

“Inclusive Education: Concept, Need, Challenges & Its Measures in India”

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ABSTRACT

Regardless of how much or how little a child can learn, he or she has the right to an education that fits within those bounds. Why shouldn't we give everyone equal opportunities if God made everyone in his image and they are all equal? Children who are gifted by God's will often have inborn illnesses or physical abnormalities. Similar to this, some children come from disadvantaged socio-economic groups, others come from historically marginalised groups, and still others speak languages that are not widely spoken. There are so many physical flaws in even an average person. Because of this, put everything else aside and think. Even a healthy human being has many physical flaws. Therefore, put aside all other considerations and simply regard them as competent and equal, as well as feeling a sense of one with them. From their early years, beginning with kindergarten education, and so on, they will begin to develop a sense of equality, uniformity, and unity. Inclusive Education is a novel technique to educating children with disabilities and learning disabilities with their peers under the same roof. What are the current requirements and difficulties in accomplishing the objective of inclusive education? How will a setting that is inclusive satisfy the needs of kids with disabilities? How can all children receive high-quality education in an efficient and effective manner? As a result, inclusive classrooms must be managed by the federal and state governments, and inclusive schools must fulfil the needs of all children in every neighbourhood. This article goes into great length about the idea of inclusive education, including its significance, difficulties, and strategies for implementing it in India.

Keywords: Special needs of children, inclusive education, disabilities, and inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

There are several ways to define inclusive education. Due to this, it is crucial to define the phrase before beginning any discussions. Different definitions of inclusive education exist that take into account the educational requirements of children with disabilities. Consider a recent interaction with a Canadian teacher who stated, "I practise inclusive teaching in my segregated classroom since all these children with behaviour problems are included together," as an illustration. This is an Orwellian (1949) misreading of the term "inclusive education" that was most likely done on purpose given that it originated from a professional in the "special education" sector. Loreman and Deppeler (2002) argue that inclusive education for a child with a disability in almost every way resembles the sort of education that children without disabilities are able to enjoy. This entails the elimination of segregated classes and full inclusion of students with disabilities in the main classroom, where they spend the bulk of their time and take part in all class activities, even if some of them need to be adjusted. One objective of inclusion, according to Loreman and Deppeler, is for every school to be prepared to not just accept but also embrace students with disabilities. This could entail modifications to the way schools are organised and as well as in the staff members' attitudes, convictions, and ideals. This is in line with Uditsky's (1993) assertion that a kid with a substantial handicap, regardless of its severity or form, is a valued member of the classroom community. Over the past few decades, the Indian government has worked to provide a wide range of programmes to aid in the education of children with disabilities. In order to give disabled students in normal education equal opportunity and to promote their retention, the centrally financed Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme was introduced in 1974. The authorities The National Educational Policy of 1986, which recommended as a goal "to integrate the handicapped with the general community at all levels as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence," is where the government's initiatives in the area of inclusive education have their roots. The 1990 adoption of the World Declaration on Education for All gave the nation's different initiatives a further push. A training programme was started by the Rehabilitation Council of India Act of 1992 to educate professionals who could attend to the requirements of students with disabilities. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, published in 2006, aims to make clear the parameters within which

the public, commercial, and non-profit sectors must function in order to guarantee a life of dignity for people with disabilities and assistance for those who care for them. The Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education (2009) is the most current development and ensures that all children between the ages of six and fourteen have the right to free and compulsory education. The act must be read in connection with Chapter V of the Persons with Disability Act, 1995, in order to address education for a child with a disability. Every kid with a handicap has a right to a free education up to the age of 18 according to Chapter V of the PWD Act. To meet the goal of Education for All (EFA) by 2010, the Indian government hastened the new inclusive education programme. The goal of inclusion is to ensure that all learners, including those with disabilities, from varied households and cultures, with a variety of interests and learning styles, are included in the learning process. According to inclusive education, all children will participate in the main stream of instruction, regardless of their talents and shortcomings. It is evident that inclusive education in ordinary schools has become a top policy goal in India, where the focus on children and adults with special needs has gradually expanded. One of the most important concerns in education has arisen as inclusive education in practically every nation. Many developing nations began revising their policies to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools after the Salamanca Statement was published in 1994 (UNESCO). The studies demonstrate that teachers interact more, spend more time planning, and gain new skills in inclusive environments.

The studies reveal that teachers in inclusive environments work more closely together, spend more time planning, share new skills with one another, take part in more professional development activities, are more adaptable, and employ a wider variety of original approaches to meet the needs of their students. All children who attend school, regardless of whether they have a disability, have a right to an education because they will eventually become citizens of the nation. Today, inclusion is regarded as the ideal educational strategy for the twenty-first century since it maximises the potential of the great majority of students, protects their rights, and promotes equality.

Theory of Inclusive education

At the "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality" (Salamanca Statement, Spain, 1994), the inclusive education tenet was endorsed, and it was reaffirmed at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal 2000). The Statement calls on governments to adopt the notion of inclusive education as a matter of policy and to give making educational systems inclusive the highest priority possible. The United Nations' Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities provide additional support for the concept of inclusion proclaiming equality and participation for everyone. The definition of inclusive education is a method of meeting the many requirements of students. The method of meeting the various requirements of each learner by removing obstacles from the learning environment is known as inclusive education. It entails enrolling in the child's local school's age-appropriate class and providing them with specially designed support (UNICEF 2007). The process of inclusive education involves enhancing the educational system's ability to connect with all students. Every person (child, teenager, and adult) would be able to benefit from educational opportunities that would match their basic learning needs, it was declared at the Jomtien World Conference (1990) in Thailand. An educational strategy and philosophy known as inclusion gives all students more chances to succeed in both their academic and social lives. The complete range of social, recreational, artistic, athletic, musical, daycare, after-school care, extracurricular, religious, and other activities are all included in this. In order to improve the integration of students with disabilities into regular schools, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in India teamed up with UNICEF and created Project Integrated Education for Disabled Children (PIED) in 1987.

The idea of inclusive education has grown in recent years to include all children who may be disadvantaged in addition to those with impairments. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005), which reiterates the value of including and retaining all children in school through a programme that reaffirms the value of each child and enables all children to experience dignity and the confidence to learn, was developed as a result of this broader understanding of curriculum.

Need to Study Discrimination in the Ancient World for a Lesson

There was discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, and birth in particular from the Satya Yuga (Age of Truth) to the Kali Yuga (Age of Vice and Misery). There was a respected Vedic sage by the name of Ashtavakra Ji who lived during the Treta Yuga (the period of Lord Rama), and he had eight bends in his body. He was born physically impaired and has eight physical disabilities. He had to endure jeers from others, but he showed them that entire he was the best by using his brains and wisdom.

Eklavya was a poor hunter's son during the Doopara Yuga (the age of Lord Krishna); who belonged to an Excluded group of people. To protect deer from leopards in the woodlands, Eklavya desired to become an expert archer. He went to Dronacharya for the same thing, but he declined to educate him because only royal families had access to Dronacharya. Eklavya nonetheless created a statue of Dronacharya and acknowledged him as his mentor. He eventually attained the same level of proficiency in archery as Arjuna over time thanks to his commitment and self-study. This is an exceptional case of self-study. Nevertheless, Dronacharya demanded to cut Eklavya's thumb as Eklavya had learnt without Dronacharya's consent. It was the harshest discrimination.

Similar discrimination occurred against Karana in the Mahabharata because he is a suta putra (a person born to suta caste parents), not a Kshatriya or a Brahmin. That group of persons was likewise excluded. No one was willing to instruct him on this premise. But he was determined to finish his study and make a name for himself as a world-class warrior and philanthropist by any means necessary. Therefore, prejudice based on caste, birth, and inborn infirmities, among other things, could be evident in numerous instances in ancient times. But this shouldn't happen again; we should take something away from it.

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. Particularly considering the difficulties these students have participating and learning in the classroom. Teachers are becoming more and more aware of the importance of valuing each kid as an individual as general education classrooms contain an increasing number of diverse individuals. Teachers adjust activities to incorporate all students in successful inclusive programmes, despite the fact that each student's goals may differ. We now know that inclusive education is a more effective strategy for ensuring the success of all pupils. Studies demonstrate that when exposed to the diversity of the general education curriculum, the majority of pupils learn and perform better. Children do better academically in inclusive environments, according to a growing body of research, and inclusion offers chances to build relationships. Friendships, social skills, personal ideals, comfort with others who have special needs, and nurturing learning environments are just a few advantages. Making individuals feel cared for, cherished, and safe is the most crucial role that friendships play. Low-achieving kids can receive additional support in an inclusive educational environment even though they did not meet the requirements for special education. In inclusive classrooms, peers of students with disabilities typically develop their social cognition and become more sensitive to the needs of others. These parents also claim that as a result of their children's experiences, they now feel more at ease with individuals with special needs, which is an intriguing side effect. Students with disabilities are able to form lifelong connections that they would not be able to otherwise, and these friendships can help them develop the coping mechanisms they will need to deal with interpersonal interactions in the future.

No one should be prevented from reaching the Goals by a disability

Stephen Hawking was a legendary cosmologist and physicist. He was diagnosed with motor neuron disease at the age of 21, a condition that slowly paralysed him because it impacted the motor neurons in his brain and spinal cord. But despite this condition, he continued on his quest for knowledge. He started looking into the universe's beginnings and black holes. His IQ was estimated to be 160, which places him in the genius category. He was the director of research at the University of Cambridge when he passed away at the age of 76. (England). Even after he became paralysed, he continued his research. Without the assistance of the computer, he was unable to speak. He provided the disabled with the greatest inspiration. He served as a tangible reminder to all disabled people that a physical impairment need not prevent you from accomplishing your objectives. When Oscar Leonard Carl Pistorius (Blade Runner) was just 11 months old, he lost both of his legs. He was the tenth sportsman to participate in the Olympic and Paralympic Games simultaneously. He was the first contestant with a double-leg amputation.

Implementing Inclusive Education in India Faces Challenges

The number of disabled persons in India is so high, their issues are so complicated, there are so few services available, and social attitudes are so harmful. It is a long and arduous journey to achieve inclusive education. There will be obstacles and possibilities along the long and varied path to inclusive education. India has a population that is stratified along distinct socio-economic and caste lines and is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, and multi-religious nation.

India is the second most populous nation in the world after China, with an estimated 1,210 million inhabitants. It is home to 20% of the world's un-schooled children and 17% of the world's population. The purpose of inclusion is to provide the students with support. The primary goal has grown more difficult as schools accommodate pupils with a wider range of backgrounds and skills. There are 26 million persons with disabilities in India, or around 2.1% of the entire population, according to official estimates from the Census of India (Government of India, 2011). However, according to UNICEF's Report on the Status of Disability in India (2000), there are almost 30 million children in India who have a disability of some kind. Around 10% of the world's population has a disability, and the majority of them (80%) reside in poor nations. conversely, 75% of those with disabilities in rural India. Since about the nation's independence, the government has developed a number of special education policies.

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 negative views, from non-disabled peers' and their parents' attitudes. Although the Indian government has made an effort to develop policies that include individuals with disabilities, its implementation efforts have not led to an inclusive educational system.

Additionally, more pupils are dropping out of school, particularly in places of extreme poverty. Due to their parents' precarious financial situation, students are compelled to quit school and work to support them. This results in an increase in child labourers, which in turn causes physical and mental impairments. There are special difficulties with teachers and parents' negative views and behaviours regarding the capacity of disadvantaged children to learn. The fact that the majority of persons with disabilities continue to be denied equitable access to public schools presents a substantial obstacle.

Another obstacle to implementing inclusive education in the Indian system is large class sizes. In order to teach children with disabilities in inclusive educational settings, Das, Kuyini, and Desai (2013) looked at the present skill levels of ordinary primary and secondary school instructors in Delhi, India. According to their findings, almost 70% of teachers in ordinary schools had neither special education training nor prior experience working with children who were disabled. In addition, 87% of the teachers' classes lacked access to support services. According to the Sixth All India Educational Survey (NCERT, 1998) estimated that of the 1.2 billion school-aged children (6 to 14 years old) in India 20 million of them need special education. Less than 5% of children with impairments attend school, despite the national average of gross enrolment being above 90%. Peer acceptance makes disabled people a frequent target for bullying and teasing by their non-disabled classmates. Many families with disabled children earn much less than the federal poverty line.

The majority of educators in India lack the training necessary to develop and implement educational plans for kids with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The majority of teacher education programmes in India don't include a course on disability studies (Myreddi & Narayan, 2000). In India, few schools are equipped to cater to the special needs of kids with disabilities, and the majority of schools are not well-designed. It is also important to note that obtaining and allocating resources for assistive devices present difficulties. A little over 94% of children with disabilities in India did not receive any educational assistance, despite numerous initiatives for inclusive education.

There are several special characteristics that, in addition to some of the difficulties that India faces in common with other developing nations, will make it exceptionally difficult to undertake educational reform. Without attending to the unique educational requirements of the children who are physically and intellectually challenged, the Government of India's commitment to the universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) cannot be completely realised. Even while inclusion is becoming a buzzword in educational circles, there are still many misconceptions about it. It's significantly more difficult for kids who have difficulties. Children who have impairments are frequently targeted for bullying and teasing by their peers who do not have disabilities. Many families with disabled children earn much less than the federal poverty line.

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National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Perspective

The National Education Policy (NEP) - 2020 envisions equitable and inclusive education for all, with a special focus on children and youth, especially girls, from socially and economically disadvantaged groups who are more at risk of being left behind. This was revealed by the Minister of State for Education during the G-20 Education Ministers' meeting.

The primary goal of NEP-2020 is to guarantee that no kid should miss out on an opportunity to study and succeed due to their circumstances or upbringing. NEP-2020 includes a number of policies aimed at increasing diversity in education, including:

- Equity and inclusion;
- incorporating community involvement;
- Inclusion of all genders;
- Including skill-based courses;
- The adoption of a new pedagogical framework for the education of young children;

- Graduation-level research is included, but M.Phil. Research is not.

By 2030, the NEP-2020 aims to provide all people with access to inclusive and equitable quality education, thereby promoting life-time opportunities. According to recent data, there are 12, 99,902 schools in India overall, but only 2, 74,445 of them adhere to inclusive education for students with disabilities, making up a very small percentage of just 21.11%. As a result, in accordance with this NEP-2020, some decisive action must be performed. Since we are already running significantly behind schedule, now is the ideal time to begin inclusive education properly. The ideal strategy is the "stitch in time saves nine" principle.

The need for inclusive education is Crucial:

Only education, or a shift in perspective, has the power to transform the world. Education is referred to as a person's "Third Eye." At first, all people are the same, but as they gain knowledge, experience, and talents, they start to become exceptional and distinctive. A doctor can diagnose a patient's condition using their third eye. A doctor has two eyes, just like everyone else, but because to his third eye of medical knowledge, he is still able to see the illness in his patients. An engineer has his or her own third eye of expertise to build a model, first in his or her fantasies and then on the ground, much as an advocate has the third eye to analyse the case and determine the saviour answer. A teacher's own topic, the one in which they have completed their master's degrees, also gives them a third eye, which is crucial. He is able to give his students a third eye that is similar to his. These pupils can then impart the same knowledge to others. This is the series of events that will enable us to grant humanity as a whole access to the divine third eye of knowledge. Therefore, by empowering people with knowledge and education, we can alter their perspectives and, in turn, the entire world.

Although education is being given out, it is not of high quality. The quality of schooling has declined recently. This can be appreciated by looking at how little knowledge graduates and even postgraduates have of their own fields. Even many teachers have been observed to lack proper knowledge of their own subjects, making it impossible for them to instruct their courses without using a book. How will pupils learn and write orally in their exams if teachers are unable to present their own subject lessons to the class?

I must add, let's incorporate each of these elements into our instructional strategy and give each pupil a thorough understanding. The future of our nation lies with our children, so we all work hard to prepare them by giving them quality education. The key to winning the battle for a successful life is education. In order to ensure that no one is left out of this blessing, inclusive education—not just education—is what is required right now.

The definition of inclusive education should be as follows.

"The education system that includes all the pupils, regardless of caste, colour, creed, group, and handicap, in the same classroom in the same school, including the current teaching methodologies in the curriculum," is one definition of inclusive education. We primarily consider just including all children in inclusive education and believing that inclusive education's purpose has been met. However, the term "Inclusive" won't be complete until or unless we incorporate all the new techniques and strategies in teaching.

Several Techniques for Promoting Inclusive Education

Because they feel as though they have accomplished something, inclusive education fosters pride in the work of the impaired child. Albert Einstein, the greatest genius of the 20th century, was known to have learning disabilities. One of the best ways to educate the populace in India is to educate children with disabilities alongside their classmates who are not disabled (Shah, 2005, Shah et al., 2014). To create a robust system of inclusive education in the nation, the Indian government must close the gaps in its educational system. Therefore, the following actions are taken for greater inclusive education implementation in India.

Modern Technology is required for Inclusive Education

- Providing Smart- classrooms for simple instruction and learning;
- E-learning to reduce time spent on paper and pen labour;
- Saving trees and the environment through paperless instruction;
- Online instruction that is accessible at any time and location;
- Educating in 3D for improved comprehension;
- Establishing online libraries to facilitate access.

Qualifications for an Inclusive Teacher

- Should be able to figure out difficulties; the capacity to establish challenging goals for children with disabilities;
- Has the capacity to give disadvantaged children success experiences;
- Should understand how to employ specialised teaching materials;
- Should be extremely patient, hospitable, courteous, and loyal;

- Should collaborate with special educators and parents as a team;
- Keep track of the child's successes and setbacks.

In addition to this, teachers must also incorporate all of the morally upright practises that we used to refer to as our moral obligations, a true strategy for preparing all of the students for the future with complete responsibility. Teachers should be aware of the interests, aptitudes, and capabilities of the challenged children and utilise them to help them acquire a variety of skills. We can actually realise the goal of inclusive education by removing "shirking aptitude" and incorporating "working aptitude." Therefore, let's include everything that is possible to for the benefit of our pupils, our society, and the entire planet.

The Inclusive Education Continuum

- Placement in a regular classroom full-time;
- Placement in the general classroom full-time with consultations for special education;
- Placement in a regular classroom full-time;
- Provision of a travelling teacher;
- Placement in a regular classroom for the whole of the day with a resource room and resource instructor;
- Education in general schools' with special classes.
- Techniques for Instruction and Instruments for Compensatory Support

For the Physically Disabled

- Movable furnishings;
- Crutches, wheelchairs;
- Removing barriers of all kinds
- Standing structures

Children who are blind

- Braille;
- Movement sticks;
- Orange path;
- Recordings and audio assistance;
- Concrete tools that may be touched, smelled, and heard to teach about shape, size, weight, thickness, and other concepts;
- The teacher should speak more;
- Talking calculators and books;
- Educating them on the instructions;
- Allowing for aural signals in games and athletic competition.

Children with hearing impairment

- Aid for hearing;
- Dramatization of circumstances that is action-oriented to teach emotional themes;
- Utilising visual aids such as transparencies, a chalkboard, flash cards, and hand-outs of lesson plans;
- Reading lips;
- Putting the young person in the first row;
- Providing speech trainers.

For Children with Mental Illness

- Concrete tools for teaching various topics in scenarios taken from real life;
- The repeat of;
- Instead of seat-based learning, use activity-based learning;
- Try to keep distractions to a minimum;
- Offering content in simple terms with lots of images

For Gifted Children

- Skipping the Primary Level lessons;
- Receiving higher-level instructions with another group of students;
- Specialized courses, such as courses at the college level and foreign languages, might be organised at the secondary level;
- The addition of originality and complexity, which changes the content.

Each and every Indian person must have access to the Right to Education (RTE). The relevance of an expanded definition of inclusive education that takes into account the various requirements of every student should be acknowledged by state and federal governments as well as by all other social actors. All schools and the entire Indian educational system must adopt an inclusion policy (NCF, 2005). Schools need to transform into centres that help kids get ready for life and make sure that everyone, especially children with disabilities from underserved groups and those living in challenging circumstances, benefits as much as possible from this crucial area of education. Since the goal of these programmes is to integrate impaired people into their local environment and community, preparing teachers for rural special education programmes should be organised differently. The inclusive education system should be adaptable. The techniques and resources employed to provide these kids with the broadest access to the normal curriculum must reflect its flexibility. The whole school should use techniques created by a school-based support team to accommodate students with special needs. This group ought to serve as a resource for instructors who are having issues in the classroom. The school is primarily in charge of assisting students in learning alongside their typically developing peers. A school that is inclusive must be able to adapt its educational structures, techniques, and procedures to meet the requirements of all students, especially those who are most likely to encounter obstacles to fulfilling their right to an education. The right to participate in any decisions affecting a child belongs to the parent. They ought to be considered collaborators in the educational process. Parents have been discovered to be highly valuable resources for the instructors and the schools where there is such cooperation. Schools must prepare in advance for the adjustments needed to integrate special needs students into the general population. Transport infrastructure needs to be changed to make it easier for these kids to get around. In terms of architecture, restrooms and other service facilities should include ramps and wheelchair access. Student-focused elements should be provided in accordance with the needs of the students, including medical and educational evaluations, books and stationery, uniforms, a transport allowance, a reader allowance, stipends for girls, support services, assistive devices, boarding the lodging facility, therapeutic services, teaching materials, etc. Children with special needs should be treated the same as other kids, and instead of being sympathetic, their skills and talents should be valued for their self-respect and overall wellness. It is important to provide access to necessary educational supplies including audio learning materials and Braille textbooks. In order to minimise examinations that are solely logical and mathematical, the examination method may need to be modified appropriately.

CONCLUSION

It is undeniably true that from the beginning of time till the present, all thinkers, scholars, prophets, saints, and sages have preached the message of unity, togetherness, equality, universal brotherhood, etc. to us. The sad reality is that discrimination based on caste, colour, creed, birth, etc. has persisted ever since. We obey our scriptures, Prophets, saints, and sages, yet we do not heed what they have instructed us to do. This is a huge farce. Without actually following them, we are their followers. So, this is a chance for us to honestly and enthusiastically strive to pursue the road of equality and togetherness in this day and age. Let's begin promoting equality, community, and unity in our educational system for all pupils, regardless of other factors. All people have the right to an education. True education is the only thing that can assist shift paradigms. Let's commit to promoting inclusive education and promoting equality via education.

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