

Professional Development for Inclusion

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Abstract

Every birth of a baby is always welcome and greeted with great jubilation by the family. On the other hand, a child with any disability may be greeted with or without knowing the difficulty. When it becomes evident he/she is secluded or given over-protection which impairs his growth and sometime affects psychological and emotional problems. The innocent individual are deprived of the minimal facilities and referred as disadvantaged children. There are disadvantaged children in every nation, every location, and every culture. In the long run, human resources are wasted since a child's disadvantage or impairment causes him or her to be less creative, grow slower, develop less fully, and have impaired potential. Prof. Jangira (1993) has traced the milestones on path of Special Education not only in India but also in the world. Thus categorising in distinct terms as "Disabled" gave way to normalisation and mainstreaming. During eighties the scheme 'Integrated Education' was transferred to Education Department. The state of early intervention or early childhood special education IE/ECSE has gone from providing isolated pockets of services offered to families and mandated services for pre-schoolers with disabilities. Past 30 years the profession of ECSE has emerged as one of the strongest areas within special education. Accommodating student heterogeneity has consistently been a major instructional problem in schools. One possible alternative is cooperative learning. When this learning is well-structured and includes individual accountability it tends to create consistently positive effect on students' achievement.

Keywords: Disadvantaged Children, Disability, Integrated Education (IE), Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and Cooperative Learning.

Introduction

What is the Concept of Inclusive Education?

The education given by the school for all children in the same classroom with real learning opportunities and are a part of the regular school system from the very beginning of school. It is conceived with an intention to provide a special educational environment that will inspire and empower every student with a clear well-structured programme for experiencing less disadvantaged group also.

Types of Inclusion

Three Main Models of Disability in Mainstream Classrooms are

- Full Inclusion
- Partial Inclusion
- Mainstream

Full Inclusion

This approach to education promotes the inclusion of all children, including those with special needs, in regular classes where they may study alongside their typically developing classmates. To make sure the model works, we need to keep an eye on how each kid is doing, and we need to make sure that our lectures, assignments, and intervention strategies are all suitable. Ensure about the alternative plans for physically disabled students and content library with ready –to-use lessons and instructional aids for diverse need of the students.

Partial Inclusion

There is an other paradigm that advocates for all children to study in regular classes, and that is Partial Inclusion. As part of this concept, kids with impairments or special needs may also be required to spend time in an alternative setting when they need more individualised attention. When put into practice, this approach places an emphasis on meeting the needs of all students, being adaptable to the unique requirements of diverse student bodies, and carefully organising classes.

Mainstream

One approach to schooling is known as “mainstreaming,” and it involves placing typically developing children with impairments in a special classroom alongside typically developing peers. Individualised assistance is provided to meet their unique requirements. Take into account the information shared with the student’s caretakers and specialised support personnel, as well as the student’s readiness for mainstream education, while adopting mainstreaming as an inclusive education method. Process integration at the pupils’ own pace and readiness. Integration may happen at a student’s own pace, according to their current level of development and comfort.

Special Education for the Disabled Need and Importance

Disabled children are no longer seen as a burden on the country. Adequate empowerment has been made available through education and other community welfare programmes. The Kothari Commission (1966) has observed that education to be given on the grounds of utility. It is the birth right and the proper education enables them to overcome the personal handicap and earn a livelihood for their life.

Justification for Integration

NPE and NEP has emphasized on integration of mild and moderate disability students to be with general community as equal partners enable them to face life with courage and confidence.

- Provide physical facilities and care services will enhance normal learning situation
- Social Integration is the aim of Education
- Give adequate attention to excel in academic achievement
- As there is limited resources available large number of special children must be educated in the common school. Moreover it is expensive in special schools. The facilities provided in special schools should be given in common schools.
- In a UNESCO (1985) study involving 14 countries reported that teaching teachers expressed that they can teach children with mild and moderate disabilities if additional training input are provided to them.

“Destiny of India is now shaped in the classroom”. A conducive classroom environment is an essential key for meaningful inclusion to occur for the benefit of all students. The key aspects in reform of teacher education curriculum is

- Teacher Attitude
- Training needs for inclusive setup
- Need for knowledge and understanding about the Children with Sensory Impairment
- Need for support system
- Needs pertaining to curricular and co-curricular areas.

Collaboration

To establish a welcoming classroom for all students, teamwork is essential. Having a collaborative organisational structure helps schools foster an environment where students feel supported, valued, and valued as individuals. With this strategy, students feel less anxious and stressed out, and they develop more positive attitudes towards the course material and their own learning. It helps in peer relationship thereby contribute to social development. Better critical thinking, reasoning skills and generate novel ideas.

Teachers may better meet the needs of their students from a variety of backgrounds by using a number of easy-to-implement collaborative educational tools. Cooperative learning, peer tutoring and reciprocal teaching is best examples of collaborative instructional strategies that structure student interaction in heterogeneous groups, encourage mutual interdependence and provide for individual accountability.

Cooperative Learning

Through organised contact in small groups, cooperative learning promotes cooperation. Through collaborative projects, students in cooperative learning groups collaborate to strengthen their own knowledge and comprehension. Better communication and social problem-solving abilities are a result.

Present Status and Future Prospects of Inclusive Education

Having qualified educators at the helm of a school is crucial to its and the community's credibility. As a result, the educational system undergoes qualitative transformation thanks to the teacher's crucial role in delivering excellent education, which is dependent on the teacher's attitudes and skills. Efforts made in teacher preparation and professional development have the potential to influence both interest and attitude.

An appropriate teacher education programme is prepared and insisted to be followed by Department of Special Education. The development of a well-organized curriculum for future educators relies heavily on the incorporation of needs-based curricular input. The study conducted by Arbeiter and Hartley (2002) warns that additional resources and special needs of the disabled students are essential for the students to attend school.

Lambe and Bones (2006) while studying student-teachers' attitude towards inclusion, found that strong attachment to and belief in traditional academic selection as preferred education model. Reddy and Sujathamalini (2005) supported the findings of their study revealed that the school teachers possess only moderate and low awareness and organization of need based training programmes for the welfare of the disabled children. Bunch (2000) also supported the discussion and found Canadian educators were having positive views in reference to the pragmatic needs such as professional preparation, more plan and prepare for support from administrators they are found to be crossroads in terms of preferred model of service delivery for students who are differently abled.

The results of Belk (2005) corroborate those of the current research and highlight the importance of the classroom setting, the resource room, curriculum adaptation, effective teaching practices, and evaluation as legitimate concerns for both educators and parents. Ambe (2006) found similar results, lending credence to the idea that educational practices should be rethought to incorporate

different perspectives on course material, pedagogical approaches, and evaluation criteria in place of the traditional “one size fits all” model.

Educational Implications

The findings of present research work emphasizes on the need for:

- Provision for substantial financial assistance.
- Give counselling to the children on nutrition and health problems.
- Assessment pattern.
- Awareness and Sensitizing parents through different community contact programmes.
- Additional support in academic LEARNING for sensorial Impaired children to be given.
- Encourage when these students perform well in co-curricular/sports activities.
- Basic amenities should be special-child friendly.
- There is an urgent need of permanent appointment of special educators and helping staff. as per Government norms..
- There should be opportunity for career advancement for the professionals.
- The curricular content of the pre-service teacher education programme at elementary level should be carefully framed and designed by the experienced special educators
- In the classroom teacher-student ratio should be balanced.
- Special Education paper should be made compulsory.

Other Enrichment Activities

- Community work, especially sensitizing mass.
- Surveying.
- More weight age to the practical's, assignments and also in terms of time, elaboration, marking scheme etc.
- Preparation and publication of teacher's manual containing the knowledge about the disability areas should be initiated to enhance the quality among teachers.
- Teachers should be given the right to participate in all the associated programmes and should be made accountable.

Conclusion

To sum up, special education teacher preparation programmes have scored well on the ability to identify and meet the academic, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs of students with sensory impairments. After that, the most crucial part of the foundational courses is identifying disabilities and conducting functional assessments of such disabilities in order to intervene. For students with visual or auditory impairments, the majority of pedagogy course participants prioritised effective classroom management, curricular transaction, and subject-based technology-based learning management (TLM). Skills in daily life, mobility, communication, adaptation, and the use and maintenance of aids and appliances are among the most significant skill-based practical tasks, according to special education teacher educators. As far as future educators are concerned, keeping records and doing observations will always be important. Involvement of impaired students in a wide range of activities, including athletics, morning assembly, the performing arts, instrumental music, vocal music, etc., was deemed crucial by special education teachers. As an important part of enrichment activities, extracurriculars are also considered. The most crucial aspect of the school experience plan is providing students with sensory impairments with classroom instruction. John Dewey stated “School environment and setting is a very important aspect in context of all-round development of the learners”.

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