

Role of Teacher in Inclusive Education

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Introduction

The directive principle to guide state policy Article 45 states that "free and compulsory education should be provided for all children until they complete the age of 14". The 93rd amendment to the Indian Constitution passed in December 2001, confirms the Government's commitment to (EFA) or Education for All or SarvShikshaAbhyaan (SSA). The preamble explicitly states that this includes children with disabilities. The SSA provides significance to early childhood care and education and apt intervention for children with special needs. The positive factor is the change combined in the Education Act by including a relevant clause which explains that "ALL" includes children with disabilities. The objective of SSA is to bring all children between 6-14 years in the net of 1-8 elementary, free and compulsory education, keep them in school till they complete the eight year cycle and see that they attain standards of a specified quality. SSA framework clearly states that "SSA will ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. SSA will adopt zero rejection policy so that no child is left out of the education system. It will also support a wide range of approaches, options and strategies for education of children with special needs."

The Draft of Inclusive Education Scheme, MHRD, (2003) "Inclusive Education means all learners, young people with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary preschool provisions, schools, and community educational settings with appropriate network of support service."

Concept-

The concept of inclusive education is a very new concept, which originated the phenomenon of respect for an inherent dignity of all human beings. Inclusive education refers to "to all learners, young people with or without appropriate network of support services". In this, it

is believed that if a child is not able to learn it is not due to the disability of the child but due to the school system. It is responsibility of the school to manage teaching in such a way that the needs of all the Children are met. The success of every educational programme depends on the quality of the teachers and their attitudes. An inclusive curriculum recognizes the need for the schools, to organize with the schools, to organize with the individual differences of students in the mind and adopt flexibility to the enable all students to achieve their goals. Implementation of an Inclusive curriculum would require a number of changes in the present day teaching practices, curriculum content, evaluation procedures and available resources at the school level without which the goal of providing quality of education would remain elusive. It is also important to mobilize support from parents, the community and special schools. All over the world, there is now a growing trend to move away from the special schools model to an 'inclusive education' Model of the education for the disabled children. Inclusive education system views that if a child is not learning, the problem lies in the education system and not in the disabled child. The difficulties arise because of rigid methods and curriculum, inaccessible environment, untrained teachers and poor quality of teaching, lack of proper attitudes on the part of the teachers, lack of support from public agencies etc. thus, the focus shifts from making the education system responsible. The abilities of children vary, some learn fast while some are slow understanding things. The understanding of various subjects also varies from student to student. Some children can understand the concept of mathematics much faster than their counterparts while other may be good in language skills. The teacher's role is not only to teach the subject but also to provide other training such as mobility training, self-care training, preparation of teaching material according to the needs of the disabled children, training in use and maintenance of aids and so on. Teaching strategies in respect of specific disabilities have been indicated. It is often argued that a lack of knowledge on the part of classroom teachers, attribute to a lack of training, is the main barriers to inclusion. Inclusion involves the use of support, the ways in which teachers respond to individual differences during whole class teaching, the choices they make about group work and they utilize specialist knowledge.

Role of Teacher in Inclusive Education-

1. Identification of the children with disabilities in the classroom-

Most important role of teacher in inclusive schools is that, to identify the children with special needs & disabilities. It is important thing to teach the children of different needs. Teacher can also take help of parents, psychiatrists & counselors to identify children with special needs.

2. Accepting the children with disabilities-

Every child is unique. Children have their own strengths and weaknesses. Their development progresses according to certain sequences, but the pace may vary. It is natural that some children may excel in certain areas but have deficiencies in other areas. However, if children display marked problems or difficulties in one or more developmental area & their performance shows significant discrepancies compared with other children of the same age, it is advisable to refer the children for professional assessment. Children progress rapidly in their early years and lots of changes are expected in a year or even a month's time. Because of this, even experts may find it difficult to make a firm diagnosis based on a young child's conditions.

3. Developing positive interaction between normal and disabled children-

It is most important role of teacher to develop positive interaction between all types of students in their classroom. He/she creates these interactions by arranging various types of completions, games, puzzles, techniques, instructional strategies, social programmes.

4. Placing the children in the classroom in proper places so that they feel comfortable and are benefited by the classroom interaction-

Classroom management for inclusive education includes the knowledge of: Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA); basic classroom management theories, methods & techniques for individuals with different learning needs; research-based best practices for effective management of teaching & learning; materials arrangement creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom & organization of aids & support services. The diversity in the classrooms presents a range of management encounters for school teachers. For example, differently abled

students, particularly those identified with emotional and behavior disorder and autism spectrum disorder, may present unique behavioral challenges for these teachers. Along with psycho-social environment, the physical aspects of classroom also exert a great influence on the inclusive classroom environment. The physical environment comprises of aspects such as arrangement of desks, lighting and temperature. The placement of the special needs child in the classroom, in relation to the rest of the students, is also very important. It depends on the severity of the child's disability that the teacher should be able to decide the proximity control.

5. Removing architectural barriers wherever possible so that children with disabilities move independently-

For students with special needs, maintaining a healthy balance of structure and unstructured processes is important. For example, on each student's desk, have a place for everything that is clearly labeled (use words or colors, for instance). Also consider using checklists and help students keep their notebooks organized; teach them how to do so on their own, but also check at the end of each day and offer suggestions for keeping it more organized. On the unstructured side of things, allow students with special needs to change their work area while completing homework or studying and assign tasks that involve moving around the room. For students with special needs and learning disabilities, hearing instructions or following directions can be made difficult if there are too many distractions. Schedule breaks throughout the day and seat students with special needs in an area of the classroom that limits distractions; for example, do not sit these children by a window, in front of an open door, or by the air conditioner, as people walking by or additional noises might be too distracting.

6. Involving the children with disabilities in almost all the activities of the classroom-

Children with learning disabilities often feel like they do not succeed in certain areas, but structuring lessons that lead to successful results is a way to keep them motivated. Provide immediate reinforcement for accomplishments, be consistent with rules and discipline, correct errors and reward students when they make these corrections themselves explain behavioral expectations, and teach and demonstrate appropriate behaviors rather than just expecting

students with special needs to pick them up. While these suggestions are ideal for classroom settings, parents of students with special needs can also implement these principles. Helping children with learning disabilities both in and out of the classroom is the best way to help your students with special needs achieve success.

7. Making suitable adaptation in the curriculum transaction so that the children with disabilities learn according to their ability-

As all children learn in different ways, it is important to make every lesson as multi-sensory as possible. Students with learning disabilities might have difficulty in one area, while they might excel in another. For example, use both visual and auditory cues. Create opportunities for tactile experiences. You might need to use physical cues, such as a light touch, when a student might get distracted or inattentive. Get creative with your lesson plans, and students with special needs will appreciate the opportunity to use their imaginations or try something new; use a balance of structure and familiar lessons with original content.

8. Collaborating with medical and physiological panels, social works, parents and special teachers-

Collaboration is an interactive process that enables people with diverse expertise to produce creative solutions to commonly defined problems. An ever increasing diversity in the classrooms has made it necessary for regular classroom teachers to work with special education teachers, school psychologists, Para-professionals parents of students with disabilities, and instructional assistants. The joint effort in dealing with the problems creating solutions would enhance the chances of the success of the programme or the course. Their shared expertise and shared ownership of problems would help the educators to deal with the problems collaboratively, rather in isolation.

9. Construction of achievement and diagnostic tool-

The main decision related to diagnosis is eligibility for special education services. To some extent, regular school teachers will play a role in making placement decisions. Although the main decisions are made by administrators and school psychologists regarding the placement, regular classroom teachers will assist them in making such a decision as part of the multidisciplinary team. Performance measures relate to the student's achievement in content

areas. Attitudinal measures relate to differently abled student's self-concept and their attitudes toward their teachers and non-disabled peers. Process measures include the types of interactions differently abled students have with their teachers and peers. These assessments allow differently abled students to construct a response, create a product or demonstrate what they understand and can do. Friend and Alternate assessments such as portfolio assessments are also effective ways of evaluating differently abled students.

10. Adaptation in evaluation for children with special needs-

The process of using testing and other formal and informal means of evaluation to make educational decisions is one of the most vital skills for a regular classroom teacher to have in the implementation of inclusive education programs. The teacher has to employ both, basic skills such as gathering, learning and background information of differently abled students and also highly specialized skills such as selecting, administering, scoring and interpreting standardized measurement instruments. Regular school teachers need to be knowledgeable about different kinds of evaluation methods in order to determine the learning outcomes of differently abled students. They need to demonstrate competency in performance-based assessments, portfolios and curriculum-based assessments. A performance-based assessment allows teachers to assess students' understanding and proficiency. Curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) also provide teachers with information on the demands of instructional tasks and allow them to determine the content and pace of an instructional program. Thus, in addition to providing information on a student's progress, CBAs help regular school teachers to match specific instructional practices and materials to a disabled student's learning needs which results in improved performance on school related tasks. Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) assumes evaluation as a routine activities and exercise of teaching learning process and it includes all aspects of pupil's growth such as intellectual, physical, personal- qualities, social, interests, attitudes and values through using a variety of tools and techniques by a teacher. CCE is a most suitable procedure due to its fundamental principles of flexibility, functionality, accountability and economy in evaluating a child with disability in an inclusive setting.

11. Providing remedial instruction to the children who require it-

This skill is at the heart of all the competencies that regular teachers need to exhibit while working with diverse student population. These skills are the ones that they should use on a daily basis to provide appropriate instruction to special needs students. A number of specific instructional techniques that regular classroom teachers would require to be competent in include- differentiated instruction, activity based and peer tutoring, experiential learning and collaborative learning. Each one of them has been tested in the field and validated to demonstrate their effectiveness. Other practices that have also been field tested with students with special needs include response cards, guided notes, and error correction and time trials.

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