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## MOVING FORWARD IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: APPROACHES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES

### Abstract

The current research paper examines approaches and opportunities for learners with specific educational demands in an effective inclusive education. It differentiates inclusive education from special education and segregation and goes deeply to provide a comprehensive meaning to the term inclusion. This conceptual research aims to describe and clarify Inclusive education as a concept, which necessitates different approaches to be realized. Inclusion supports the right that every child is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences to education. Some of the benefits of this inclusive education for both children and families include multicultural learning environment in which learners with disabilities develop a positive understanding of themselves and others, socialization and learning by being together, and also the development of the child's academic skills. Approaches identified for suitable inclusive education are placing the child in an appropriate place, practicing cooperative learning with no special classes or separate schools. Obstacles can be overcome by breeding awareness on what inclusion is and making inclusion a reality's benefits should be supported by the society, schools and families. This paper suggests that inclusive education keeping deserves to be taken into consideration in re-structuring the curriculum to meet varying needs within the classroom.

**Keywords:** Inclusion, inclusive education, learners with disabilities, special classes

### 1. Introduction

The main aim of all educational systems across the world is to provide an effective education for children and young generations. There is a big interest in the concept of *inclusive education*. Yet, the field remains ambiguous in several countries. In some territories, inclusion is still considered as an approach to serve individuals with disabilities within general education environments. Internationally, still, it is thought as advantage made to ensure and provide all learners with equal chances for learning though being different. It assumes that the main objective of inclusive education is to eradicate social exclusion that is a result of attitudes and forms of diversity in race, religion, ability, class, ethnicity, language, and gender in a society.

### 2. The Background of Inclusive Education

The 'Salamanca Statement' used in the 'World Conference on Special Educational Needs: Access and Quality' urged all countries to adopt as a compulsory policy the principles of inclusive education, enrolling all children in formal schools, unless there are real reasons for doing otherwise (UNESCO, 2000) There are two distinct views on inclusive education: one concerning the developed countries and the other trying to meet the needs and circumstances in the developing ones. In well-developed countries, education is more inclusive for girls, the disadvantaged and the ethnic and minor groups. Children With disabilities - physical, mental, learning difficulties - are traditionally put at an early age in specialized institutions. Yet, nowadays, they are recommended to formal schools with an inclusive system. Therefore, the

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policy on inclusive education in such countries consists mostly on the extension of special education, or a reform in special education. The underlying argument in this orientation has been that children's disabilities are due to medical problems which need to be solved in order to fit them in the regular education. According to recent literature dealing with inclusive education, schools should meet all the needs of the children and adapt to their learning differences. Ainscow (2005) dealt with the school reforms approaches to improve the practices of inclusion. Similarly, Sharma (2014) described the inclusion as being a process by which an institution attempts to respond to all learners as individuals by reforming its curricular organization and provision. Throughout this action, it establishes its ability to accept all those from the local community who wish to attend and, henceforth, it decreases the exclusion of others. In this perspective, they will not need special schools or private ones.

### **3. Meaning of Inclusion**

Inclusion has recently become a very crucial factor, thought, and quality of education all over the globe (Sharma, 2015). Even if children face learning difficulties, they surely should be given a chance to get an education that assists them to improve themselves and their communities as well. James (2015) supported Sharma's definition. He added that inclusive education objective is ensuring quality in education through accepting and respecting diversity, taking every individual into consideration, especially disabled students so as to give up any disregard or discrimination. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson(2006) explained that there are two forms of inclusive education: a narrow inclusion and a broad one. The narrow inclusion insists on a specific minority of individuals or learners whilst the broad inclusion insists on "diversity and how schools could respond to these diverse students and others in the society" (p. 21)

This clutter that exists within the area generally arises from the fact that the concept of inclusive education can be defined differently (Ainscow, Farrell & Tweddle, 2000). It is not surprising, thus, that inclusion development remains passive in different territories. For illustration, in her analysis of educational plans in the Asia region, Ahuja (2005) noted that the theme of inclusive education is always absent. In fact, special schools and residential centers were usually built as charitable places where many disadvantaged children and marginalized individuals meet their needs and get the necessary assistance. (United Nations, 2005).

Further, it is also important to clarify that, even in the modern world, not all practitioners of education have employed the inclusive philosophy and even some are against the concept (Brantlinger, 1997). Indeed, some disability-focused organizations still call upon separated or, 'special' reactions. Many organizations of deaf people, for instance, consider separate providences as the only available method to learn the sign language to get the access to deaf education (sharma,2014). However, the development of special units within the formal school is considered as a way of providing special knowledge, treatment and help to the children whose needs are difficult to adjust in regular classrooms. Therefore, the area of inclusive education is considered as being complicated and difficult to be fully-realized with all these uncertainties and contradictions. Yet throughout the world, hard efforts are made to provide effective educational services for all children, whatever their features and needs, and established by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 2000), the broad trend is towards making these services within the context of regular educational provision. Indeed, this surely will lead to a retrospect of the coming roles and objectives of specialists throughout the education curricula, involving those who work in private or special education. And consequently this has a great significance for the direction of international policies in the field of inclusion.

#### **4. Approaches to Develop Inclusive Education**

In order to successfully offer an inclusive education program Ainscow et al, (2006) have developed a conceptual design based on what standard research calls for, which includes a set of items which, according to them, should be seen as ideals aspirations against the existing regular services in the field. For each item or theme there are four performance indicators that all practitioners have to follow.

##### ***4. 1. The Concepts' belief***

Individuals will develop Inclusive educational system providing that they consider such basic concepts:

- Inclusion is a broad principle that highlights all educational policies and practices.
- The curriculum and its associated evaluation systems are framed to involve all learners.
- All infrastructures that work with children, such as health and social organizations adopt and support the policy of inclusive education development.
- Programs are improved to ensure the presence and achievement of regular education.

##### ***4. 2. The Running Policy***

In an educational system that is inclusive:

- The development of inclusive education is well described in approach documents and decisions.
- The staff must provide clear leadership on inclusion.
- Leaders present equitable policy for the patronage of inclusion in schools and institutions.
- Leaders at all stages should challenge and eradicate non-inclusive actions in schools

##### ***4. 3. Components and Methods***

In an educational system which is inclusive:

- There is high quality encouragement for disabled groups of children.
- All institutions and schools dealing with children with disabilities must coordinate together to ensure inclusive practices.
- All human and financial resources are used and produced for the privilege of learners.
- There is still an important role for special provision, special schools and centers in developing inclusive education.

##### ***4. 4. Practical Services***

In an educational program that is inclusive:

- Schools have strategies for supporting the help, involvement and performance of all learners from their regular communities.
- Schools encourage vulnerable learners who suffer from marginalization and exclusion
- Trainee teachers are well-prepared for dealing with them.
- Teachers have opportunities to participate in promoting professional development regarding inclusion.

This framework provides a set of guidelines for the development of an education system. Yet, it requires a real involvement of students with disabilities and their families. Through this pattern, evident plans can be made to promote inclusion policy and practice forward.

#### **5. Challenges of Inclusive Education:**

There exist different challenges of inclusion in education due to several reasons. Yet, the most common problems are as follows:

##### ***5.1. Families and Negative Behaviours in Society***

People have to possess good motives and intentions about practicing inclusive education both at school and in the society. Ofori (2017) argued that individuals, who have a positive understanding and right use of inclusive education, will develop positive attitudes towards

inclusion. Hence, implementing and practicing inclusive education will become easier for them. Thus, everyone needs to know the significance of inclusive education first. Adopting a positive attitude towards disabilities begins within the family. Most importantly, Asamoah (2016) claimed that parents must treat their disabled children positively, and that they also need to have a great will to help them; if so, they will be more open to send them to regular schools and get a quality education. Meanwhile, this may not be accepted for some parents when they find it hard to show their children publically because they fear that people laugh at them (Ofori). In addition, the parents' voice needs to be respected. The Salamanca Statement urges them to be responsible for their children and try to aid them to overcome these disabilities. All these promote inclusive education. The Salamanca Statement mentions that "the governments should provide parental partnership with parents to contribute to the development and decision making to enhance the education of their disabled children" (UNESCO, 2000). In consideration of this, the public and families have to improve behavior towards disabled children to generate an effective practice of inclusion in schools.

### ***5.2. Teacher's Negative Attitude***

It is also important to consider the teachers' approach though it's challenging for them when they are not well-trained. Teachers should also care for children with special needs and try to undergo them in regular schools (Agbenyega, 2014). In relation with discussing teachers' attitude and providing them with training, it will be always great to explore ideas about tools that train teachers more to promote enhancement of supportive attitudes towards involving children with disabilities.

### ***5.3. Lack of Facilities and Materials***

If teachers have to develop an encouraging attitude towards inclusive education, they ought to be first informed, trained assisted by the policy makers. The government should ensure infrastructures with the necessary resources and materials to help the use and practice of this program. Proper facilities, equipment, and tools need to be provided in the place to facilitate for instructors to teach disabled children (Kuyini, 2010). It is compulsory to provide the different resources to grant more opportunities for disabled children to learn. In fact, this is part of the charitable organization to help disabled children into proper schools and to bring in facilities needed to improve their learning (Sharma, 2015). Furthermore, Alhassan (2014) mentioned that teachers often develop a negative attitude towards inclusion because of the problem of a huge class- number in some schools. Having more than 10 or 20 students in a classroom makes it so difficult for teachers to manage and include all students, especially disabled ones.

## **6. Conclusion**

Educational reform in the globe has sparked an inclusive movement based on needs, rights, diversity, and mainly equity. The interest has obviously shifted towards establishing educational systems that provide appropriate accommodations to include all learners, regardless of their ability, within regular schooling. Within inclusive schooling, teachers and educators must pay more attention to teacher preparation for inclusive education and learners' positive attitudes towards it. Most importantly, we are all concerned with disabled children; families, teachers, and researchers. Thus we need to adopt the above approaches to overcome all types of challenges. In a summary, there is a need to acknowledge the benefits and possible opportunities inclusive education brings about, most importantly, in term of diversity and equity in education through providing disabled learners with opportunity to learn the skills that will be effective for their future.

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