

# Saarth

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### Why Inclusive Education?

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#### Abstract

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, the World Declaration on Education for All, and the Jomtein Conference 1990 have successfully raised the slogan of Education for All. In 'Inclusion', there is no segregation at all. Every child has equal right to have quality education and learning. Inclusive education is the most effective way to provide equal and fair opportunity to all children of society to have school education, to learn and develop all those skills they need to develop. Inclusive education means all children are having learning experience in single platform or same classrooms in same schools. Inclusive systems value the unique contributions students of all backgrounds bring to the classroom and allow diverse groups to grow side by side, to the benefit of all. Inclusive Education eliminates all forms of discrimination in the learning environment. Inclusive education is provided to all students beyond all barriers of disabilities and shackles of the society. It provides better opportunities for learning. Researches has shown Inclusive education results in superior social and developmental outcomes Special Students who had inclusive education achieved better academic outcomes when compared with their counterparts in segregated settings. Special students who had inclusive education demonstrate improved outcomes in specific skill areas, such as their social competencies.

#### Introduction

In our teaching experience we observe many a special students or variety of students. No two students are similar by their capacity, Intelligence Quotient, Emotional Quotient, social skill, behavioral skill, life skill, way of dealing with the events and way of understanding the facts. Generally, we classify the students on the basis of their capacity slow learner, bright learners etc. Some children are labeled as Problematic children. The students who may be struggling with some conflicts are seen as hyper active, depressed, withdrawn or quarrelsome etc. Some may have learning disorders like Dyslexia.

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# Saarth

## E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

Some special students may have problems like Autism, Down Syndrome etc. Some may be differently-able students. All have equal right of equal opportunity of same education, equal opportunity for development by international law, our constitution and by virtue of different education acts.

As per the data found on website of UNICEF, about 93 million children from whole worldwide live with disabilities. Like all children, children with disabilities have equal ambitions and dreams for their futures. They also need quality education achieving life skills and develop their full potential.

On the contrary, children with disabilities are usually ignored in nearly all policymaking, limiting their access to education. These children face persistent barriers to education stemming from discrimination, stigma and the routine failure of decision makers to incorporate disability in school services.

Nearly 50 % of children with disabilities are not in school, compared to only 13% of their peers without disabilities. Children with disabilities are often denied the chance to take part in their communities, the workforce and the decisions that most affect them.

Disability is the single most serious barrier to education in whole world. Usually we found that Principals, Head teachers who refuse admission to children on the basis of financial, emotional or physical disability are reflecting deeply entrenched social biases. Schools are influenced by perceptions of social economic status, race, language and gender.

Pupils who experience difficulties in learning can and should be treated with respect and viewed as potentially active and capable learners. This approach not only helps the child who is coping with challenges but also those who are typical. Both learn tolerance and understanding, they learn to live in a society that is accepting of difference. Once educational institutions start to see all students as a whole rather than as individual with certain disabilities they will be able to work towards an inclusive climate.

### **Inclusive education-**

Inclusion in education is based on the belief that every child can learn and realise her full potential if provided equal opportunities to participate in school, supported with resources required as per her condition and taught in a manner appropriate to her needs.

# Saarth

## E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

Inclusive education means all children are having learning experience in single platform or same classrooms in same schools. Inclusive systems value the unique contributions students of all backgrounds bring to the classroom and allow diverse groups to grow side by side, to the benefit of all.

### **History of Inclusive Education-**

The concept of inclusion first gained recognition in Canada followed by the USA and Great Britain. In India the government of India launched the Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) programme in 1974. This was the first formal step towards inclusion. In fact, even as early as 1966, the Kothari Commission had highlighted the importance of educating children with disabilities in regular schools. The Salamanca Statement, UNESCO 1994, for action on special needs education, has been identified as the International breakthrough for inclusion leading to a paradigm shift in education.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, the World Declaration on Education for All, and the Jomtein Conference 1990 have successfully raised the slogan of Education for All. In view of this policy declaration, it urged upon all governments to give highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties.

In inclusion we believe that "regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (Salamanca statement on principle policy and practice in Special Educational Needs. UNESCO 1994).

Legislation is formulated so that it influences and determines our actions and our ways of perceiving events. But in spite of having a lot of legislation that looks to provide equal opportunities to the challenged, this legislation has a major weakness and that is its lack of summary procedures.

### **Features of an inclusive school-**

#### **1. Human rights-**

- All children have right to learn together. They must be given opportunity to achieve & maintain an acceptable level of learning.

# Saarth

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- Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
- Disabled adults describing themselves as special school survivors are demanding an end to segregation.
- There are no legitimate reasons to separate children from other students. Children belong together- with advantages and benefits for everyone. They do not need to be protected from each other.

### **2. Good education -**

- Researches shows that children perform better academically and behave better socially in Integration. They gain better education in same platform.
- In segregation special children feels neglected, ignored and deprived.

### **3. Good social sense -**

- Segregation develops prejudice.
- All children needs education which will enable them to develop life skills, develop their skills to the fullest extent and help them to develop relationships and prepare them for life.

### **The characteristics of inclusion reflect-**

- 1) Good,
- 2) Value based,
- 3) Pupil-cantered
- 4) Management paradigms,

### **Inclusive schools will-**

- 1) Be in a well-balanced state of change and development.
- 2) support staff in innovation, experimentation, risk taking, problem solving;
- 3) adopt collaborative working practices such as: -
  - joint planning
  - - teaching partnerships
  - - peer coaching and critical friendships

# Saarth

## E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

### **Different Concepts/ Terms and Phases in Inclusive Education-**

Within the CTN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, terms like 'integration', 'mainstreaming', and 'partial mainstreaming ' and 'inclusion" have entered the field of education. While these terms are understood differently in various countries, in the third world these terms, are all methods of educational transaction.

Inclusion is being used here to define a system of educational transaction which provides to children with disability similar platforms as those that typical or normal children receive. The Vision of Inclusion is that all children can learn and belong to the mainstream of school and community life.

In integration special arrangements are made to accommodate exceptional children within a system. While in inclusiveness we restructure schools to respond to the needs of all children. It involves educating children with special educational needs in settings where they have the maximum association, consistent with their needs, with other children.

In 'Inclusion', there is no segregation at all. Whereas 'integration' is at the lower end of the spectrum where there is near total segregation in the school. 'Disability' or 'disabled' and challenged are synonymous and are used to describe children who have some physical or, mental, emotional or financial impediments which requires special or different interventions in a classroom.

'Typical' or 'normal' is used to describe children who apparently do not exhibit any symptoms that require special interventions in the classroom. Some of these terms are quite contested but for the purposes of this unit these terms have been used as explained earlier.

### **Requirements-**

- The objective of the school must be to cater to the needs of each student irrespective of her/his individual pace to draw out to maximum potential. Thus, an inclusive school can be successful only when all students feel they are valued and are truly a part of the school community.
- An inclusive school must adopt changes in its overall structure in such a way that it becomes a part of the school's culture. These changes are at various levels i.e. infrastructural, curriculum-based, pedagogical, or in classroom management, sports and

# Saarth

## E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

cultural events, community-level programmes, and assessment.

- Adopting a Zero Refusal Policy
- Once admitted, each child should be equally welcomed, accepted, valued and respected.
- Organizing continuous orientation/sensitization programmes for all the stakeholders.
- Building a culture for inclusion in the school by adopting changes in curriculum, pedagogy, co-curricular activities and assessment to implement inclusion as a basic right to each child.
- Involving all stakeholders including professionals, social workers and organizations and parents in the education of their wards.
- All the teachers should be trained by the competent resource persons and skilled persons.
- School buildings must be suitable for all type of special students.
- The students must receive accessible learning materials.
- At the community level, we have to organise some community programme that enables them to understand the necessity of Inclusive Education.

### **Principles-**

- All children can learn
- All children attend regular classrooms suitable to their age.
- All children receive appropriate educational programs
- All children receive a curriculum suitable to their needs.
- All children participate in all types of school activities.

### **The Benefits of Inclusive Education**

- Inclusive education results in superior social and developmental outcomes (Baker et al. 1995; Carlberg & Kavale 1980; Oh-Young & Filler 2015)
- A study compared the quality of school life of special students in segregated and inclusive settings and found that students in the inclusive settings were less lonely (Wiener & Tardif 2004).
- Special students who had inclusive education demonstrate improved outcomes in specific skill areas, such as their social competencies (Fisher & Meyer 2002;

# Saarth

## E-Journal of Research

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McGregor & Vogelsberg 1998).

- Special Students who had inclusive education achieved better academic outcomes when compared with their counterparts in segregated settings (Cosier et al. 2013; Hehir et al. 2012; Jackson et al. 2008).
- Students without disability tend to hold fewer prejudices about people with disability and are more open to socially interacting with them (Ruijs & Peetsma 2009).
- All children are equally members of the community and develop a sense of belonging towards society.
- Inclusive Education eliminates all forms of discrimination in the learning environment
- Inclusive education is provided to all students beyond all barriers of disabilities and shackles of the society.
- It provides better opportunities for learning.

### **UNICEF's work to promote inclusive education-**

UNICEF supports inclusive education systems. Our focus key areas are as below-

1. **Advocacy:** UNICEF promotes inclusive education in discussions, high-level events and other forms of outreach geared towards policymakers and the general public.
2. **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.
3. **Capacity-building:** UNICEF builds the capacity of education systems in partner countries by training teachers, administrators and communities, and providing technical assistance to Governments.

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# Saarth

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