



## Role of family in inclusive education

Monika

Research Scholar, Department of Education, OPJS University Churu, Rajasthan, India

### Abstract

It is an accepted notion that every child is like every other child and every child is unlike every other child. Every child is unique in his own ways. Some are bright, some are dull. But regardless of these differences, everyone has equal right to develop their potentialities. Inclusive Education protects the right of all disabled students by integrating disabled child with non-disabled in regular classrooms with provision for extra help for the disabled. One of the several factors which determine the success of inclusion is family support and involvement. Parents are known to be the first teacher of their children and they continue to influence their children learning and development during lifetime. Family involvement can have a major impact on student's learning, regardless of the social or cultural background of the family. The purpose of this article is to describe the vibrant role of family and parents in success of inclusive education.

**Keywords:** parents, family involvement, inclusion, parents

### Introduction

The concept of inclusive education first time has been introduced in the Salamanca Statement and the framework for action and special needs education in 1994. It states that all governments have been urged to *“adopt as matter of have or policy, the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise”*

The basic promise is that the school should meet the educational needs of the all children irrespective of their disabilities or limitations. It is the implication of the policy and process to accept all children i.e. disabled and non-disabled without any restrictions in all the educational programmes. It denotes equality and accepts every child with his own unique capabilities. The principle must be accepted by all the international, national and local programmes. The system of inclusive education designates a variety of ways in all normal and students with special needs are accommodated. In terms of inclusion of disabled children, it means the shift in services from *‘care of disabled child to his education and personal development’*. Disabled children is defines as children with special needs who need special attention, rather than children who are impairing or handicapped. Inclusive education is nothing but making the programmes for disabled children as integral part of the general educational system rather than a system within general education.

### Basic elements of inclusive education

1. Equal access to education is a matter of right and not a privilege. Every child has a fundamental right to education on the basis of equality of opportunities.
2. Right to Education (RTE) states “ Education for all”, it means for all not for almost all”
3. Education for all in a school; for all the disabled as well as non-disabled children get education together in one and

the same school. They may learn for learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning live together.

4. Togetherness means no exclusion or discrimination in admission and education on the basis of gender, race, ethnic and cultural group, socio-economic status or areas of residence, language and religions; and physical and psychological advantages or limitations etc.
5. Non-discriminated equality and togetherness promote willingness to participate contributing to social harmony, and stimulating and building relationships among people, group and nations.
6. School's adaptation to needs of children, rather than students ought to adapt to the needs of the school.
7. Individual differences do not mean deficit or deficiencies; even the disability is a natural difference between children. It is not to be rationalized but is to be accepted and respected providing opportunities to be compensated for a healthy living.
8. Diversity of individual differences is a rich source of inspiration to learn together and learn from one another how to excel in a particular field of one's interest. Individual differences are not a problem.
9. Diversity of needs and pace of development of students are addressed through a wide range of flexible measures.
10. Familiarity with diverse physical, psychological and social characteristics breaks barriers between the different groups of students. It reduces fears, prejudices and stereotypes and rejection; and increase acceptability, harmony and tolerance.

### Assumptions for inclusive education

The basic assumptions of inclusive education are as follows:

1. All children and the adults are part of one social system.
2. Every child is special in one or the other way.
3. Exploitation and oppression free education is the right of

every child.

4. Every child is unique and equally valued. He has potential of self-development if adequate resources are provided to him by the society.
5. Education does not aim only at cognitive development of children. It is its just one dimension. The virtual bases of education are Acceptance, Belongingness and community (ABC)
6. All schools of inclusive education should be directed and controlled by one single unitary education should be directed and controlled by one single unitary body which must look into all its requirements and progress.
7. Inclusive education is a continuous process, not an achieved state or a product.
8. Education is not restricted to schools only, community and society can also be permissible places of learning and acquiring knowledge.
9. The adequacy and success of any educational system is based upon barrier-free, permissive and congenial environment conducive for teaching-learning experiences.

### **Role of family in inclusive education**

Parental involvement and community participation in the total scheme of inclusive education is important. The involvement of families and local communities is essential in achieving quality education for all. Most of the parents want their children to be welcomed into the real world and be given respect and resources which they need and deserve as is given to non-disabled children. Families and community groups can take an active role in promoting inclusive education by helping and cooperating the school authorities in making or providing necessary arrangements and accommodations for the education of special peers. When families get involved in their children's education, the students achieve more, stay in school longer and engage in school more completely (Henderson and Mapp, 2002)

The participation of family members could be a mother, a father or both, grandparents, guardian or an older sibling in all spheres of child's life plays a vital role in shaping and determine his personality. Parents involvement in inclusive education programme builds positive relationships, encourages new behaviours, and increase self-satisfaction and optimism among themselves, their children and teachers. Such involvement of family is the key component which leads to student's and school's success.

The main goal of parents is to see whether the child with special needs benefits from school experience or not. Children with lifelong, disabilities need educational opportunities that are appropriate for their age and abilities. Parents and teachers working together are the very best support for such special children. Jointly, they can ensure children acquire as many necessary skills and abilities to be successful in life are possible. Parents know their children best. They know their likes and dislikes, strengths and weakness, needs and desires, abilities, capacities, capabilities and challenges. This information shared with teachers is invaluable while developing an educational plan for the child. As a parent it is important that one is fully involved in all the aspects of decision making that goes on during child's education. In some cases where the children are identified very early in their

lives by family members, it becomes the responsibility of the parents or family to inform the school authorities for their child's special needs.

Parents play an effective role in the education of their children with special needs. While special education teachers generally work hard to make a difference, they cannot be expected to educate these special children on their own. They need support from family members. Parents must encourage them in order to make children reach their potential. They should work on the goals at home as well as cooperate with teachers in schools. If parents will work with their children at home, not only they will progress more quickly and show better results, both will also realize how dedicated and committed their parents to their education. Time spent with children at home brings parents children closer to each other.

Parents should bear major force in helping children overcome adversity. Parents should bear following points in mind to be among the facilitators of inclusive education:

- Timely identification of disability of the child.
- Parents should not get disturbed by the responsibilities of looking after them.
- Parents should understand the meaning of "Inclusion".
- Parents are responsible to generate income and provide financial support for child's living costs and related payments.
- Parents have affectionate responsibility to show and share love, care, emotional feelings and companionship with their children. Parents should not adopt over-protection approach towards the child.
- Parents ensures for providing congenial environment to them at home.
- The educational and vocational responsibility to assist and support schooling, career selection and preparation.
- Parents should accept the limitations of their child.
- Parents may not feel shy in developing relationship with teachers and other related professionals.
- Preparing their children for meeting the societal expectations of their prospective roles.
- Parents should determine the strengths and needs of their ward
- Parents should spend quality time with them.
- Parents should involve in the academic development of their children.
- Parents should help them in inculcating positive attitudes towards learning.
- Parents should try to provide stress free environment at home.
- Parents should posse certain basic qualities that have a positive influence on their ward's ability to learn and to adjust in school programme.
- Parents should help their children for inculcating positive attitudes towards learning.
- Parents need to enjoy and be excited about what their children are learning day by day.
- Parents need to be involved their understanding of school's philosophy.
- Parents should frequently contact with class teachers, resource teachers and therapists to know exactly what is going on in the classrooms and in therapy sessions.
- Parents should discuss with the teacher what needs to be

changed in order to improve their child's learning in problematic area.

- Parents should share specific information such as medical reports, child's early development, recent behavioral changes and observations noticed at home with professional.
- Parents need to have positive and attitude towards thinking, learning and challenges.
- Parents should work in collaboration with teachers, therapists, clinicians and school authorities.
- Parents should play an integral role in assisting their child's learning.
- Parents should help their children understand diversities, to respect the different points of view they will come across and to develop a sense of responsibility towards their family values.
- Parents should not be obsessively close to their child.
- Fostering feelings of self-esteem in the child.
- Parents should maintain ongoing communication with child's teachers or specialists.
- Parents should not listen to anyone saying derogatory about the child.
- Parents should not be apologetic for the child, nor be ashamed of him.
- Parents should promote self-discipline in their ward.
- Parents should attend meetings, conferences and other training programmers along with the child if possible.
- Parents should take an active role in their child's individual education Plan (IEP)
- Parent needs to avoid the comparison of the performance special child with other siblings.
- Parents should help children to develop a feeling of responsibility and sense of making a contribution to the family and world.
- Parents should provide opportunities for their child to make choices and decisions and promote self-discipline.
- Parents should help children to deal effectively with mistakes and failures.

### Conclusion

Family is the primary unit in the life of an individual. Parents are the pillars of this unit. Parents are the natural teachers because they know their child better than everyone else does and have a better idea of what he/she is ready to learn. They spend more time with the child. Parents play a major role in the life of disabled child by making them learn art of living and get adjusted to the real life situations as independently as possible. Parental participation is vital for the success of inclusion. For effective partnership there is a need of time and appropriate strategies.

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