the fact that the subject has been deeply researched around the world to the extent that the know-how and methodologies to introduce the concept in classrooms have been developed, though inclusive educationists insist that such know-how has to conform to culturally appropriate practices and precepts (CAPP) (Chatterjee, 2003).

In addition, Lakshmi (2003) noted that roughly 10% of Indian population falls under the category of some form of disability, out of which around 2% are people with mental disability. Even though a great initiative has already been made in the field of education in recent years and efforts to see every individual become literate has gained much momentum. However, the field of special education is still in its infancy as far as mainstreaming and integrated education is concerned (Lakshmi 2003) in spite of the sincere effort of RCI, and DPEP. Disabled people in India have been subjected to direct and indirect discrimination for centuries. As the current TV show “Aap Ki Antara” (2009)

represents that the attitude of parents of non-disabled children people in dealing with disabled individual is still creating a barrier between normal and abnormal discriminatory. Shivagami (Cited in Chadha, 2003) discussed the about the expectation of parents how they were belied or fulfilled by the different approaches to the educational needs of these children. Special Schools which admitted special children were supported by welfare services and provided specialized services in the form of consultants, therapists, and special educators. They, however, promoted segregation, and the children enrolled in these schools could not escape from social stigma, nor could the lack of role models be overcome in these schools. Inclusive education would be considered a success if mainstream schools developed a positive attitude towards the educational needs of disabled children and increase access through simple adaptations (Cited in Chadha, 2003). Drawing data from The National Census, cited by Kalyanpur (2008, mentioned in Kohama, (2012), states that,

In terms of educational levels, only 11% of children with disabilities between the ages of 5–18 years in urban areas (less than 1% in rural areas) were enrolled in special schools, while 55% of adults with disabilities were illiterate (59% in rural and 40% in urban areas), with only 7% in rural and 18% in urban areas having completed secondary education xxxvi

Most of the data available follows this trend, suggesting that services are significantly more available in urban areas and people and students with disabilities are more marginalized in rural areas. However, interestingly, in the National Census, the data is the opposite in regards to inclusive schooling, or at least attending a mainstream school. Per 1000 students with a disability between the ages of 5-18, enrollment years in mainstream schools were actually higher in rural areas versus urban areas; 475 out of 1000 students with disabilities attended a mainstream school in rural areas, versus 444 out of 1000 students with disabilities in urban areas. This may be because there is a higher prevalence of special schools in urban areas, which would make sense considering that urban areas have significantly more resources http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF.

THE RESEARCH AND PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AROUND THE WORLD

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1996), 43% of the students with disabilities in

the U. S. receive the majority of their educational program in inclusive environments. Ensuring that these students have meaningful access to the curriculum and instruction provided in general education classrooms requires a sound knowledge of how educational reforms are impacting special education (McLaughlin, Henderson, & Rhim cited in Vitello., Mithaug; & Erlbaum Associates, 1998). On the same note, the theme "Inclusive Education in Brazil" was introduced in the beginning of 90s, adopted by the UNESCO's World Conference on Special Education Needs Education: Access and Quality (Sasaki, 2004). Presently, the inclusion movement is actively in place in all over Brazil; the parallel practice of both special education and regular education is supported by both federal and state legislations and policies as well as private initiatives (Sasaki, 2004). In addition, the Step by Step Foundation in Ukraine, a nongovernmental, nonprofit organization that promotes the process of democratic reform in education (Association for Childhood Education International 2007). This foundation fosters quality education for all children, especially children with special needs and other underserved children (Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation, 2003). The project approaches reform with three programs: 1) teacher training, 2) inclusion, and 3) educating minorities. According to Kolupayeva, (2004) it appears that attitudes have changed a little. Part of the problem seems to be that many citizens believe that "typical" children and adults are presently not receiving appropriate educational and economic support, and consequently worry that less will be provided if individuals with disabilities begin to take a share of the country's very limited resources. Despite this, as a nation, Ukraine's rhetoric appears to support a willingness to change cultural biases against individuals with disabilities (Kolupayeva, 2004). Ukraine's education system undoubtedly has come a long way since independence in spite of many financial and societal challenges (Association for Childhood Education International, 2007). As one of the major top financially stable country, The United States of America is continuously reauthorizing The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (1990, 1997, and 2004) to make education more appropriate and inclusive so that individuals with disabilities can be functionally independent to the maximum extent as possible. According to Smith (2006), based on the report of school ministers, and inspectors in United Kingdom, continuous professional development for

teachers and teaching assistants is vital to improve their knowledge and skills to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Smith (2006) also mentioned that the parents, teachers and disability campaigners have voiced concern over the continued closure of dedicated special schools in the name of "inclusion" - where children with special needs are placed in mainstream schools.

SUMMARY

Although the Government of India has attempted to create policies that are inclusive for people with disabilities, their implementation efforts have not resulted in an inclusive system of education. Moreover, the number of students dropping out of school is getting higher, especially in poverty-stricken areas (Sing, 2016). Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) examined the current skill levels of regular primary and secondary school teachers in Delhi, India in order to teach students with disabilities in inclusive education settings. They reported that nearly 70% of the regular school teachers had neither received training in special education nor had any experience teaching students with disabilities. Further, 87% of the teachers did not have access to support services in their classrooms (Cited in Sing, 2016). Educating children with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers is considered one of the better ways to provide education to the population in India (Shah, 2005, Shah et al., 2014). Sing (2016) suggested following measures for better implementation of Inclusive Education in India.

- The Right to Education (RTE) must apply to all citizens of India. State and central Governments as well as all the other social actors should recognize the importance of a broadened concept of inclusive education that addresses the diverse needs of all learners.
- A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout Indian education system (NCF, 2005). Schools need to become centers that prepare children for life and ensure that all children, especially the differently abled children from marginalized sections, and children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit of this critical area of education.
- The preparation of teachers for rural special education programs should be planned differently, as the aim of these programs

would be to integrate disabled persons in their own environment and community.

- As a system, inclusive education should be flexible. Its flexibility must be reflected in the methods and materials used to give these children the widest possible access to the regular curriculum. .
- A school-based support team should develop strategies for the whole school to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs. This team should also be a resource for teachers experiencing problems in their classrooms.
- The school has the primary responsibility for helping children learn alongside their typically developing peers. An inclusive school must enable education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children, particularly those who face the greatest barriers to achieving their right to education.
- Parents have a right to be involved in all decision-making concerning their child. They should be seen as partners in the education process. Where there is such co-operation, parents have been found to be very important resources for the teachers and the schools.
- Bringing special children into mainstream requires adjustments that schools need to make in advance. Transport facilities should be altered, so that these children can move around with relative ease. Architecturally, there should be ramps and wheelchair access constructed in service areas such as toilets.
- Student-oriented components, such as medical and educational assessment, books and stationery, uniforms, transport allowance, reader allowance and stipend for girls, support services, assistive devices, boarding the lodging facility, therapeutic services, teaching learning materials, etc should provide according to need of the students.
- Differently abled children should be treated equally as the normal children and instead of looking them in sympathy their talents and abilities should be recognized for their self-respect and welfare of the society.
- Necessary school supplies such as audio learning or textbooks in Braille should be made available. Suitable modification to examination system may be required, so as to

eliminate pure mathematical and logical assessments.

- Teachers attitudes towards inclusive education could be formed and developed in the context of an educational system which can provide some specific conditions in order to have a good practice in this field.
- Families with children without disabilities should develop relationships with families with children with disabilities and be able to make a contribution.
- In-service training programs of two to three weeks' duration for general educators and special educators in all the disabilities and in specific areas of disability should arrange to effectively teach children with disabilities.
- Those schools that are committed to taking in children with special needs, then teachers must attend workshops in order to be adjusted to the child's needs.
- Periodic evaluation of the training programs and constant updating to meet the challenges of changing trends in special education should be part of the planning of teacher preparation.
- Inclusion should not be the sole responsibility of the specific class teacher. Everybody should be involved and take responsibility. Training for teachers should be sustained and ongoing. It should most importantly focus on attitudinal change.
- The reform of the curriculum should be made in parallel with a proper training for teachers regarding their knowledge of inclusion and its principles. The curriculum for each of the above programs should be carefully developed by an expert group which include practicing special teachers. (Sing, 2016)

RECOMMENDATION

As we stand facing the global partnership between India, and other developed and developing countries through call centers merge, business partnership through mega car manufacturer, creative partnership between Silicon Valley in the California with Tech Park in Bangalore, and Hyderabad, is India ready for global partnership in educating children with disabilities with their non-disabled peers? Along with movie stars and directors, popular TV reality shows and soap NGO and RCI entrepreneurs, India is still struggling with the term “Handicap or Disabilities”. The disability is too far from the

reality. Handicap is more understood in a spastic concept and well integrated in the culture a common people more relates the term with physical and mentally challenged individual. The concept of emotional behavior disability (EBD) is not there but juvenile delinquent is understood and the term learning disability is far understanding either (Chakraborti-Ghosh, 2008). A recent interview from a school head mistress (who was trained to be a special educator) from one of the top metropolitan school in India, the author learned of several obstacles that special education certified teachers face in the employment market. They are: a) a teacher with special education certification will not be hired in regular school, rather they will only be hired in special schools; b) very few universities provide special education certification program and that limits the job opportunities; c) majority of parents still don't want their non-disabled child to be educated with disabled child therefore sped teachers have no role to be part of inclusion program. The principal mandates some professional training for her staffs to have some professional development in special education (interview conducted in June 2009). According to a blog posted by Anusha Balasubhranium, inclusive education in India strives to address the learning needs of children with special needs, with a particular focus on those who are subject to being isolated and excluded. And in circumstances, where a former excluded child is given admission into a mainstream classroom, the outcome of the action is questionable (Balasubhranium, 2012). The key barriers of providing inclusive education are

- Inappropriate/inadequate curriculum
- Lack of awareness and affordability among parents and the community
- Lack of resources
- Lack of trained teachers to provide inclusive education
- And many more social, political, and economical barriers.

There are some private schools in the country such as The Heritage School, Akshar School, Vydehi School of Excellence, Amar Jyoti School, Chettinad Srihari Vikasam, SPJ Sadhana School etc. that offer individualized learning programs for children with special needs. However, no public/government schools are available to support this initiatives.

Therefore, it will be intriguing to experience the effective inclusive education services for children with disabilities and exceptionalities to be educated with their non-disabled peers. Free and appropriate education is a right, not a privilege. Freedom is earned only when the opportunities are utilized in productive manner; credibility can be developed with a proactive approaches regardless the presence of disabilities.

REFERENCES

- [1] Association for Childhood Education International (2007). Inclusion of school-age children with disabilities in Ukraine. Gale Group.
- [2] Balasubhranium, A. (2012). Inclusive education for children with special needs. <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper>
- [3] Chadha, A. (2003). Perspectives in Special Needs Education in India: A Journey from Isolation to Inclusion. A paper presented <http://www.un.org.in/Janshala/Janmar03/inclusion.htm>
- [4] Chatterjee, G., Thakore, D., Raghupathi, H., Parikh, K., & Yasmeen, S. (April 2003). The movement for inclusive education. India Together from Education World, Bangalore through Space Share.
- [5] Chakraborti-Ghosh, S. (2008). Understanding behavior disorders: Their perceptions, acceptance, and treatment—A cross-cultural comparison between India and the United States. *International Journal of Special Education*, 23, (8), 136-146
- [6] Das, A. K., Kuyini A. B., & Desai I. P. (2013). Inclusive Education in India: Are the Teachers Prepared? *International Journal of Special Education*.28 (1).
- [7] Dasgupta, P. (2007). "I am not insecure to act with kids who are scene-stealers" an interview with Aamir Khan in retrospect to his movie 'Taare Zameen Par'. *Calcutta Times*, December 2007
- [8] Deepa, A (January, 2006). Educating the disabled: Included by law, but little else. in India Together's multi-part series, "Lens on Education", and is funded through support from the Indian American Education Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the education of children with disabilities in India.
- [9] Dubey, B. (2007). Khan I do it, Sir? *Calcutta Times*, December 2007
- [10] Gupte, A., & Khaan, A (2007). *Taare Zameen Par: Every Child is Special*. PVR pictures and Aamir Khaan Production.
- [11] Individual with Disabilities and Education Act (1990, 1997, 2004). United States Department of Education: Office of Special Education Research Service
- [12] Kalyanpur, M. (2008). "Equality, Quality and Quantity: Challenges in Inclusive Education Policy

- and Service Provision in India." *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. 12.3 cited in Kohama, (2012). *Inclusive Education in India: A country in transition*.
- [13] Kumar, A. (July 25, 2007). A look at India's access to higher education for people with disabilities. <http://www.miusa.org/ncde/intlopportuneities/indias-jawaharlal-nehru-university/>
- [14] Kolupayeva, A. (2004). Trends in the integration of special education in Ukraine. *Modern trends of special education development (Canada-Ukraine experience)* (pp. 142-146). Kyiv, Ukraine-Edmonton, Canada: Naukowy Swit.
- [15] Lakshmi, K (September, 2003). Special or segregated? India Together from Education World, Bangalore through Space Share,
- [16] Nattarajan, J. (2000). Intellectual impairment in India: Government Policies and Legislation. *MINDS ESCAP: Millennium Symposium on Intellectual Disability*, Singapore, 28 Nov-2 Dec, 2000.
- [17] United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. *History: Twenty-Five Years of Progress in Educating Children with Disabilities through IDEA*. Date of Publication Unknown. <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/history.pdf>
- [18] "The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education." UNESCO, The United Nations. 10 June 2012. Web. 2 November, 2011. http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALA_MA_E.PDF.
- [19] Shah, R., Das, A. K., Desai, I. P. and Tiwari, A. (2014). Teachers' concerns about inclusive education in Ahmedabad, India. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*. doi:0.1111/1471-3802.12054
- [20] Singh, J. P. (2004). Rehabilitation Council of India: Pioneering advances in human resource development for the improvement of services to persons with Disabilities. *The Educator* http://www.icevi.org/publications/educator/January_04/article18.htm
- [21] Singh, J. D. (2016). Inclusive education in India – concept, need and challenges. *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity, Science and English Language*. DEC-jan, 2016, vol. 3/13. www.srjis.com
- [22] Smith, A (2006, July). Teachers urge rethink on inclusion policy. <http://education.guardian.co.uk/ofsted/story/01828619,00.html>
- [23] Aap ki Antara(2009). A Hindi TV serial production by Sony TV
- [24] ZEE TV (2008, February). Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Little Champs. A production of ZEE TV, USA
- [25] UNESCO, 2009. International Day of Persons with Disabilities, EduInfo, UNESCO, 2009, Web. 19 April, 2012, <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php>.
- [26] Making Schools Inclusive: How Change can happen. Save the Children UK, Save the Children UK, 2008, Web. 11 December, 2011, <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Making%20schools%20Inclusive%20SCUK.pdf>.