



## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

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*Children who learn together, learn to live together*

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### **Abstract**

*Inclusive education programme gives every learner a chance to participate in a learning environment that provides better opportunities to grow up and succeed. Inclusive programs are difficult to develop because they require significant changes to the manner. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated 1.3 billion people have significant disabilities and globally 16% of the population. UNICEF reported that estimated 240 million children with disabilities worldwide. There is a need to provide basic education for their betterment in the shelter of inclusive programmes. Teachers are one of the basic pillars who play an important role in schools and provide the best instruction and education for their students. There are several barriers related to preparing teachers for inclusive schools in India (Kumar Amlesh;2021). General educators have limited knowledge and information of special education background, this can often be stressful for teachers. In the sector of inclusiveness all students have the necessary resources in order to be successful. There is a need to improve the teacher education programmes also. New Education Policy (2016) also focused on reviewing the B.Ed. regular programs related to inclusive education (Joshi Neha;2020). This paper highlights the Issues about the effectiveness of teacher preparation for working in inclusive classrooms.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusive education, disabilities, special education, resources, teacher education programmes*

### **Introduction**

Every child or individual is unique and different on this planet. In Inclusive education all students are welcomed in school with any disability and supported to reach their full potential. Here all students have to access equal opportunities and recognise the rights of education for every child (Kumar Amlesh;2021). All learners participate in the teaching

learning process on the principle of equality and equity and learn together. Article 26 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights promotes the inclusive education programme “everyone has the right to education”. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) article 28 focused on statement every child has a right to education without discrimination clearly express the aim of guaranteeing quality education for all and the importance of providing the required holistic support to develop each child’s potential.

Education plays a significant role in developing a child into a complete human being, and inclusive education is a major step in this regard. Many countries around the world have passed laws and instituted policies for implementing inclusion. The roots of inclusive education were planted at Haring over 50 years ago. At that time, numerous children with different disabilities were excluded from public education because they had nothing to do with academic performance and were unable to learn quickly. The Experimental Unit (EEU pioneer, K. Eileen Allen ) was created to conduct research to develop more effective techniques for those children who did not have access to the public school system.

In 2000 Indian states that there were around 30 million children who are suffering from some disability reported by UNICEF’s (Sharma Prasad , 2019). The government of India launched the Integrated Education for Handicapped Children (IEDC) program in 1974, was the first formal step towards the origin of inclusive education (Paul Souvik & Chatterjee Biswajit; 2023). In 1994, ‘World Conference on Special Education’ at Salamanca (Spain), accepted the principle of Access and Quality for inclusive education (Joshi Neha;2020).

In 1966, the Kothari Commission had highlighted the importance of educating children with disabilities in regular schools. Project Integrated Education for Disabled Children (PIED) was introduced in 1987, through the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) joined hands with UNICEF, to strengthen the integration of learners with disabilities into regular schools in India (Singh JD;2016). In 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act was launched to receive a quality education in “the least restrictive environment” (Kirschner R. Suzanne;2015).

Inclusion means that children with disabilities and special needs are given an opportunity to educate with peers in the same environments. Inclusive education is that environment where ensuring that children despite their differences, receive the equal opportunity to be part of the same classroom as other children of their age, and in the procedure get the opportunity of being shown to the curriculum to their optimal potential (Sharma Prasad;2019). Inclusive

Education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disability with that of normal ones within the same roof (Singh, JD;2016). Children who study in an Inclusive school environment develop confidence and imbibe values. Albert Einstein said, “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it to be stupid”.

Inclusive is an approach to schooling where students with many different kinds of disabilities and learning needs are educated in classes with non-disabled students and provide additional support and services in the same classroom and peer group (Kirschner R. Suzanne;2015). Inclusion is a basic human right. This education is based on the belief that every child can learn, if equal opportunities are provided in school. Inclusive education is a universal phenomenon and fundamental way towards the development of (EFA) Education for All (Paul Souvik & Chatterjee Biswajit;2023). According to the regulation of the Ministry of Education, “Inclusive education is an education system that provides an opportunity for students with disabilities and gifted students to continue their education in public schools along with other students in general (Yadav Sandhya; 2023).

### **Pillars of Inclusive Education**



Following pillars are used for inclusive education

- ❖ Engage
- ❖ Equip
- ❖ Empower
- ❖ Embed
- ❖ Evaluate
- ❖ Evolve

### **Issues and Challenges for Teachers preparing Inclusive Education Programme**

In the context of India there lie several challenges & obstacles to achieving the success of Inclusive education, such as lack of trained and well-educated teachers, lack of resources, plans and policies, curriculum, good infrastructure and negative attitude of teachers for extending the concept of inclusive education (Amina Parveen, Tamheeda Qounsar;2018). There are several berries and challenges to educate children with disabilities and special needs with normal students in regular classrooms on the same roof. Major issue in inclusive schools is educational equity in the creation of ‘schools for all’ relates to the preparation of teachers to meet the challenges of teaching that are increasingly diverse.

**Quality of Teacher Education Programmes:** Educational programmes for teachers refer to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the school and classroom. There is a need for raising the quality and standards of our teacher education programmes because of the quality of the work undertaken by a student teacher, significantly affecting his or her students. Education plays a vital role in the development of society and nation also but the quality of education is greatly determined by the quality of teachers. Today educational programs for teachers focus upon these points. Such as National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), National Council of Educational Research and Training(NCERT),National University for Educational Planning & Administration (NUEPA) and University Grants Commission (UGC) is also involved with Departments of Teacher Education (Dwivedi S. Kant 2012). The ratio between theory and practice generally remains 5:2 although teaching practice plays a significant role in B.Ed. programme.

**Dearth of Resources:** Resources are that material of teaching which helps to meet the learners expectations for learning. Teachers play an important role and the responsibility of the teachers to make the learner curious, have the drive to learn and be able to apply what is required. Learners can engage more with the learning material and participate in the classroom effectively, only then resources, such as infrastructure, trained teachers and teaching aids are provided to their specific needs.

**Limited funding & support:** Inclusive education is said to a White Elephant approach because funding is the biggest challenge and it is essential to preparing teachers for inclusive schools. India is a developing country, the apprehensions of the government can be very well understood. Schools frequently lack adequate amenities, facilities, qualified and properly-

trained teacher educators, educational materials or equipment and all general support etc (Kumar Amlesh;2021, Kumar Bushan;2018).

**Negative attitude and thinking:** Generally seen due to the negative attitude of parents toward their children they are not able to pay proper attention to their children and learning. In a school environment, if any teachers, like the general public, have negative views on children with special needs, they have to face challenges. This kind of negative attitude is an obstacle to the success of the inclusive education programme. Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) reported 87% of the teachers did not have access to support services in their classrooms.

**Lack of Appropriate environment:** Most schools do not have a suitable environment to make CWSN feel welcome. There is a lack of resources such as teaching aids, hearing aids, electronic resources, braille keyboards, posters, pictures, music and wheelchair ramps etc.

**Non-acceptance in classrooms:** In a classroom environment nondisabled peers don't accept these students due to their disability and slowness to participate in normal activities. This attitude creates a big challenge for teachers to develop peaceful learning. There is a need to change the attitude of non disabled students towards disabled students.

**Size of classroom:** Presently large class sizes are the biggest hurdle and challenge for the implementation of inclusive education programmes in the Indian context (Singh JD;2016 , Yadav Sandhya;2023).

**Individualized lesson plans:** Inclusive education pays special attention to every child and each one has special needs and teachers have to prepare the IP for their students. This makes it an extra burden. Teachers need to familiarize themselves with these plans and ensure they are implemented effectively.

**Lack of training:** Due to lack of training teachers cannot identify who are different learners. That's why such a kind of teachers don't know how to deal with these children. Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) reported 70% of the regular school teachers had neither received training in special education nor had any experience toward disabled students.

**Less Students Enrolment:** The enrollment rate for children with disabilities is at least as high as for children without disabilities in the public school system.

**Teaching Methods:** Most schools and teachers use only a few specific teaching methods, preventing students of varying abilities from taking full advantage of the teaching and learning process.

**Addressing biases and stereotypes:** Inclusive education aims to create an environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion. Teachers need to be aware of their own biases and stereotypes and actively work to create an inclusive and accepting classroom culture.

### **Role of UNICEF to Promote Inclusive Education**

UNICEF supports government efforts to foster and monitor inclusive education systems.

These work focuses on four key areas:

- **Advocacy:** UNICEF promotes inclusive education in discussions, high-level events and other forms of outreach geared towards policymakers and the general public.
- **Awareness-raising:** UNICEF shines a spotlight on the needs of children with disabilities by conducting research and hosting roundtables, workshops and other events for government partners.
- **Capacity-building:** UNICEF builds the capacity of education systems in partner countries by training teachers, administrators and communities, and providing technical assistance to Governments.
- **Implementation support:** UNICEF assists with monitoring and evaluation in partner countries to close the implementation gap between policy and practice.



### **Conclusion**

Several issues and challenges for preparing inclusive school teachers. Inclusive education based on the principles of a human rights approach and focus on those who are marginalized and excluded. There are a number of children with different disabilities in the country. To succeed and achieve the aim of inclusive education requires school transformation and needs a set of conditions necessary to promote inclusive practice. Without education, all different children may not be able to fulfill their rights as a citizen in the largest democracy of the world (Bandyopadhyay & Dhara, 2021). The Goal 4 (SDG14) of the 2030 global Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable

quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. The success of inclusive education depends upon many factors. Teachers are a key factor in the successful implementation of inclusive education but lack the necessary competencies, relevant knowledge creates obstacles in this approach. There should be a need to improve it. Teachers also often are required to study additional aspects of psychology and sociology. Teachers are an essential component to ensure the quality of students’ inclusion in the school environment. Other essential issues related to infrastructure and support facilities, curriculum modification and educational materials should be addressed. All government agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations are committed to supporting the universal right to education for all children. There is a need to develop a long-term strategy in which every step taken plus to the sound.

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