

## **Inclusive School Education**

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### **Abstract**

*Inclusive education is a concept that focuses the participation of all students. It has educational concern of all, including challenged, deprived and marginalized. Proper education of Disabled, SC, ST, Girls and Other Weaker Sections of the society is the real purpose of inclusive education. For the success and development of any society, nation & the mankind Inclusive Democracy & Inclusive Society is essential, which cannot be thought without Inclusive School Education. Despite governments policy, planning and programmers Exclusion is equally vibrant in school education. It can be checked only if besides Formal system of education, Non-formal and Informal also operate significantly. Lack of education is itself the vital cause of Exclusion in school education. As wards of upper layer of the community are not associated with the community schools, they do not contribute the schools as per their strength to manage Inclusion in school education. Policy and Planning do favour selective discrimination in favour of the marginalized, but the implementation is not as per the plan. India still has a large number of first generation learners. The Panchayati Raj Institution is also not working due to lack of education among the members of the community. Uneducated weaker sections of the society are not enjoying the benefit provided to them by the government. Plans, programmers and institutions like Right to Education, Mid-Day-Meal, SSA, UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, European Commission, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Village Education Committee, Operation Black Board, Open Schooling, etc. have not done much due to non-education & Exclusion from school education of a large section of the society. Inclusive School Education has wider impact on the development of an individual, a society, a nation and the mankind. Without inclusive education, we cannot attain peak of any type of development-Economic, Political, Social, Cultural, Emotional, Environmental, Intellectual. The well to do & educated individuals, the community, the NGOs, the state governments, the central government along with proper planning & policy and due implementation of various schemes together, can manage inclusive school education for the healthy mankind and balanced society.*

*Creation of an inclusive set-up in the school education, establishment of more and more inclusive schools instead of special schools, education of the adult mass of the deprived sections of the society, removal of poverty through economic reforms, checking of corruption, minimization of the impact of feudalism, flexible and comprehensive student evaluation,*

*judicious evaluation of government policies, plan & actions, population control, development of suitably qualified and appropriately trained human resources, provisions of reward and punishment for honest and dishonest persons, selection of appropriate philosophy of education for planning and implementation, proper implementation of different plans, schemes, ideas, recommendations, etc., proper and optimum governmental support to school education, strengthening of panchayatiraj institution, involvement of community, quality research in school education, management of attitudinal changes among mass, controlling of excess bureaucratic interferences, proper use of mass media & multimedia, etc. are some of the measures that can manage the exclusion in school education to shape a sound inclusive system of school education.*

## **Keywords**

Exclusion, Inclusive School Education, Challenged, Deprived, Marginalized

## **Understanding Inclusive School Education**

Inclusion is a concept opposite to Exclusion. Exclusion is a vital problem of the society as some persons are left out in the sharing of the different available resources. Exclusion and further exclusion leave the deprived sections of the society further excluded from the list of beneficiary. Human is not like nature. Nature distributes equally, but human distribution is always influenced by some bias, leaving room for exclusion. Limaye, Sandhya (2016) has quoted World Bank and has rightly suggested, "Social Inclusion, the converse of social exclusion, is affirmative action to change the circumstances and habits that lead to (or have led to) social exclusion. The world Bank defines social inclusion as the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society". Exclusion has harmed the mankind, democracy and society as a large population of human being has been identified as deprived, marginalised, poor, down-trodden, etc. We are having exclusion in almost all the sphere of human life and this exclusion has given birth to the concepts like Inclusive Democracy, Inclusive Society, Inclusive Education, etc. What Roy, Ash Narain (2013) has told in terms of Inclusive democracy for effective participation of the marginalised section of the society is also true for the attainment of inclusive school education, "India needs to create social citizenship which is the material preconditions for effectively participating in society. As long as the disadvantaged, minorities and the Adivasis feel 'othered', their democratic citizenship will remain at risk." Rai, Adya Shankar (2011) considers that inclusive education is based on the philosophy that all children can learn at some level according to their own individual pattern of development. He defines inclusive education, "inclusive education is an approach that seeks to meet the learning and schooling needs of everyone." Exclusion has created gap and so Inclusion is needed for a balanced democracy, society, education and even for humanity.

UNESCO Commission on Education (1996), International Education Commission (1972) and other International & National educational commissions have advocated for Inclusive growth for the development of human resources. Development of human resources, lifelong education, learning society all lead towards Inclusive growth through inclusive education. Education is the most powerful tool of every type of development – Social, Economic, Moral, Intellectual, Vocational, Aesthetic, Cultural, Environmental, etc. and so education to all is the cardinal principle of development. No nation, no society, no community and even no individual can grow horizontally without education. Development of humanity is also not possible without education and this is the testimony of the relative importance of inclusive education for the upliftment of the mankind. Creation of exclusion less education is inclusive education. Nawani, Disha (2013) has explained inclusion and equity in education in a very lucid manner, "It must be noted that 'inclusion' and 'equity' have several meanings in the context of education – all children, irrespective of their age, gender, region, religion, caste and class, etc. are able to access education (complete school cycle) of a formal type as against a part-time, short-term or non-formal education." Inclusive education focuses the participation of every child in education. It conveys that not even a single child should be deprived of education due to any possible reason. It has educational concern for all irrespective of caste, class, region, section, religion, sex, disability, etc. In the society there is gap and class consciousness. One section of the society is utilising the available resources more than the other, leaving gap between their statuses on certain grounds. Kumar, Lalit (2013) has defined inclusive education in a comprehensive manner "Inclusive Education is based on the idea of eradication of exclusion in education. It is also to meet educational needs of marginalized and uneducated sections of the society. The ideology behind inclusive education is to check, minimize and eradicate exclusion from education. It is based on the idea of removing factors responsible for exclusion in education to take care of the education to all, specially to the educationally backward. It also puts emphasis on special arrangements & provisions for education of girls, SC, ST, marginalized and disabled children."

Equity and equal opportunity are essential for the proper application of the concept Inclusive Education. In our society we have certain types of discrimination and that creates two distinct class as male-female, rich-poor, privileged – deprived, urban- rural, educated - uneducated, general – SC, ST & OBC, Non-tribal-tribal, more paid – less paid, savarn – dalit, etc. This class distinction and its impact on the socio-cultural conditions of the society are the vital reasons of exclusion in education. Inclusive education is not the only means of this man-made misery. Education to all and inclusive education both runs in the same direction and have same objectives for the development of overall living conditions of the human civilisation. Inclusive education not only opposes distinction in education only rather it connotes selective discrimination in favour of the disadvantaged group. It also speaks silently about some special provisions for the comparatively inferior groups. It points out for education of disabled, girls, SC-ST, marginalised, etc. to uplift them equal to the mass. In order to understand the inclusive education as a concept it is worthwhile to quote sajna, V (2017) and his identified Principles of Inclusive Education like, " Teaching all Students, Exploring Multiple Identities, Preventing

Prejudice, Promoting Social Justice, Choosing Appropriate Materials, Teaching and Learning about Cultures and Religions, Adapting and Integrating Lessons Appropriately". Inclusive education is the pre-condition of inclusive democracy & inclusive society and so this form of education cannot be looked down – upon any more. The concept of inclusive education can be understood in the light of the concept of inclusive democracy stated by Chatterjee, MD (2013), "The concept of 'inclusive democracy' stands for participation of all in the democratic process and ensuring that no one should be left outside that very process."

Inclusive School Education means availability and assurance of school education to every individual child of the society. Not education to all rather education to each is the focus of inclusive school education and in the process there is the need to adopt the principle that not only students go to school, but at times school goes to the students. Tuli, Uma (2013) has defined inclusive education, "Inclusive education is a dynamic and continuous process of facilitating the participation of all students, including those with disabilities.". Tuli has further stated about inclusive education, "Inclusive education is primarily about restructuring school culture, policy and practice so that it responds to the diversity of students in the locality."

### **Efforts Towards Inclusive School Education**

Relative importance of education for the development of human resources has always been taken care of. After independence the process of educational development took shape and speed both. Through Radha Krishnan Commission, Kothari Commission, Mudaliar Commission, Education Policies (1968, 1986), New Education Policy Programme of Action (1992), 42nd Constitutional Amendment, Institution of Panchayati Raj System, SSA, RTE, RMSA and many others, much has been done for universal school education. Establishment of body like CIBE, NCERT, KVS, NVS, KGBV has further enriched school education in India. International bodies like UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, European Commission, etc. have also supported development of school education in India. Programmes like Operation Black Board, Open Schooling, Mid-day-Meal have also strengthen school education in India. Cooperation of NGOs and community support through village Education Committee (VEC) has further enriched school education in India. Number of schools has increased, more students have started to go schools, infrastructural facilities have been augmented enormously, but much has to be done to achieve Inclusive School Education. Rajput, JS (2014) finds the present education system responsible for increasing the gap of inequality. He has lamented the situation where rich reads in better schools and the poor in the government schools.

Independent India has initiated development of school education through different commissions, committees, programmes, organisations, constitutional amendments. In 1987 operation black board was launched to improve school by enhancing retention and achievement of children. Toys, games, maps, blackboards, charts, etc. were supplied to primary schools. For increasing literacy level the National Literacy Mission was set up in 1988. 73rd and 74th constitutional

amendments gave birth to local self-government bodies or panchayats. Panchayats were entrusted the responsibility for the development of local area including development of education in the area. Universalisation of Elementary Education was emphasised by the establishment of district primary education programme (DPED) in 1994. In 1995 national programme for nutritional support to primary education, now known as mid-day-meal scheme, was launched to increase enrolment, retention and attendance in primary schools. Health and Education are the twin objectives of the scheme. Recommendations of Sarkaria Commission in 1997 about the distance between the home and the school were another step forward towards inclusive school education. It recommended that a primary school should be established within a distance of 1 to 1.5 km from every catchment of 250 and an upper primary school within 3 km of every catchment of 500 households. In 2001 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was introduced to provide effective and quality elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 by 2010. It gave special focus on the education of girls, children with special needs and SC/ST to achieve inclusive elementary education. Now Rastriya Madhaymik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has been launched as per the XI Plan to attain universal secondary education. It has to revolutionise secondary education and has to cover higher secondary education and its universalisation in future. Under RMSA model schools are to be opened in every block of the country.

This centrally sponsored scheme (RMSA) along with SSA scheme covers total school education, and really to the achievement of inclusive school Education. RMSA like SSA is a comprehensive scheme. Out of 6000 model schools under RMSA about 3500 are to be set up in educationally backward blocks in partnership with the states and rest 2500 under public private partnership mode. Shankar Deepa (2010) speaks about RMSA, "The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), designed by Ministry of Human Resource Development on the lines of SSA, is expected to bring in the desired investments in secondary education and facilitate the process of universalizing secondary education in the country." Central government is also planning to expand Kendriya Vidyalayas in all the districts which does not have Kendriya Vidyalaya. Vocationalisation of Secondary Education is also an approved agenda. Now the Right to Education (RTE) act has come in force from 1st April, 2010. The act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14. It is a great step forward in the achievement of universalisation of primary education and attainment of Inclusive School Education. It is the first legislation in the world that puts the responsibility of ensuring enrollment, attendance and completion on the government. Rajput, JS (2009) has lamented that its enforcement has been delayed, but suggests honest implementation of RTE can make the people able to forget its late arrival in the education system. There are constrains in the enforcement of RTE, but removing barriers day by day the society will achieve inclusive school education soon. Noronha, Claire (2013) has rightly written, "RTE requires all the building blocks to be in place to secure quality education for the disadvantaged child in both cognitive and non-cognitive domains."

Non-government organisations (NGOs) are collaborating with the government in a big way to implement educational programmes of the government. Government programmes like DPEP, SSA and NLM are being supported by the NGOs in a better manner. Initiative by Pratam and Butterflies are praiseworthy in the direction of Inclusive School Education. Action for Ability Development and Inclusion (AADI), New Delhi; Akshay Pratishthan, New Delhi; Tamanna, New Delhi; Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad; National Centre for Inclusion, Mumbai; etc. are also working for Inclusive School Education (specially to the disabled). UNICEF is an active partner in SSA, The European Commission has also signed agreement with Indian government to support the SSA, Worldbank is the single largest contributor to DPEP, UNESCO is running Associated School Projects (ASP net) and selected Indian schools are directly linked with UNESCO secretariat for participation in ASP nets for undertaking education related activities. National and International Collaboration has done precious enough for Inclusive School Education. Programmes, Organisations, Institutions, Commissions have immensely contributed to Inclusive School Education and NGOs have also played their role promptly. Overall analysis of the educational achievements still demands more to be done for Inclusive School Education.

## **Hurdles and Barriers Leading Exclusion in School Education**

From the above discussion it is evident that much has been done by the government through different programmes to attain universalisation of primary education to support universalisation of secondary education and achieve inclusive school education. International organisations have also contributed honestly in this direction. NGOs too have played satisfactorily to minimise exclusion in school education. Despite governmental efforts, help of International agencies and cooperation of NGOs we have not been able to minimise exclusion in school education upto desirable extent. Kumar, Lalit (2001) has appropriately suggested implementation of common school system, compensatory education and neighbourhood schools system to provide equal opportunity of education to all. There are so many reasons of this non-attainment of universal school education and of increasing exclusion among school going students. Lack of education among the parents of the students of excluded section is the vital reason of exclusion in school education. Poverty among the mass and specially among the marginalised groups is also a big barrier in the way of inclusive school education. Improper evaluation of the learners is responsible for exclusion. Non implementation of government schemes, plans, policies are harming the desired inclusive school education. Schemes like neighbourhood school and common school system are still to be implemented.

Panchayatiraj institutions are not working in a desired manner. Kumar, Lalit (2002) has concluded that no scheme of education can succeed if it is not planned in consultation with the local community. Government is conscious towards teachers and students evaluation, but the

evaluation of government policies, plans, actions, etc. are really done unsatisfactorily. Too much bureaucratisation of school education is another vital reason of non-implementation of different plans and schemes. Feudatory mentality of people representatives, education officers and educated & well to do people of the society towards the education of the marginalised is a big hurdle for inclusive school education. Population explosion eats educational and economic efforts silently. Kumar, Lalit (2010) has concluded that over population hinders the expected level of development. Corruption and dishonesty among members of the education system have greater impact on school education. Financial position of state governments and insufficient support from central government are the other vital reasons of non-achievement in school education. Lack of suitably-qualified and appropriately trained human resources, poor infrastructure, insufficient community support, over all ideological crisis among the mass, lack of accountability among every sections of the society and identity crisis among the policy makers to adopt idealistic philosophy in education are responsible for the non-performance & under achievement of school education in India. All these above mentioned factors are working against inclusive school education some way or other.

### **Suggestive Measures**

Inclusive school education is essential for the development of a democracy. Inclusive democracy and inclusive society cannot get shape without inclusive school education. Following measures may find us nearer to attainment of the target of Inclusive school education:

- Establishment of more and more inclusive schools instead of special schools for the creation of real inclusive set-up. Khare, Rachna (2016) also suggests to develop a comprehensive strategy on education of children with special needs in an inclusive environment. She further speaks, “special schools are dead-ends for special needs children, they promote isolation, alienation and social exclusion which needs to be changed to build equitable and compassionate societies.”
  - Creation of an inclusive set-up in the school education. Chadha, Anupriya (2016) has talked of Inclusive Learning Environment, Inclusive Teacher and Inclusive Classroom essential for inclusive education. She finds inclusive class room different from the traditional classroom where there is more rigidity.
- \* Education of the adult mass, specially the marginalised sections of the society.
- \* Removal of poverty through economic reforms to streamline the marginalised.
- \* Checking of corruption, specially in education system. Kumar, Lalit (2004) has suggested social service as part of education for making the education a means of social welfare. The idea of social service as part of education system can certainly check corruption among educated.

- \* Minimization of impact of feudalism. For democracy and education feudalism is harmful. Chokar, J S (2014), Ahmed, Emteyaz (2014) and Pant, Pushpesh (2014) also considers Feudalism as the vital cause of inequality in the society. They find people representatives in feudal state.
- \* Flexible and Comprehensive student evaluation. Kumar, Lalit (2008-09) has rightly suggested unconscious and oral evaluation besides Internal and Criterion-Referenced evaluation to remove fear of the students of being evaluated.
- \* Judicious evaluation of government's policies, plans and actions. NCF (2005) has attacked on several types of schools – private, high-cost, etc. "such developments unintentionally reinforce privilege and exclusion in education and undermine the constitutional values of equality of opportunity and social justice."
- \* Population control to find the available resources sufficient for inclusive school education.
- \* Development of suitably qualified and appropriately trained human resources. Tiwari, KN (2013) has also suggested in the same way.
- \* Provisions of reward and punishment for honest and dishonest personals. It is sad that Banerjee, Abhijit (2011) finds the torch bearer teachers escapist, "one study found that government teachers actually teach only about half the total number of hours that they are supposed to be teaching."
- \* Selection of appropriate philosophy of education for planning and implementation. If possible Idealistic only.
- \* Proper implementation of plans, schemes, ideas, recommendations, etc.
- \* Sufficient support to the system of school education by the state government. Mander, Harish (2012) has suggested checking educational apartheid of centuries by democratising our classrooms.
- \* Optimum help of central government, specially to the poor states. Rao C.H.H (2014) suggests, "Establishing publicly funded educational institutions alone can ensure greater participation from among the educationally disadvantaged communities".
- \* Strengthening of Panchayatiraj institution to look into the school education system and its development in an inclusive manner.
- \* Proper involvement of community and appropriate help by the community members.
- \* Quality Research in school education.



\* Special care for the education of girls, SC, ST, poor, rural, disabled and marginalised sections of the society.

\* Managing drop-out in schools, specially of the marginalised sections and educationally backward groups of the society Rao, SS (2016) rightly suggests, "In order to retain children in schools, and halt their drop-out from schools, it is imperative for the governments, schools and communities to provide egalitarian schooling experiences for all children, more so for those coming from SC, ST backgrounds."

\* Checking of the ill effect of salary gap in the country and paying more autonomy & prestige to the teachers. Why poor teachers are being paid less than one lakh per annum and a managing director more than 2 crores per annum?

\* Management of attitudinal changes among the mass towards the education of deprived sections of the society.

\* Proper use of mass media and multimedia for propagation and enrichment of inclusive education. For removing educational inequality Tamang, Anisha (2012) has suggested to use mass media for creating a conducive atmosphere in favour of girl's education in the rural villages. This needs to be done for every marginalised group and not to the rural girls only.

## **Conclusions**

Inclusive School Education is the base of every type of education. Development of inclusive democracy and inclusive society also depends on school education. Steps are being taken by state and central governments in this direction. International organisations have also shown serious concern about inclusive school education. Various NGOs are doing hard work for the education of disabled, marginalised and girls. Community support in the sphere of school education has increased, but much need to be done. Quoting ASER Tripathy, K.K. (2013) has focused the problems of infrastructure and other facilities, "Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012 indicates that though enrolment in schools are rising for children in the age group of 6-14 years, there has been no major changes in buildings, playgrounds or drinking water availability in schools." Development of humanity is possible only through the development of human resources. Inclusive School Education is the need of every type of development. Civilisation has crossed many boundaries due to educational development and it can move further with the support of education only.

Inclusive School Education is being supported by governments, community members and International organisations, but for the development of Inclusive School Education their joint efforts and actions are needed. This joint war against school exclusion is to provide a new path to the mankind and its cultural and civilisational development. NCFSE (2000) has

explained need of inclusive school education for a cohesive society by putting focus on education of girls, learners with special needs, education for disadvantaged groups and also for the education of gifted and talented, "Despite more than half a century of independence, India is struggling for freedom from various kinds of biases and imbalances such as rural/urban, rich/poor, and differences on the basis of caste, religion, ideology, gender etc. Education can play a very significant role in minimising and finally eliminating these differences by providing equality of access to quality education and opportunity." Certain suggested measures to shape & prepare schools in a inclusive look & action are not needed for the inclusive development only, rather these are essential for the achievement of millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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