

## REVAMPING TEACHER EDUCATION: CURRICULUM IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

*Inclusion in education involves the process of increasing the participation of students in and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools. It involves restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in their locality. Inclusion is a dynamic process that is constantly evolving as it accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions and these challenges have to be met by creating the child centred pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children. For empowering the pupil teachers, restructuring the curriculum of teacher education will be the stepping stone for inclusive education. Under this context the present paper attempts to establish a framework for the knowledge, understanding and skills required by teachers to support and ensure educational inclusion.*

**Keyword:** Social Darwinism, Disability, Inclusive Education.

### Introduction

*“All children and young people of the world, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, with their hopes and expectations, have the right to education. It is not our education system that have a right to a certain type of children. Therefore, it is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children.”*

*B. Lindqvist, UN-Rapporteur, 1994*

Education is a lifelong process involving many planned and unplanned experiences that enable children and adults alike to develop and learn through interaction with the society and culture in which they live. It involves experiences at all stages of life, from infancy to old age. Education also involves adaptations to society and culture. With all the combinations of life events, adaptation will mean that each person is subjected to unique set of learning and problem solving experiences that constitute an understanding of the world and the events that take place in it. There are some children who, for some reason, are unable to take full advantage of education as it is normally offered. These are the children with special need. When we go in the history of education of special need children, there were no provisions of education. In fact, development is a plant with slow growth. Similarly the plant of special education has been nourished to foster a long gradual change in interests, attitude and behaviour of people which made education essential, accessible and advantageous for people with different disabilities.

### Historical Perspectives

In the earlier times, the disabled was protected with the parental instinct and also made able to cope with disability. All these were through the informal education. In course of time there was a significant change in

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the people's attitude and they viewed the disability as a punishment of God . It was based on the '**Sin Theory**'; therefore the result was the expulsion of such people from the society. It was the '**Social Darwinism**' phase. The modern period of special education emanated from the '**Educational Darwinism**', which meant for attitudinal change in '**Social Darwinism**' into education for disabled. But there was no such provision of education for them rather the attitude was full of sympathy. This period laid the foundation of organized care and education with the emergence of humanity and charitable organizations of people in many corners of the world.

### **Development in Modern India**

In course of time in first 3 decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century, global change in society led to development in modern education and special education to much extent. Asylums were opened and training centres were established.

The outset of the constitutional obligations regarding the special education of universalisation of education in the age group of 6-14 years under Article(41) also envisages that the state shall 'within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provisions for the special child, as far as possible in the normal schools. The National Policy on Education (NPE) of India came into existence in 1968 but it became ineffective as regard to its formulation and lacking adequate financial and organizational support. After Nationwide discussion, the New National Policy on Education (NPE) was formulated in 1986. The main aim of this policy was to integrate the differently abled children with the general community as equal partners and to prepare them to face the life with certitude and fortitude.

### **Inclusive Education: Policy and Legislative Frameworks**

#### **According to NCF 2005**

*"A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout our education system. The participation of all children needs to be ensured in all spheres of their life in and outside the school. Schools need to become centres that prepare children for life and ensure that all children, especially the differently abled, children from marginalised sections, and children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit of this critical area of education".\**

Inclusion is a quite broader term which is not just about providing students with disabilities access to regular classrooms rather it means providing all children regardless of race, language, class and disability, equitable and effective education that responds to their needs as learners. At the core of inclusive education is the basic right to education which is rooted in human rights treaties. Inclusive education brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and seek to maximize the potential of all

students. Inclusion is an effort to make sure that diverse learners – those with disabilities, different languages and cultures, different homes and family lives, different interests and ways of learning – are exposed to teaching strategies that reach them as individual learners.

#### **The PWD ACT, 1995 The Person with Disabilities**

The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 provides for access to free education in an appropriate environment for children with disabilities till they attain the age of 18 years. The educational needs of disabled persons between the ages of 14 and 18 will be covered through a range of interventions including a Revised Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD) at an enhanced outlay of Rs. 1,000 Crores. Whereas under the Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) as it stands at present, children with disabilities are placed in a regular school without making any changes in the school to accommodate and support diverse needs, the revised IECYD will, in contrast, modify the existing physical

infrastructure and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of all children including Children with Special Needs.

**The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995** further provides 3 % reservation in all institutions receiving funds from Government for persons with disabilities. The implementation of these provisions in educational institutions will be taken up as a priority activity under the Action Plan. The fulfilment of the reservation in schools admissions will however not be a criterion for denial of admission of other children with disabilities.

All the schools in the country will be made disabled friendly by 2020 and all educational institutions including hostels, libraries, laboratories and buildings will have barrier free access for the disabled. Special attention will be given for the availability of Study material for the disabled and Talking Text Books, Reading Machines and computers with speech software will be introduced progressively in addition to an adequate number of Braille books. An adequate number of sign language interpreters, transcription services and a loop induction system will be introduced for the hearing handicapped students. Taking into account the special transportation needs of disabled college students, Universities will be encouraged to introduce Special shuttle services for the disabled.

### **The Right To Education Act - 2009**

Right to Education Act 2009 is developed to move a step ahead in the direction of 100% literacy in India. It is a concept which incorporates free elementary education to every child of the age of six to fourteen years and ensures that the child belonging to weaker section and the child belonging to disadvantaged group are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any grounds. The Act has to be implemented by 2015.

There are three basic predominating issues in current educational scenario-

- Issue of access to education by all the children,
- Retention and guarantee for their success and
- Quality in education

### **Role of Teacher in Inclusive Set up of Education**

Students in inclusive classrooms have wide range of diversified needs as they are different in terms of abilities and backgrounds. It creates a wide range of diversity in the classroom and demands different inputs, such as

- Each student requires individual attention and continuous support of the teacher.
- Inclusive classrooms demands flexible learning as each student has a different pace and style of learning.
- Teacher has to be multifunctional in the classroom – they perform the role of teacher, a counsellor, a guide, a friend, a researcher, a resource person, an information provider and above all a continuous learner who all the times keep on updating his/her knowledge.

*Some interesting data and facts revealed by the recent study of SSA throw light on the crucial issues for strategic interventions:*

- More than 3 million children with disabilities have been enrolled in general schools and this constitutes around 78% children of school going population and therefore nearly 22% of children with disabilities are yet to be enrolled.
- Though general teachers are important stakeholders in the process of inclusion, their knowledge about the disability is not adequate to handle children with disability. Even if a Special Educator is there in a school

he is trained in single disability where as we are talking of inclusive classrooms of children which may have several disabilities.

- Exclusion of Special Teachers form the general system of education in most States of India has made it difficult rather impossible for their absorption in mainstream. Special Teachers continue to be a project mode and draw consolidated salaries from the Central Government.
- Poor linkages at all levels i.e. Administrators, Special Educators, Disability Cells, EVGCs, State and District Coordinators, NCERT, SCERT, Special Schools and NGOs etc.
- UNESCO indicates that there are nearly 77 million children who are out of school system and one-third of them are expected to be children with disabilities. Recent initiatives and policy decision under RTE Act has made a breakthrough in this context by making provision for two Special Educators in each school as compulsory and imparting training to General Teachers in Inclusive Education for developing an understanding towards inclusive classrooms in mainstream.
- Here the role of Teacher Training Institutes for mass training of teachers' gains utmost importance and at the same time poses a challenge to fill this Training Gap. Though Inclusion emerges as the Cost-effective Model, there are local specific factors which determine a particular approach to inclusion and therefore, factors such as accessibility, availability of trained human resource, parental support, peer-group support etc. should be taken in to account for achieving goals of EFA.

#### PROFILE OF DISTRICT SOUTH- AT A GLANCE

S.No.	Particulars	Delhi	District South
1	<b>Tehsil</b>	27	1. Defence Colony 2. Haus Khas 3. Kalkaji
2	<b>Area (Sq. Km.)</b>	1483	250(16.86% of Delhi)
3	<b>Population (2011)</b>		
	Total	1,67,53,235	27,33,752
	Male	89,76,410	14,70,288
	Female	77,76,825	12,63,464
	Population of District South is 16.3% of Delhi		
4	<b>Density (per Sq. Km.)</b>	11,297	10,935{362 people (per Sq. Km.) less than Delhi}
5	<b>Decadal Population Growth Rate</b>		
	(1991-2001)	47.2 %	50.92%(3.90% larger than Delhi)
	(2001-2011)	21.00%	20.59%(0.41% less than Delhi)

In 2001-11 decadal population growth rate reduced to less than half of previous growth rate. Previous decadal growth rate of District South was larger than Delhi but in 2001-2011 it has been lesser than Delhi.

**6 Sex Ratio (per 1000)**

2011	866 (per 1000)	859 {7 Females (per 1000 males) less than Delhi}
2001	821( per 1000)	797{24 Females (per 1000 males) less than Delhi}

In 2011 sex ratio increased in District South as well as Delhi. In District South, 62 females (per 1000 male) are more than last decade.

**7 Literacy Rate (2011)**

Total	86.34%	87.03%(0.69% larger than Delhi)
Male	91.03%	92.20%(1.17% larger than Delhi)
Female	80.93%	80.99%(0.06% larger than Delhi)

**8 No. of Schools**

DOE	934	142
DOE Aided	209	17
DOE Unaided	1236	117
KVS	41	06
MCD	1726	273
MCD Aided	44	08
MCD Unaided	753	143
NDMC	87	Nil
NDMC Aided	03	Nil
NDMC Unaided	04	Nil
DCB	06	Nil
JNV	02	Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>5045</b>	<b>706(13.99% of Delhi)</b>

**9 No. of Children With Special Need (CWSN)**

Blind	196	38(19.39% of Delhi)
Visually Impaired	45	02(00.04% of Delhi)
Low vision	3,320	277(08.34% of Delhi)
Hearing Impaired	499	63(12.63% of Delhi)
Ortho Handicaps	4,222	652(15.44% of Delhi)

Mental Retardation	270	65(24.07% of Delhi)
Mental Illness	31	04(12.90% of Delhi)
Slow Learner	3,464	401(11.58% of Delhi)
Autism	12	05(41.67% of Delhi)
Cerebral Palsy	69	13(18.84% of Delhi)
Speech Impaired	498	68(13.65% of Delhi)
<i>Learning Disability</i>	418	157(37.56% of Delhi)
Multiple Disability	244	33(13.52% of Delhi)
Leprosy cured	08	Nil

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<b>Total (DOE + MCD)</b>	<b>13,296</b>	<b>1,778(13.37% of Delhi)</b>
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**Source:**

1. Census of India, 2001 & 2011
2. Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Office of Chief Registrar, Delhi
3. IEDSS, Lajpat Nagar, Delhi
4. DURC, Moti Bagh

**From table it can be seen that :**

Population of District South is 16.3% of Delhi.

In 2001-11 decadal population growth rate reduced to less than half of previous growth rate. Previous decadal growth rate of District South was larger than Delhi but in 2001-2011 it has been lesser than Delhi.

In 2011 sex ratio increased in District South as well as Delhi.

In District South, 62 females (per 1000 male) are more than last decade.

13.99% of schools of Delhi are in South District. CWSN ( blind 19.39% , Visually Impaired 00.04%, children with Low Vision 08.34%, Hearing Impaired 12.63%,Mentally Retarded24.07%, Mentally ill 12.90%, Slow Learners 11.58%, Autistic 41.67% ,Cerebral Palsy 18.84%, Speech Impaired13.65%, Learning Disable 37.56%, Multiple disabled13.52%, Leprosy Cured Nil) in District South are 13.37% of Delhi.

**Teacher Education and Implementation of Inclusive Education:**

In India, secondary teachers are prepared through Pre Service Teacher Education Programmes, one year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) programme. The course is being run largely by more than ten thousands teacher training institutions and universities where as the primary teachers are trained under two years diploma course which are run by Government and private DIETs (District Institute of Education and Training) under State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT ). In India, National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), University Grant Commission (UGC) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) are responsible for preparing B.Ed curriculum. The curriculum was revised during 1998, 2002,2005 and 2009. The B.Ed and DIET programmes have the **Special Education** paper as optional. Thus this intergroup choice leaves little scope for the paper to be chosen by the pupil teachers as their elective option. Besides this the teacher educators have reported that pupil teacher do not opt for the paper: reasons are many

like- absence of experts in the teaching faculty to teach this paper, comprehensive coverage of this paper as the teacher educators generally do not feel comfortable due to their limited orientation in the field of disability. Another potent reason as indicated by them is that special children are rarely present in regular stream: so why to add to the work load of pupil teachers. This notion is common among the teacher educator as well as the pupil teacher. Thus the issues again question marks the adequacy, appropriateness and sufficiency of PSTE curriculum under consideration for preparing teachers to fulfil the requirement of inclusive set up of education. In our country all professionals like doctors advocates are trained on those skills which are required by their profession, but the plinth of human development, education, is being left with untrained teachers. There is an urgent need to renovate teacher education curriculum regarding pedagogy and updated learning methodologies. Teachers in inclusive classroom are asked to vary their teaching strategies according to the need of the child but in reality this curriculum is not empowering the pupil teachers to handle even the conventional classrooms. The curriculum of teacher education must focus on practical education; life skills and methodologies to satisfy each and every learner irrespective of his/her diversities.

### **Conclusion**

Thus the data reveals that there is a dire necessity and immediate need of restructuring and reorganising the pre-service teacher education curriculum. The present form of Pre Service Teacher Education programme and the curriculum help teachers least to deal with the challenges of actual working conditions. The training programmes should contain more application based approaches and based on the various learning styles already researched, tested and adopted.

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