

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 7

Issue: 4

Month: April

Year: 2020

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 10.02.2020

Accepted: 15.03.2020

Published: 01.04.2020

Citation:

Anjum Khan, M., and J. Banumathi. "Can Textbooks Promote Inclusive Society?" *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2020, pp. 66–70.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v7i4.2147>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Can Textbooks Promote Inclusive Society?

M.Anjum Khan*Assistant Professor of English**Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, India***J.Banumathi***Ph.D. Research Scholar**Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, India***Abstract**

The idea that inclusive education and inclusive society is still a theoretical vision is dispiriting. There are schools that promote inclusive education. However, inclusiveness is not attained at the fullest. Likewise, society also lacks inclusiveness at large. There are several strategies and schemes devised to bring social inclusiveness. The proposed paper discusses the textbook as a tool to impart inclusive ideas at the school level.

Keywords: Inclusive, Education, Society, Textbook and Tamil Nadu**Introduction and Need for the Study**

The paper argues that a textbook is a tool which does not just impart subject knowledge, but also help in shaping the attitude of the learner. If it is true, then it is essential to keep in mind several aspects when preparing a textbook. Further, among all the subject textbooks for school, the English textbook stands apart. It is a total of lessons which are stories, poems, grammar exercises, etc. By and large, it is one of the favorite textbooks of the students as it contains stories and poems. Now, these literary pieces are carefully chosen to convey some human values besides language proficiency.

As disability is infrequently discussed subject in the textbooks of school, the students remain ignorant about it. They learn very little, and whatever they learn is either through media or society. However, the experience is uneven as one student might have watched a movie where a visually impaired person is portrayed as a beggar, and the other student might have watched another movie where a person with visual impairment has special powers. Now, both of these students will develop a different perspective on the disability of blindness. Either they will stereotype that all persons with visual impairment are beggars, or they have special powers. So, it is very important to disseminate uniform knowledge among students who are in school. In connection with this, the researchers analyzed Tamil Nadu Board English textbooks and found that the books carry some information on disability.

The Review of Literature

Michael Berube, in the article "Disability and Narrative," discusses the representation of human bodies and congenital disability, which remains an indistinct topic.

He also renders a clear picture of one's capacity to distinguish oneself from those who are in-capable of self-representation. Michael says, "In one world, cognitive disability remains irreducibly alien, and self-representation depends on ones' capacity to distinguish oneself from those incapable of self-representation". The article, "Disability Studies Now" by Rachel Adams focuses on the inevitability of disability. It elaborates on the recent technology of diagnosing a fetus for any abnormality and terminating it. Adams concludes, "As these diverse constituencies lay claim to 'Disability' as a political and institutional identity, we must also acknowledge their differences and continue to seek out versions of Disability that can accommodate without assimilation".

In the article, titled, "Disability: An Embodies Reality (or Space) of 'Dasein,'" Josephine Seguna argues that the so-called non-disabled individuals play the major role in marginalizing the individuals with a disability. He affirms that the non-disabled individuals form the social norms which make the presence of the individuals with disability insignificant. He says, "The 'reality' of disabled identity's otherness has been exposed through the influence of impersonal, normative social, political, and cultural norms". The author concludes by proposing equal treatment and highlighting the binary opposite, able, and disable.

In the article, "Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation," G. Thomas Couser say, "Disability is an inescapable element of human existence and experience. Although it is rarely acknowledged as such, it is also a fundamental aspect of human diversity". However, there are changes in the living conditions of the disabled community. Of late, individuals with a disability are visible in public places. It is because of the assistive technology and unfolding awareness among the public. The author asserts that the general public should stop drawing limits for the individuals with a disability and let them be one among them.

The article, titled "Disability Worlds" by Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, centers on the different kinds of disabilities, like, hearing impairment, Visual Impairment, Autism, etc. The article also reflects on the idea that the students who go to school

together with students with disability are more sensitive towards it in society. He says, "the 'new normal' established by living life with a difference". Similarly, in the article, titled, "Naturalism and the Social Model of Disability: Allied or Antithetical," Dominic Assist elaborates on how one should understand disability instead of sympathizing with it. He discusses various types of disabilities and the related theories. He puts forth the point that naturalism on disability should not be taken as an assault on diversity.

Cynthia Lweiecki Wilson, in the article, "Doing the Right Thing' versus Disability Rights: A Response to Ellen Barton." Reflects on the alienation of the persons with disability. The author admits that this alienation of disabled individuals is a result of society's exclusion. Many disability activists works to change the social environments and attitudes to enable, not disenable, people with impairments. She says, "By bringing to light the history of disability, and by critiquing language, rhetoric, and social practices, disability studies seeks social transformation". Thus this article focuses on the rights of disabled individuals in society.

The article, titled, "Race, Ethnicity, Disability, and Literature: Intersections and Interventions" by Jennifer C. James and Cynthia Wu discusses various texts, like, *Almanac of the Dead*, *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*, *Borderlands/La Frontera* etc. Which is related to disability. The article suggests the need for using the perspective of disability. It also contemplates the role of society in secluding individuals with disability. Jenifer observes, "Disability is one of the material incarnations of the borderlands; it is outside or elsewhere from the normative national fantasy of bodily 'integrity'".

In the article, "Reimagining Disability," Darla Y. Schumm discusses feminist disability, wherein she refers two Nancy Etesland's work and Sharon Betcher's article, and compare them both. Etesland's work illustrates that able bodies should look at the disabled ones through a new lens. Sharon's article deals with double oppression of society towards a woman with a disability. Finally, Darla Y. Schumm concludes by highlighting the painful silence of the women who live with a disability and says, "A

feminist disability ethics of compassion echoes this cry of freedom”.

Likewise, Karen P. Depauw, in the article titled, “Space: The Final Frontier’: The Invisibility of Disability on the Landscape of Women Studies,” talks about women with disabilities. The author ruminates on the two-fold sufferings of the women with a disability; she quotes the “trans-formative power of speaking to the larger culture about how disability experiences inform human perceptions and social practice” . She elucidates on the fact that even gender plays a role in disability. Men with disabilities are subjected to less oppression when compared to women with disabilities.

In the article, titled, “Developing Diversity and Equal Opportunity: Why the Disability Perspective Matters,” Paul Steven Miller deals with disability studies as a discipline. He discusses the benefits of prescribing disability studies in the curriculum. The author stresses an institution’s role in creating awareness of disability among the students. Penny L. Richards, in the article, “Disability History Online,” traces the history of Disability. She mainly focuses on the Veterans Disability project. The author also discusses ways to flare up students’ interest in the Disability field.

Elizabeth Barnes, in the article, titled, “Disability, Minority, and Difference,” ponders on the hardships related to disability. She says that persons with disabilities confront more difficulties when compared to persons without a disability. She says, “The dominant characterization of disability in analytic philosophy is starkly different”. The author states that disability has its downside. However, the fact that different set of individuals makes a vibrant place in the process is inevitable. Further, she recommends the readers to understand and develop awareness about it.

Patricia A. Dunn, in the article titled “Disabling Assumptions: Challenging Stereotypes about Disability for a More Democratic Society”” interrogates the meaning of disability. She argues that one’s inability is also categorized under disability. The author brings forward some ways to treat disabled individuals.

In the article, “Measuring Disability in India,” Roger Jeffery and Nidhi Singal discuss the survival

of the disabled community in the society. The article claims that there are many individuals with a disability who are to even aware of their rights and Government policies. Roger quotes, “disability issues are no longer simply marginalized: now people with disabilities may well find themselves enmeshed in a kind of ‘surveillance society’”. Further, the authors recommend that the Government should implement more welfare schemes and frame policies for the benefit of individuals with a disability.

The article, “Moving beyond Disability 2.0 in Composition Studies,” explores the scope of education for students with disabilities. The article begins with a question, “We seldom hear questions anymore such as, “Aren’t there special colleges for those students?” or “How would a disabled student even get into college?” We have come to what we might think of as “Disability 2.0”: now that disabled students and teachers are accepted as to be- longing in our classrooms, and we affirm that their presence is an asset rather than a deficit, what should we be doing?”. He also says that the time has changed, and people have started to accept the disability and the disabled individuals as one among them. He summons by saying that disability is not a problem; instead, it gives an opportunity to rethink our practices in the classroom.

Angharad E. Beckett in the article, titled, “Challenging Disabling Attitudes, Building an Inclusive Society’: Considering the Role of Education in Encouraging Non-Disabled Children to Develop Positive Attitude towards Disabled People,” contemplates on the awareness of disability among the non-disabled individuals. The article is about the non-disabled children’s attitude towards disabled individuals and their knowledge about the reality of life for disabled people within a disabling society. The author also makes an inquiry into general education and teaching practices in schools concerning creating awareness about disability.

In the article titled “Disability as Human Variation: Implications for Policy,” Richard K. Scott and Kay Schriener discuss the limited accessibility of the world for individuals with a disability. The authors recommend equality and rights for persons with disabilities. The article whirls around the rights of persons with disabilities. The writers are

of the strong opinion that equal rights and equal opportunities should be made available for persons with disabilities.

Stephen Kuusisto, in the article, titled, “‘Extreme Bold’ in the Faculty Ranks,” scorns the social exclusion of the disabled individuals. He criticizes the society which overlooks the population with disability. He observes, “The fact is that disability disturbs people who think of themselves as nondisabled. While most liberals and progressives would charitably toss a moral coin in the direction of the lame, the blind, or the halt, few have thought about the oppression committed in the of being “normal””. The author advocates a broader prospect and a better understanding of disability. He urges everyone to know about disability and become a part of the inclusive society.

Pooja Singh, in the article titled “Persons with Disabilities and Economic Inequalities in India,” explores the inequalities related to the economic development of the disability community. The article depicts the condition of unemployment among the person with a disability. It points out that the societal attitude and the bias against individuals with a disability is the chief reason for unemployment among the disabled. The author resents that the system fails the disabled individuals and do not give them to prove their abilities. She also discusses various dimensions of unemployment based on gender, cast, religion, rural, and urban background. She concludes by saying that persons with disabilities face several challenges such as lack of employment, differences in wages, lack of support, caste, and gender. The author also strongly expresses the need for making individuals with a disability visible in society.

Texts under Review

The English textbooks of Tamil Nadu Board Class VI, VII, and VIII were reviewed. It is revealed that these textbooks are written on several themes. Disability is also one of such themes. The text contained a lesson on visual impairment, where there is a discussion of a special school. The lesson also throws light on Braille, screen reading software, and so on. Further, another textbook contains a lesson on several learning disabilities, like, attention disorder, dyslexia, and dysgraphia. There are also lessons

on wheel chair users, and autistic disability. The best part is these disabilities are presented through stories, and the message sent across is heartening and thought-provoking.

Case Studies

A handful of students were selected randomly from different boards of education, and the following questions were asked:

Yes/No Questions

1. Do you know what Braille is?
2. Do you have any idea about Dyslexia?
3. Do you know about the screen reader software?
4. Do you know what Dysgraphia is?
5. Do you have any idea about Attention Deficit Disorder?

Findings and Conclusion

One of the major findings of this study was that the students who studied in Tamil Nadu Board were able to answer at least one question positively. They demonstrated knowledge of disabilities and assistive technologies. Although, they did not remember everything that they have read in their English books,, they had remote ideas. However, the students from other boards were not able to answer these questions. They were ignorant about different disabilities. Therefore, the study concluded and answered the question, “Can textbooks promote inclusive Society?”.

Work Cited

- Adams, R. “Disability Studies Now.” *American Literary History*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2013, pp. 495-507.
- Barnes, E. “Disability, Minority, and Difference.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2009, pp. 337-355.
- Beckett, A.E. “Challenging Disabling Attitudes, Building an Inclusive Society’: Considering the Role of Education in Encouraging Non-Disabled Children to Develop Positive Attitude Towards Disabled People.” *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2009, pp. 317-329.

- Berube, Michael. "Disability and Narrative." *PMLA*, vol. 120, no. 2, 2005, pp. 568-576.
- Couser, T.G. "Disability, Life Narrative, and Representation." *Modern Language Association*, vol. 120, no. 2, March 2005, pp. 602-606.
- Depauw, K. "Space: The Final Frontier: The Invisibility of Disability on the Landscape of Women Studies." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1996, pp. 19-23.
- Dunn, P.A. "Disabling Assumptions: Challenging Stereotypes about Disability for a More Democratic Society." *The English Journal*, vol. 103, no. 2, 2013, pp. 94-96.
- Ginsburg, F. and Rayna Rapp. "Disability Worlds." *Annual Review Anthropology*, vol. 42, 2013, pp. 53-68.
- James, J.C. and Cynthia Wu. "Race, Ethnicity, Disability, and Literature: Intersections and Interventions." *MELUS*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2006, pp. 3-13.
- Jeffery, R. and NidhiSingal. "Measuring Disability in India." *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 43, no. 12/13, 2008, pp. 22-24.
- Kuusisto, S. "Extreme Bold in the Faculty Ranks." *Academe*, vol. 99, no. 1, 2013, pp. 37-40.
- Lewiecki-Wilson, C. "Doing the Right Thing' versus Disability Rights: A Response to Ellen Barton." *JAC*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2001, pp. 870-881.
- Miller, P.S. "Developing Diversity and Equal Opportunity: Why the Disability Perspective Matters." *PMLA*, vol. 120, no. 2, 2005, pp. 634-637.
- Richards, P.L. "Disability History Online." *OAH Magazine of History*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2009, pp. 45-48.
- Schumm, D.Y. "Reimaging Disability." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2010, pp. 132-137.
- Scotch, R.K. and Kay Schriener. "Disability as Human Variation: Implications for Policy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 549, 1997, pp. 148-159.
- Seguna, J.A. "Disability: An Embodies Reality (or Space) of 'Dasein'." *Human Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2014, pp. 31-56.
- Singh, P. "Persons with Disabilities and Economic Inequalities in India." *Indian Anthropological Association*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2014, pp. 65-80.
- Sisti, D. "Naturalism and the Social Model of Disability: Allied or Antithetical?" *Journal of Medical Ethics*, vol. 41, no. 7, 2015, pp. 553-556.

Author Details

Dr. M. Anjum Khan, Assistant Professor of English, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** anjumkhanrs@gmail.com

J. Banumathi, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** j.banumathi11.5@gmail.com