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Role of Inclusive Education and Training of Children with Disabilities

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Abstract

The education and training of children with disabilities is an integral part of building an inclusive society. This paper examines the historical evolution, current practices, challenges, and future prospects related to educating children with disabilities. It explores international conventions, national policies, teaching strategies, inclusive education, and the role of assistive technologies in supporting learning. The aim is to highlight the importance of equal access to quality education for all children, regardless of their physical, sensory, intellectual, or developmental differences. Inclusive education is essential for the overall development of children with special needs (CWSN) as it promotes equal learning opportunities in a shared environment. By studying alongside their peers, CWSN develop academic skills, communication abilities, and social interactions in a natural setting, which enhances their confidence and self-esteem.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Children with Disabilities, Equal Access, Assistive Technologies, Teaching Strategies, Policy Frameworks*

Introduction

Inclusive education emphasizes the right of every child, including those with disabilities, to receive quality education in a mainstream setting. Despite global commitments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), millions of children with disabilities remain out of school or receive substandard education. This paper explores how education and training can be structured to support their academic, social, and vocational development. Inclusive education that includes children with disabilities in mainstream

classrooms with appropriate support. Some studies show inclusive settings can improve social skills, academic outcomes, and self-esteem for children with disabilities (UNESCO, 2020; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). Education is a basic human right. Children with special needs (CWSN) deserve the same access to education as their peers. It aligns with UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 (India).

Historical Background and Policy Framework

Global Perspective

The Salamanca Statement (1994) marked a global commitment to inclusive education. It called for schools to accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic, or other conditions.

National Policies (India as Example)

India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasize inclusive and equitable education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Samagra Shiksha schemes also promote inclusive practices.

Types of Disabilities and Educational Needs

Sensory Disabilities: Hearing or visual impairments require Braille, sign language, audio aids, etc.

Intellectual Disabilities: Need simplified instruction, repetition, and individualized learning plans.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Require structured environments and behavior therapies.

Physical Disabilities: Require accessibility, assistive devices, and sometimes caregiver support.

Approaches to Education and Training

Education plays a vital role in the development and empowerment of children with special needs (CWSN). It not only provides them with academic knowledge but also fosters their emotional, social, and life skills, helping them become independent and confident individuals. Through inclusive and supportive education, CWSN gain equal opportunities to participate in learning alongside their peers, which enhances their sense of belonging and self-worth. Access to quality education ensures that their unique needs are addressed through specialized teaching strategies, assistive technologies, and individualized learning plans. Furthermore, education helps break down societal barriers and stigma associated with disabilities, promoting a more inclusive and accepting society. Ultimately, educating CWSN is essential for ensuring their rights, improving their quality of life, and enabling their active participation in community and national development. Inclusive education involves educating children with disabilities alongside their peers in regular classrooms, using adaptations and supports. These

are institutions tailored to specific disabilities, offering specialized staff and infrastructure. For children with severe disabilities, home or community-based models may be necessary. Education must also focus on preparing children for independent living and employment.

Teaching Strategies and Pedagogical Tools

Inclusion fosters a sense of belonging and acceptance, reducing feelings of isolation and discrimination. It also helps children without disabilities to develop empathy, respect, and understanding. Inclusive classrooms encourage cooperation, teamwork, and mutual support, benefiting all students. Moreover, inclusive education ensures that the unique learning needs of CWSN are addressed through individualized support, adapted teaching methods, and assistive technologies. This holistic approach contributes to their cognitive, emotional, and social growth, preparing them for independent living and active participation in society.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): Multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression.

Individualized Education Plans (IEPs): Custom learning goals and evaluation methods.

Assistive Technologies: Screen readers, AAC devices, mobility aids.

Multisensory Teaching: Visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic learning modes.

Peer Tutoring and Cooperative Learning: Promotes inclusion and understanding.

Challenges in Education of Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities face several challenges in accessing quality education. One of the major issues is the lack of inclusive infrastructure and accessible learning environments in many schools. Inadequate training of teachers to handle diverse learning needs further limits effective instruction and support for these students. Many educational institutions lack specialized teaching materials, assistive technologies, and individualized education plans (IEPs) essential for addressing the unique needs of each child. Additionally, societal attitudes and stigma surrounding disability often lead to discrimination and exclusion, affecting the self-esteem and participation of children with disabilities. Transportation barriers, financial constraints, and lack of parental awareness also contribute to low enrollment and high dropout rates. These challenges highlight the urgent need for systemic reforms and increased investment to ensure that every child, regardless of ability, receives equitable and quality education.

- Stigma and Discrimination
- Inaccessible Infrastructure
- Lack of Trained Teachers
- Insufficient Learning Materials and Technologies

- Low Awareness Among Parents and Communities
- Fragmented Policy Implementation

Role of Teachers and Training Programs in Education of Children with Disabilities:

Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring the successful education of children with disabilities. They are not only facilitators of academic learning but also key supporters in the social and emotional development of these children. To fulfill this role effectively, teachers need specialized training to understand various types of disabilities and to implement inclusive teaching strategies. Training programs equip educators with skills such as differentiated instruction, classroom management, use of assistive technology, and development of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). These programs also promote positive attitudes and awareness about inclusive education. Continuous professional development enables teachers to stay updated with best practices and adapt to the diverse needs of learners. Ultimately, well-trained and sensitive teachers create an inclusive, supportive, and engaging classroom environment that empowers children with disabilities to reach their full potential. Teachers play a central role in implementing inclusive education. Training programs must focus on:

- Disability awareness and sensitivity
- Inclusive classroom management
- Use of adaptive tools and IEPs
- Collaborating with parents and therapists
- Continuous professional development

Impact of Technology on Inclusive Education as follows-

1. EdTech Solutions: Platforms like Microsoft Immersive Reader, Google Classroom accessibility tools.
2. Mobile Applications: Apps for speech therapy, learning sign language, and visual schedules
3. Remote Learning: Expands reach but raises concerns on access equity
4. Case of a Visually Impaired Student in Mainstream School
5. Describes adaptation through Braille books, peer support, and digital tools like screen readers.
6. Vocational Training Center for Students with Intellectual Disabilities
7. Focuses on cooking, gardening, and craftwork leading to employment opportunities.

Conclusion

The education and training of children with disabilities is a moral, legal, and developmental imperative. Inclusion is not only about access but also about participation and achievement. Holistic policies, trained educators, supportive environments, and technological innovation are key to transforming education into a tool for empowerment. Educational implications for children with disabilities emphasize the need for inclusive, supportive, and accessible learning environments that cater to diverse needs. These children often require individualized education plans (IEPs), specialized teaching strategies, and appropriate assistive technologies to help them engage meaningfully with the curriculum. Teachers must be trained to recognize and accommodate various disabilities—whether physical, sensory, intellectual, or emotional—ensuring equal opportunities for participation and learning. Furthermore, inclusive education fosters peer interaction and reduces stigma, promoting empathy and social integration. A flexible, child-centered approach, combined with collaboration among educators, parents, and specialists, is essential to unlocking the full potential of CwDs and ensuring their right to quality education.

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