

Inclusion in Indian Schools from the perspective of Guardians

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Abstract: - Many efforts have been made by the Government of India and the voluntary sector in the field of inclusive education in the Post -Independence period but still the schools in India are not completely ready to provide inclusive education because of lack of trained teachers and lack of proper equipments for disabled children. Another major problem is the mind set of guardians who feel that inclusive education will not have challenges for their peers and also will not provide opportunities to develop their capacities further. Present study describes inclusive education and has presented the opinion of guardians of some students about inclusive education in India.

Keywords: Exceptional children, Disability, Inclusion, Education.

Introduction

Concept of inclusive education was present even before independence in India as Sargent report in 1944 stated that handicapped children should not be segregated from normal children only when the nature and extent of their defect make it necessary, should they be sent to special schools (Sargent Report ,1944: Chapter IX, pp 76-82 in Mithu Alur, p 53). Schools and teachers have always been making efforts for children with educational, social, behavioural problems, but the concept of inclusive education as extending into ordinary schools has only been expressed recently. And still it is not seen in most of the schools. Among many other reasons, one of the reasons might be that guardians of normal children do not want their ward to study in a school where children with certain kind of disability are taught along with normal children under one roof. They feel that their children need to be in settings where they can be challenged by their peers and can have opportunities to develop their capacities even further. Present study finds out the opinion of guardians about inclusive education in Indian schools.

Objectives of the study

- (i) To study the concept of Inclusive Education
- (ii) To know the opinion of guardians on inclusive education in Indian schools

Historical Background

A Pre-Independence overview of Education for the handicapped

Christian missionaries in India established schools for blind children. The first school for blind children was known as Annie Sharp in Amritsar in 1887. Due to insufficient documentation researches in the past fifty years, both Indian

and foreign, are poorly informed about India's special educational needs and disability issues in the nineteenth century (Mithu Alur In Education & Children with special needs Ed. Seamus Hegarty & Mithu Alur p 52). In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) published a comprehensive report on the post-war educational development of the country, popularly known as the Sargent report. In this report provisions for the handicapped were to form an essential part of the national system of education and were to be administered by the education department.

Post-Independence Scenario

The Kothari Commission, 1964-1966

In 1964, the Kothari Commission, was the first education commission which brought up the issue of children with special needs in the plan of action and gave strong recommendations for including children with special needs into ordinary schools (Mithu Alur p 54)

Policy of assistance to voluntary organisations, Ministry of welfare

In June 1964, work concerning the education, framing and rehabilitation of the handicapped was transferred from ministry of education to a newly created department of Social Security. This department became the ministry of Social Welfare (GOI, 1965). This happened despite the CABE Report and the Report of Kothari Commission which had recommended that children with disabilities should be a part of the mainstream system.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education has the concept of bringing together the exceptional children with the normal children. In such a system apart from a teacher, a resource teacher can be appointed. The resource teacher should have a lot of patience,

tolerance, perseverance and zeal in the services of disabled children studying in integrated schools (Bhargava, M 2003). The term exceptional children refers to those children who deviate from normal children in any way. The committee for the National Society for the study of education has described exceptional children as 'those who deviate from what is supposed to be average in physical, mental or social characteristics' (Chintamani, K.p 01). For these exceptional children special education should be provided. Special education means specially designed instruction which meets the special education and related needs of an exceptional child (Rajkumari, M.A 2005).

Children with special educational needs can be defined broadly as those with significantly greater difficulty learning and adjusting to school than other children of the same age. Some, but by no means all, of these students have a disability or disorder. In an attempt to clarify definitions and descriptions of students with special needs across various countries, the OECD (2007) created three convenient and meaningful categories:

- students with identifiable disabilities and impairments;
- students with behavioural and/or emotional disorders, or with specific difficulties in learning;
- students with difficulties arising from socio-economic, cultural or linguistic disadvantages

For most children in all three categories (other than those with severe or complete disabilities) the worldwide trend is placement in mainstream classes rather than special schools. All teachers can expect to teach children with special education needs in their regular classes, and all schools must strive to be inclusive by educating the full range of children from the local community (Peter Westwood, 2014).

Also the concept of education for all, states that each child whether gifted, normal or disabled should have equal access to the curriculum. This is called Inclusive education. In order to make guardians aware of the concept of inclusive education guidance and counselling of guardians has to be introduced. Guidance is part and parcel of counselling profession, it is called directive counselling (Dhawan, M.L, 2005).

To know more about inclusive education from the perspective of guardians, present study was conducted in which opinion of guardians of students of some schools was taken from two cities of a province in India called Uttar Pradesh. These two cities are Lucknow and Prayagraj

(Allahabad).

Tool used for the study:

.Questionnaire was prepared for guardians which included items related to Inclusion in Indian schools. This questionnaire was distributed in schools of Lucknow and Prayagraj (Allahabad).

Sample of the study:

Sample of the study were 100 guardians from Lucknow and Prayagraj (Allahabad). The schools were chosen randomly. Fifty guardians from ten schools of Prayagraj and fifty guardians from thirteen schools of Lucknow were chosen for the study.

Names of Schools of Prayagraj are as follows

1. St. Mary's Convent Inter College
2. St. Anthony's Girls' Inter College
3. YMCA School & College
4. Benhar School & College
5. Bal Bharti School and College

Names of schools of Lucknow are as follows

1. Colvin Taluqedars, Intermediate College
2. Florence Nightingale Inter College
3. Karamat Husain Girls' Inter College
4. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Aliganj
5. Loyola International School
6. Police Modern School
7. Universal Girls' Inter College
8. Bright Candle School

Apart from the above schools guardians were also taken from La Martiniere Girls' College, Lucknow, Loreto Convent Inter College, Lucknow, City Montessori School, Lucknow, Delhi Public School, Lucknow, Jaipuria School, Lucknow. Tagore Public School, Prayagraj, Girls' High School, Prayagraj, Boys' High School, Prayagraj, Taqwa School, Prayagraj and Ornillas School, Prayagraj.

Responses/Opinion of Guardians regarding Inclusive Education in Indian Schools.

Following questions were asked to the guardians regarding Inclusive Education in Indian Schools. Their responses to the questions asked is as follows.

Do you agree that concept of Inclusive Education is good for Indian Schools? Yes / No

Table I below shows that sixty two percent guardians from Prayagraj (Allahabad) and seventy four percent guardians from Lucknow agreed that concept of Inclusive Education is good for Indian Schools.

Table:I

No.of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No.of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	31	19	62	38	50	37	13	74	26

in your city? Yes / No

Do you know about schools providing Inclusive Education

Table:II

No.of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No.of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	04	46	08	92	50	15	35	30	70

According to Table II, only eight percent guardians from Prayagraj and only thirty percent guardians from Lucknow knew about schools providing Inclusive Education in their city.

Will there be equality in society when there is IE in schools? Yes / No

Table:III

No.of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No.of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	36	14	72	28	50	40	10	80	20

Education is good for Indian Schools.

It can be seen from Table III,above that seventy two percent guardians from Prayagraj and eighty percent guardians from Lucknow agreed that concept of Inclusive

Will you prefer admission of your ward in schools providing Inclusive Education? Yes /No

Table : IV

No.of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No.of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	17	33	34	66	50	09	41	18	82

From Table IV, it can be seen that only thirty four percent guardians from Prayagraj and eighteen percent guardians from Lucknow preferred to send their wards to schools providing Inclusive Education.

Do you think that your ward will not get quality education if they study with CWSN (Children with special needs) in schools providing IE ? Yes / No

Table V

No.of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No.of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	44	06	88	12	50	42	08	84	16

Inclusive Education.

As can be seen from Table V, that eighty eight percent guardians from Prayagraj and eighty four percent guardians from Lucknow think that their ward will not get quality education if they study with children with special needs in

Should there be change in curriculum for providing IE in schools ? Yes / No

Table VI

No. of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No. of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	47	03	94	06	50	43	07	86	14

Table VI, shows that ninety four percent guardians from Prayagraj and eighty six percent guardians from Lucknow think that there should be change in curriculum for providing Inclusive Education in schools.

Should teachers also undergo special training to teach CWSN along with normal children in classroom? Yes / No

Table VII

No. of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No. of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	46	04	92	08	50	44	06	88	12

It can be seen from Table VII, that ninety two percent guardians from Prayagraj and eighty eight percent guardians from Lucknow feel that teachers should be given special

training to teach CWSN along with normal children in schools.

Do you think IE will be successful in India? Yes / No

Table VIII

No. of guardians from Prayagraj	Response		Response %age		No. of guardians from Lucknow	Response		Response %age	
	Yes	No	Yes	No		Yes	No	Yes	No
50	08	42	16	84	50	19	31	38	62

According to Table VIII, only sixteen percent guardians from Prayagraj and thirty eight percent guardians from Lucknow feel that Inclusive Education will be successful in India.

How can society help CWSN?

On asking this question to guardians their responses were as follows

Various type of responses were received like special care of such children should be taken, CWSN need more attention than normal students therefore number of students in a class of Inclusive education should be very few. Some of them also talked about Right to Education and said that as it is a fundamental right and CWSN should be provided equal opportunity for education and for this members of society should co-operate with CWSN. Some of them said that they can contribute money for this programme of Inclusive Education if asked.

Why according to you IE did not achieve success in India as in other developed countries?

Kindly suggest some measures for its success in Indian schools. (Question asked to the guardians)

Guardians felt that IE was not much successful in India because here number of students in a class is too big, moreover teachers are not trained to teach in Inclusive schools. Above all schools do not have the Infrastructure needed for CWSN. Moreover the attitude of members in society towards CWSN is not that positive as it has to be. They should not be differentiated from normal children. For this their counselling has to be done. For the success of Inclusive Education in India, both society and Government have to take steps, lots of changes have to be made in school system and lots of funds will also be needed for this and finally it should be monitored that it gets implemented successfully.

Who according to you can be helpful for bringing equality in education for CWSN?

Government / NGO's / Society. Please Explain. (Question asked to the guardians)

Guardians felt that it was combined responsibility of all i.e government, NGO's and members of society to make it successful and bring equality of education in society. But as government is more powerful than other bodies in terms of providing funds and implementing it, government of India is more responsible in bringing equality of education in schools

although many schemes have been introduced and many efforts have been carried out in this field, but not much difference has been seen in it.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Most of the guardians were unaware of the concept of Inclusive education, Those who were aware of it did not want to send their wards to Inclusive schools. It means there is a type of fear among guardians that their children's efficiency will be reduced if they mix up with children with special needs. Most of them wanted that CWSN should be helped in all ways but they felt that it was the responsibility of the government first and then they will also play their role.

So there is a need to explain the concept of inclusive education to the guardians, there is a need to remove their fears and explain to them that their child's efficiency will not be reduced if study with CWSN in the same classroom. Counselling of guardians has to be done. In this way inclusive education in Indian schools can be popularised.

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