Inclusive Education in India

Asst. Prof. Kiran Mathur

Department of Education- Maulana Azad University, Jodhpur

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is a contemporary approach to integrating students with special needs and learning difficulties with generally developing students (IE). Regardless of their areas of strength or weakness, it brings all students together in a single classroom and community and aims to bring out the best in each kid. Around 80% of the locals live in rural areas without access to special schooling facilities. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the concept of inclusive education, including its importance, challenges, and implementation tactics in India. What are the existing conditions and challenges to achieving the goal of inclusive education? The need of inclusive studying environment? How can we ensure that every child receives a top-notch education? How can digitalization can help in improving the learning and visualizing experience for students? As a result, the federal and state governments must oversee inclusive classrooms, and inclusive schools must meet the requirements of all students in every area.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Digitalization, Educational Environment, Contemporary approach, Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusionary education is seen as every child's right to participate in society in the twenty-first century (Ainscow and Miles, 2008)According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (2011), India is the second-most populated nation in the world, with a population of over 1.2 billion. There are 26 million persons with disabilities here, or about 2.1 percent of the nation's total population. Since achieving independence from the British Raj in 1947, the Government of India (GOI) has launched a number of schemes aimed at educating children with impairments.

Diverse traits have been used to describe inclusive education, which supports the learning needs of students with disabilities. The Indian government has worked hard to offer a wide range of program for kids with special educational needs over the past 50 years. The government's involvement in inclusive education started with the National Educational Policy of 1986, which recommended as a goal "to connect the handicapped with the rest of the community at any and all stages as equal partners, to prepare people for normal growth, and also to empower them to face life with courage and confidence.".

It is evident that inclusive practice in mainstream education has become a prime policy goal in India, where the attention on children and people with special needs has increasingly expanded. The word "inclusion" describes a teaching strategy in which children with special needs spend the greater amount of time with students without disabilities. One or two kids may spend time each day in both a general education classroom and a special education classroom in an inclusive classroom, that may have many students with special needs who have been easily incorporated full-time into the general classroom. India's general public continues to struggle with understanding the requirements and services for students with disabilities.(Sharma and Das, 2015)

To create better citizens, Indian schools should collaborate with parents and other community leaders. This can help those who assist kids in separate special schools understand what an inclusive society sounds like, promote the societal ideal of equality, and lessen the stigma associated with disabilities. Since education is one of the major contributors to society, it is crucial to learn about and comprehend the concept of inclusion and inclusive education in Indian culture.

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. (Singh, 2016)

CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

The process of inclusive education involves enhancing the educational system's ability to connect with all students.All kids may succeed more academically and socially with the inclusion educational concept and methodology. The complete range of social, recreational, artistic, athletic, musical, daycare, after-school care, extracurricular, religious, and other activities are all included in this.At the "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality" (Salamanca, 1994), the inclusive education principle was endorsed, and it was supported at the World Education Forum (Singh, 2016)

The idea of inclusion is further supported by the United Nation's Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Person with Disability Proclaiming Participation and equality for all. Inclusive Education (IE) is defined as a process of addressing the diverse needs of all learners by reducing barriers to, and within the learning environmentIt means attending the age appropriate class of the child's local school, with individually tailored support (UNICEF, 2006)(Singh, 2016)

Pijl and Meijer (1997) proposed three major categories of implementation considerations for inclusive education:
 (1) External: i.e. public opinion and attendant legislation/policy, regulations and funding,
 (2) School: i.e. structure for providing special services in schools, the role of special education, the support system, decentralization and cooperation between schools.
 (3) Teacher, including the instructor's personality, the amount of time allotted for instruction, his or her expertise and abilities, and the techniques of instruction used, including any resources on hand. (Srivastava and Pijl, 2013)

Need and Importance of inclusive Education.
International initiatives have been made to integrate disabled children into the regular school system. We must consider and include kids with special needs in ordinary classrooms if we want to achieve truly inclusive education. Especially considering the difficulties these students experience communicating and learning in the classroom. Teachers are becoming more aware of the significance of treating each kid as distinct as general education classrooms involve more and more diverse learners.Teachers in good inclusive programmers adjust activities to incorporate all students, even if their particular goals differ. We've discovered that inclusive education is a more effective strategy to help all children achieve.A growing amount of research has indicated that children do better academically in inclusive environments, and inclusion gives chances for relationship development. Friendships, social skills, personal ideals, comfort level with persons with special needs, and caring educational environments are just a few of the advantages.Classmates of disabled students result in increased social cognition and are frequently more mindful of the challenges of others in inclusive classes. An intriguing consequence is that all these parents report feeling more at ease with persons with exceptional needs as a result of their children's experiences.

CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDIA

The path to establishing inclusive education in India is a long and varied one, on which possibilities and obstacles will arise due to the country's vast population of handicapped people, limited supply of resources, and detrimental societal attitudes. India has a population that is stratified along distinct economic and caste lines and is a multilingual, multicultural, and multi - religious nation. The purpose of inclusion is to provide the pupils with support.In India, there are 26 million people with disabilities, or roughly 2.1 percent of the total population; according to UNICEF's Report on the Status of Disability in India (2000), there are approximately 30 million children in India who are affected by some form of disability; 10 percent of the population in the world lives with a disability; and 80 percent of the population in India has some form of disability However, in India, 75% of those with disabilities reside in rural regions. (Singh, 2016)

Since the nation's independence, the government has developed a number of special educations programs. Children with impairments may face a variety of difficulties when learning in mainstream classes. These difficulties may result from a lack of sufficient human and material resources, from instructors' and the community's unfavorable views, from non-disabled classmates' and their parents' attitudes. More pupils are dropping out of school, particularly in places of extreme poverty.

Students are compelled to drop out of school and work to support their parents make finances meet. This results in an increase in the number of child laborer's, which leads to cognitive and emotional impairments. There are unique obstacles associated with unpleasant attitudes and conduct on the part of both instructors and parents in respect to impaired children's capacity to learn. Another important issue is that most handicapped persons are still denied equal access to normal schooling.

Large class sizes provide yet another barrier to the implementation of inclusive education in India. While the national average for gross enrolment in school is more than 90%, less than 5% of children with disabilities are

enrolled. Acceptance by peers is a considerably more difficult struggle for children with impairments. Children with disabilities are frequently mocked and tormented by their non-disabled peers. A considerable percentage of disabled children are raised in households with incomes well below the poverty line.

The majority of Indian schools are inadequately built, and few are prepared to address the special requirements of kids with disabilities. It is also worth mentioning that there are difficulties in obtaining and funding assistive equipment. Despite several initiatives in India to promote inclusive education, over 94 percent of children with disabilities did not receive any educational assistance. Aside from some of the issues that India has with other developing nations, there are several unique characteristics that will make educational reform particularly challenging to achieve.

Few steps needed to establish inclusive education.

1. The Right to Education (RTE) must apply to all citizens of India.
2. The preparation of teachers for rural special education programs should be planned differently.
3. As a system, inclusive education should be flexible.
4. The school has the primary responsibility for helping children learn alongside.
5. Identify and provide support for teachers as well as students.
6. Identify and reduce barriers to learning for all children (rather than simply developing separate services for one group of children).
7. Parents have a right to be involved in all decision-making concerning their child.
8. A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout Indian education system (NFC, 2005)(Chakraborti-Ghosh, 2017)

Actions to encourage and promote inclusion should also be inclusionary, and they should be taken involving governments, local authorities, specific schools, families, communities, and children themselves at a variety of levels. The emphasis put on each of these levels will be determined by the local political, social, economic, and cultural setting.

ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Community College (CC) is an alternative educational system that aims to empower the underprivileged and disadvantaged (Urban poor, Rural poor, Tribal poor, and Women) through the development of appropriate skills that will lead to gainful employment in collaboration with the local industry and the neighborhood and achieve skills for employment and self-employability of the aforementioned sections of people in the society.(MCRDCE, 2003)The Community College is a cutting-edge educational option that is based in the community and offers comprehensive education and work eligibility to the underprivileged. The CC's mission is to develop responsible citizens by being of the community, for the community, and by the community. The CC supports education that is career-focused, work-related, skill-based, and life-coping-related.The CC system's guiding principles are accessibility, flexibility in curriculum and teaching methods, cost effectiveness, and equal opportunity in collaboration with the local industrial, commercial, and service sectors and in response to the social needs and issues of the local community. They also include internship and job placement within the local area, promotion of self-employment and the growth of small businesses, declaration of competence and eligibility for employment. (MCRDCE, 2003)

Community Colleges in India Across History
The community members in the area have referred to community colleges as "Roofs for the Roofless," "Giving the Best to the Least," and "Includes the Excluded" since they are nothing more than an alternative educational institution.(Saileela, 2020)

Bangalore's Canara Community College, the country's first community college, was founded in 1993. Second, in 1995, Lawspet, in Pondicherry, was seeing the establishment of the Pondicherry University Community College. Madras Community College opened in Chennai in 1996, marking the beginning of the Community College Movement (CCM). The Community College Movement was started in 1998 by ManonmaniamSundaranar University in Tirunelveli, and the first Nano Nagle Community College was founded by Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU) in Chennai in 2004.

Despite the fact that CCM was first implemented in India in 1993, TNOU's principal acknowledgment of CCs in Tamil Nadu was based on G.O. Ms. No. 163 from the government of Tamil Nadu, which was issued on August 10, 2008. In Tamil Nadu, the State and Central Governments established 766 Community Centers (CCs), which also includes CCs established by various Voluntary Organizations. As of May 2015, there were 1948 community colleges operating in India (TNOU, 2015)

ADVANCED DIGITAL TOOLS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Effective common learning environments

- Allow each student to engage fully in the learning environment that is developed for all students and shared with peers in the selected educational setting.
- Promote a positive environment, foster a feeling of belonging, and ensure that students are progressing toward suitable personal, social, emotional, and academic goals.
- Provide adequate levels of assistance and use student-centered teaching approaches and ideas to respond to individual learning requirements.
- A common learning environment is an inclusive atmosphere in which education is meant to be offered to children of varied ability and with their social circle in the community school, while being sensitive to their particular needs as a learner, and is utilized for the bulk of the learners' regular instruction hours. (Saileela, 2020)

Digital Learning Tools and Inclusive Technologies

Digital Tools

In our technological environment, technology is absolutely inescapable, and children learn to it faster than anybody else. Students, unlike instructors and parents, are being schooled in a digital environment. It is quite normal for students of all ages to use technology in many aspects of their life. (Save the children, 2006). This is why digital tools in the classroom are becoming incredibly valuable. Traditional teaching approaches are already being transformed to meet the demands of twenty-first-century students and to improve instructors' professional practice.

Here are a few unique digital classroom tools that develop responsibility, connections, and respect and may be utilized by both instructors and students. When inclusive education is well-supported and schools, instructors, parents, and students all have access to digital technologies that help break down educational obstacles, "everyone benefits".

Immersive Reader

For children with dyslexia, the Immersive Reader feature, which is embedded into Office 365 products such as One Note, Outlook, and Teams, among others, is a show stopper. And this technology is now accessible in all classrooms across the country.

Picture Dictionary

Immersive Reader allows you to change the font, font size, color, spacing, and other settings. It contains a pictorial dictionary and may be configured to display nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives in different colors.

Translate

The Translate capability is available as part of the Immersive Reader tool, which is included with all Office 365 programs. It may translate individual words or entire documents.

Prezi

Prezi is a digital presentation programme that allows you to create interactive presentations. When compared to Power Point presentations, the creative approach in which Prezi lets you produce presentations by zooming results in more effective, convincing, effective, and interesting presentations.

Haiku Deck

Haiku Deck is a digital application that allows us to simply create presentations on our iPad, iPhone, and the web. The application is available online and has a large collection of stock photographs from which we may make image-based presentations. It allows you to build presentations on the run and have them in your smartphone. It may also be incorporated into Google Classroom, which has recently gained popularity.

Scratch

Students may use this digital tool to create fascinating projects such as games, animations, interactive art, storytelling, and more. If our learners are interested in creating programs, Scratch is one of the digital tools for the classroom that we must introduce them to. This approach would provide the children with an excellent foundation for thinking innovatively and creatively.

Pixton

Pixton, a digital classroom tool, improves children's visual thinking and creativity while fully engaging them. This program allows both small and big students to create comics and storyboards. This exercise may be both informative and entertaining ''boost the students' imagination.''

Flipsnack

This is an application for making digital flipbooks Teachers may utilize this digital tool for instructional purposes, and students can use it to exhibit work in class in a fun way. The utility supports.pdf and.jpg files. All we have to do now is upload our photographs, write our information, and share it with the rest of the world.

"It is vital that accessible technology advances to meet the demands of special education, and that we as parents and educators learn to use these digital tools to their full potential. We can assist direct our children to the greatest digital tools to fulfil their requirements when we, as teachers and parents, are confident in the most modern tech."

Learning Environment

Small class settings that offer individualized tutoring, counselling, and other services should replace the need for specialized learning spaces with digital tools and inclusive classrooms. Any youngster with a learning handicap would consider themselves fortunate to attend such a school. (Chakraborti-Ghosh, 2017)

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

Understanding that adjustments must be made at all levels of the educational system is necessary for restructuring education so that children and young people with disabilities will have an equal opportunity to participate. Making schools more inclusive and kid-friendly won't be enough to remove many of the obstacles facing kids with disabilities since they are disability-specific. Accessible education must include accessible technology, such as computers and Braile for kids with vision impairments, as well as suitable communication styles.A significant portion of a deaf child's education may be conducted in sign language in order to help them acquire actual communication and language skills. The curriculum must be provided to children with intellectual impairments in a way that is understandable to them Before ever considering school admission, a handicapped kid may require child-specific assistance from the youngest possible age.Children with disabilities are frequently undercounted, particularly in underdeveloped countries such as India. Children with severe and moderate disabilities may receive special care, but those with mild or hidden issues are frequently missed. Another aspect is the large number of children who have learning difficulties or obstacles. These children account for a sizable proportion of those who drop out of school before finishing elementary school. Although they may not appear to have any limitations, individuals may struggle to learn in one or more topics. Children with unexplained difficulties, such as hearing loss, may be regarded as having hidden impairments, as may individuals with mental health concerns and intellectual disabilities. Children from a variety of ethnic groups continue to face challenges in Indian schools. The number of children with disabilities is grossly underestimated,particularly in developing countries like India. Children with severe and moderate disabilities may receive special care, but those with mild or hidden issues are frequently missed. These children account for a sizable proportion of those who drop out of school before finishing elementary school. Despite the fact that they may not appear to have any limitations, individuals may struggle in one or more topics. Children frommany of the groups are still facing lot of tribulations in Indian classrooms,the new education policy also addresses the flammable issues that children with impairments face.

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