Inclusion of Students with Disabilities: A Case Study of South Delhi
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ABSTRACT

Inclusive Education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disability with that of normal ones within the same roof. It brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and seeks to maximize the potential of all students. What are the needs and challenges for achieving the goal of inclusive education? How will an inclusive environment meet the needs of children with disabilities? How quality education can be effectively and efficiently delivered for all children? Therefore, inclusive schools must address the needs of all children in every community and the central and state governments have to manage inclusive classrooms. Keeping in view these questions, this project discusses in detail the concept of inclusive education, case study of primary schools, various participants perception, challenges and measures to implement inclusive education in India.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Disability, Cultures, Ethnicities, Religions, Social Justice, Empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

“Everyone is a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

Around 15 per cent of the total world’s population, or roughly 975 million people, have some kind of disability and around 8 % of people in India or around 70 million persons are with disabilities. The total number of disabled persons in Delhi is 234882 according to the census 2011 of India. Children with disabilities and special needs also have the right to education just as normal children do. India’s education system, with 108 million school-going children in the 6 to 10 age group, is the second largest in the world after China (World Bank, 2003).

Today Inclusive education is considered a human rights issue and hence any kind of exclusion is considered as violation of human rights of the disabled. There was for long a belief that the disabled were best taught in special schools and were therefore prepared separately from the everyday life of schools. The result was that when the disabled students are not members of the appropriate class for their age group and when there is no plan to include them, they are likely to be affected adversely. The Indian government continues to include children special needs under several of their education initiatives, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). This is a government programme that aims at improving and providing quality primary education for all children. There are several national and local NGOs that champion the cause of children with disabilities and provide specific resource centres in support of inclusive education.
There are three basic types of Special Education. 

**Segregated education** occurs when students with disabilities learn completely separate from their peers. Often, especially in "developing" countries, segregated education takes place in the form of special schools created specifically for the education of students with disabilities. Segregated education pinpoints the child as the problem in the system, and as a result, these students will often receive a completely different curriculum, rather than being taught the same curriculum as their peers.

**Integrated education** is similar to inclusive education. Integration is often mistaken for inclusion because students are placed in a mainstream classroom, which is a step towards inclusion.

**Inclusive education** “is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners.” For a school to be inclusive, the attitudes of everyone in the school, including administrators, teachers, and other students, should be positive towards students with disabilities. Inclusive education means that all children, regardless of their ability level, are included in a mainstream classroom, or in the most appropriate or least restrictive environment, that students of all ability levels are taught as equals, and that teachers must adjust their curriculum and teaching methodologies so that all students benefit.

India is a country of many cultures, ethnicities, religions and languages, being an exemplar of unity in diversity. The Constitution, which came into force in 1950 provides not only for fundamental rights of people, but also the right to free education for all individuals, including individuals with disabilities. The 86th amendment to the constitution, Article 21A reads, “The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine. The Government of India developed new legislation in the field of education. The legislation protecting the rights of all individuals with disabilities was only established in the 1990s with the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995, also known as the PWD Act.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995- According to this act, every child is entitled to free and compulsory education until the age of 18. This act however, pushes for inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms with the...
provision that the Government must also provide special equipments or books for free.4

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill-2016-Parliament passed "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016". The Bill will replace the existing PWD Act, 1995, which was enacted 21 years back. Speech and Language Disability and Specific Learning Disability have been added for the first time. Acid Attack Victims have been included. Dwarfism, muscular dystrophy have been indicated as separate class of specified disability. The New categories of disabilities also included three blood disorders, Thalassemia, Hemophilia and Sickle Cell disease. Additional benefits such as reservation in higher education, government jobs, reservation in allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes etc. have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities and those with high support needs. Every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 to 18 years shall have the right to free education. Government funded educational institutions as well as the government recognized institutions will have to provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities.5

The Government of India created the Kothari Commission in 1964, named after it’s chairman, P.S. Kothari. This commission was created because the Government of India wanted to create a plan of action to improve the education system. It recommended that 6% of the nation’s Gross National Product be spent on education, but public expenditure on education continues to be around 3% (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2000). The plan of action created by the Kothari Commission included people with disabilities, but unfortunately, the Government of India never implemented it.

The National Policy for People with Disabilities-2006 is the policy specifically concerned with the education and people with disabilities introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This policy utilizes Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as their main mode of implementation of the policy. According to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) program established by the Government, all children including children with disabilities between the age groups of 6 and 14, are entitled to free elementary education (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2000).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan “Education for All”– the Government of India, in conjunction with the World Bank, created the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), an initiative which translates to “Education for All.” SSA is not a disability-specific program, but rather a disability-inclusive program, with specific aspects that benefit people with disabilities. There are three major parts of this program that benefit children with disabilities–

i. A scholarship is being provided to every child with a disability per year

ii. To include students with a disability in schools and for that each district will formulate its own plan.

iii. The key institutions will be encouraged to collaborate to further support these students with disabilities.

Objective of study

• To know the nature of the inclusive education in the government primary schools of south Delhi.

• To find out the status of enrollment of the disabled students in educational institutions of the south Delhi.

• To find out the views of those working towards and/or associated with inclusive education in schools.

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• To find out the perception and experiences of the parents regarding the inclusion.
• To conduct in-depth case studies of some inclusive schools of south Delhi.

Research questions

• What does the principal know about, and what are his/her perceptions and experiences regarding inclusion in the school?
• What do general education teachers know about, and what are their perceptions and experiences regarding inclusion and dealing with the disabled students?
• What do parents know about, and what are their perceptions and experiences regarding inclusion?

II. Methodology

In this project, I have collected primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from the SDMC primary schools and the secondary data is collected from the government websites. The essential stakeholders’ (principal, parents, teachers) knowledge, perceptions and experiences within the school implementing inclusion were explored. I have adopted sample survey method.

Limitation of the study

Some participants seemed open and forthcoming with regard to their perceptions while others seemed a little nervous or tense, especially when expressing negative aspects or limitations. Due to the small sample and limited number of participants, the results of this study cannot be generalized to a larger population. Overall, the principal, teachers and parents have positive perceptions regarding including children with disabilities.

Tools of the study

• Principal and teacher’s opinion/perception survey
• Parents opinion/perception survey
• School record of child with special need (cwsn) for the present study
• Questionnaire- Specific questionnaires were prepared to gather the relevant data from the various SDMC primary schools.

Sample

The data related to the disabled children/students enrolled in the five primary schools’ of south Delhi have been covered in this study. The school practices of inclusion, and how the principal, teachers and parents of children with disabilities perceived inclusion in the context of school activities have been explored and observed in the study.

Data collection procedure and analysis:

The inclusive schools of south Delhi were surveyed, and data was collected with the help of questionnaires, interviews, and personal observations. Questionnaires were administered to the different stakeholders to elicit their responses and reactions to the concept and practice of Inclusive education in Delhi. Similarly, through observations and interviews of the school Principals and teachers case studies of inclusive schools were also done.

Case Study-1 Status of inclusive education in five primary schools of South Delhi.
Table- 1 Number of disabled students (children with the special needs) enrolled in the year 2015-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Total number of students</th>
<th>Number of students with disabilities</th>
<th>Percentage of disabled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source- Enrollment Registers of the selected schools (primary data).

From the table- 1 it is clear that the enrollment of the Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in the primary schools is very low.

Table- 2 Number of disabled students (children with the special needs) enrolled in the year 2017-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Total number of students</th>
<th>Number of students with disabilities</th>
<th>Percentage of disabled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source- Enrollment Registers of the selected schools (primary data)

From the table- 2 it is clear that the enrollment of the CWSN in the primary school is very low. It indicates that the people are not aware about the inclusive education provided by the schools according to the provisions of the National education policy.

Special educators

Special educators play an important role in the education of children with disabilities. All teachers felt that special educators could guide general educators in handling children with disabilities in academic and social aspects.

Table- 3 Number of special educators in primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N o</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Contractual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Sarai Jullena</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Zakir Nagar-I (Hindi)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Zakir Nagar-II (Hindi)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Zakir Nagar-I (Urdu)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Zakir Nagar-II (Urdu)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source- Zonal office of education, South Delhi (primary data)

From table- 3 it is clear that there is not a single special educator provided by the government in these schools observed by the researcher (primary data).

Table- 4 Number of special educators in specific primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N o</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Name of school</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Contractual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Sarai Kale Khan- I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South Ex Part- I
Kalkaji K Block- I & II
Jasola Village- II
Sri Niwas Puri (B)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Source- Zonal office of education, South Delhi (primary data)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table- 4 it is clear that there are only few special educators in the primary schools of south Delhi.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### III. Findings

Sample surveys and observations were used to understand the implementation of inclusion in primary schools. In addition, the knowledge perceptions and experiences of essential stakeholders regarding inclusive education were also explored in the context of school practices.

- **An introduction to the school**- In India, no child under 14 years of age may be refused admission to a school for his/her religion, caste, gender or disability, according to the Right to Education Act of 2009.

- **The physical setting of the schools and classrooms**-
  The schools were having 2-3 storey building. When I entered one of the primary schools, I immediately saw a small playground with a swing, a slide and a few others pieces of play equipment. In front there were classrooms. Each classroom had rows of long benches; each bench seated 2-3 children.

  - There was no such provision for the reservation of the seats for students with disabilities. The doors of all the primary schools remain open for the children.

  - There were no special arrangements for the disabled students like ramps, washrooms, special educators, wheelchairs etc in the school.

**Findings of study based on teachers’ perceptions (difficulties):**

- According to the Principal there is no such policy for the reservation of the seats for CWSN.
- The children should love their school first. They should love their teacher and only then they can love their subjects.
- The children with disabilities need to learn to socialize with their fellow classmates.
- There are few difficulties while dealing with the disabled children. For example submission of homework on time, following teacher’s order etc.
- The key goal for students with disabilities was holistic development, with less emphasis on scoring marks in examinations and more emphasis on learning appropriate social behaviour.
- Parents should also play a role including children with disabilities in the classroom and looking after their academics.
- Inclusion may not work for all children with disabilities and it would be easier to include children with mild disabilities.
- The teachers did not use the necessary materials because they did not have sufficient teaching materials in the schools.
- Due to larger class size teachers have to do greater work to address the problems of special needs of students on individual basis. This ultimately affects the attitude of teachers negatively towards inclusive education.
- Some of the teachers are not trained in special education.
Findings of study based on parents’ perceptions:

- The teachers were concerned about them and their children, and that they were able to establish a good relationship with the teacher through open communication.
- Parents sometimes accompanied their children in the classroom, if the teacher was unable to manage.
- Teachers encourage their children to try to write and to mingle with the fellow classmates.
- The teachers don't use terms such as “special” to describe children with disabilities in their school.
- Their child depends more on them instead of the teacher for all the school work.
- The teacher had requested them to stay with the children in the classroom.

Finding of study based on the students’ perceptions (only those students are included which are mentally strong):

- Unsuitable seating arrangement, far/close distance between benches and blackboard are not suitable for them.
- Teacher help them in all their work.
- Sometimes it irritates teacher to repeat same thing again and again to the special students.
- Other fellow students sometimes tease them for their disabilities.
- They miss their home and parents while studying in the school and feel alienated in such environment.
- Teachers encourage them for their efforts and understandings.

Inclusion versus special education

Teachers talked about partial inclusion, with additional support of special educators. They indicated that more special education was helpful for students with behaviour disorders and severe disabilities, but that inclusion was the best option as far as social aspects were concerned.

All parents felt that inclusion helped develop social skills in their children but special education was necessary for their child since special educators were better trained to handle their children. According to one teacher- “If you look at a special school, there are children with different abilities. They don’t segregate them according to their abilities; they all sit in the same room, they all do the same thing.”

Challenges of inclusion

1. Lack of awareness regarding persons with disabilities in schools among general public, parents and teachers.
2. Lack of training among teachers.
4. No teacher will have patience for that [inclusion] because they are paid to teach and finish the syllabus.
5. Parents of children without disabilities worry that their children would behave like children with disabilities.
6. There is a lot of difference between taking care of these children with the required knowledge and without it. If the teacher is not properly trained and the child does something that the teacher doesn’t know about, he or she may get angry about why that child is not behaving like other children.

IV. CONCLUSION

Right to Education Act 2009 ensures education to all children irrespective of their caste, religion, ability, and so on. It is essential to build an inclusive society through an inclusive approach. In doing so, we have challenged commonly held beliefs and developed a new set of core assumptions. Inclusion is more than a
method of educating students with disabilities. It stresses that each child, regardless of the intensity and severity of his or her disabilities, is a valued member of society and is capable of participating in that society. A good inclusive education is one that allows all the students to participate in all aspects of classroom equally or close to equal. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires all states parties, educationalists, parents of disabled children and disabled people’s organizations to be actively aware of the changing paradigm around disability. There has been a shift from viewing the problem as one that is caused by the disabled person to identify the barriers to disabled people’s inclusion in society on every level, and then enacting laws, policies, procedures and practices to change the situation around.

Survey data indicates that the principal, teachers and parents share important roles in implementing inclusion. The role of parents is both unique and essential in implementing inclusion. All participants involved in the survey felt that inclusive classrooms provided the appropriate atmosphere for social development of children with disabilities. The participants involved in the survey also identified certain issues or barriers in implementing inclusion of special children in schools. Teachers identified a lack of awareness among parents and teachers, large class sizes, lack of resources, lack of access to information regarding inclusion and lack of support personnel as some of the barriers to inclusion. There is not enough guidance for schools implementing inclusion. At times, teachers felt that schools admitted children with disabilities since it was mandatory.

In India, a majority of children with special needs do not receive any formal education, in spite of the practice of inclusive education in some schools. This is because children with disabilities and learning deficiencies are segregated from mainstream schools and other regular routines and social activities of normal children. Children with special needs have a distinctive experience undergoing inclusive education along with normal, non-disabled classmates.

There are several barriers for providing education to special children in a regular classroom. We can overcome these obstacles by creating more awareness on inclusive education, by schools having the resources and the ability to re-structure their curriculum to cater to all types of students, by recruiting teachers who have the skills and proficiency to meet varying demands within the classroom and by having the support of family. If these changes are implemented, it will increase the confidence of a number of special children to aspire for a valuable education like their normal peers.

**Recommendations**

- Appropriate sensitization, orientation and awareness should be done of all the teachers, parents, students, principals, educational officers and the public at large so that inclusion in general school is made clear to all.
- Inclusive schools should provide special educator for the children with special needs.
- A school-based support team should develop strategies for the whole school to meet the needs of children with special educational needs.
- An inclusive school should enable such methodologies (hearing device, braille etc) to meet the needs of special children.
- Parents should involve themselves in all decision making of the school regarding their children.
- Transport facilities should be arranged for the inclusive schools by the state government in order to encourage the disabled to go to inclusive set up.
- There should be ramps and wheelchair in the school premises.
- Student-oriented components such as medical and educational assessment, books and stationery, uniforms,
✓ transport allowance, support services, assistive devices—audio learning and textbooks in braille, scholarships etc. must be provided to all the disabled students.

✓ Differently abled children should be treated equally as the normal children and instead of looking them in sympathy their talents and abilities should be recognized.

✓ Parents having children without disabilities should develop relationships with parents having children with disabilities.

✓ In-service training programmes of two to three weeks duration for general educators in specific areas of disability should be arranged by the government in schools so that they are made aware of the need and importance of the subject.

✓ Professional counselors should be appointed at the schools to handle the problems of both the regular and the disabled students.

✓ There should be a monitoring body to see that the schools do not refuse admission of the disabled students.

✓ There should be special educators in every school.

✓ Committee should be formed for the effective implementation of inclusive education throughout the state by the government, which studies the way how it is carried out in other states.

✓ The framing of the curriculum for the inclusive schools should be done by the various experts and professionals involved in the field of special education.

✓ The NGO’s should be also involved in the schools as most of their professionals are well experienced and trained.

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