

INCULCATING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education evolved consistently over decades and has been integrated at kindergarten and primary-levels in schools across the globe. In India, awareness on early intervention and identification of learning difficulties during initial ages (3 – 6 years) has shown a gradual progress. Inculcating inclusive education in the primary-levels of schooling can assure strong foundations of functional concepts and accommodates personalized learning experiences. Effective inclusion provides opportunities to experience the richness of the curriculum at the comfort of differential instructions and appropriate assistance.

World-wide spread of pandemic has unleashed many factors that can influence the learning and development of children. Management practices of inclusive education have thrived to respond to the diversity of children by altering the curriculum and encourage participation in mainstream classes, specifically designed with a least restrictive environment (LRE). Inclusion promotes child-centered learning by treating children from different learning levels equally through modified teaching methodologies.

INTRODUCTION

“Inclusive classrooms support the abilities and recognize the possibilities in every student”

- ‘Inclusion in Action’ by Nicole Eredics [1]

The practices of inclusive learning have evolved consistently over decades and have been integrated at kindergarten and primary-levels in schools across the globe. In India, awareness on early intervention and identification of learning difficulties during initial ages (3 – 6 years) has shown a sudden impetus. Inculcating inclusive education in the primary-levels of schooling can assure strong foundations of functional concepts and accommodates personalized learning experiences. Effective inclusion provides opportunities to experience the richness of the curriculum at the comfort of differential instructions with appropriate assistance.

The Essential Best Practices document was initially established by the Institute on Disability as part of the Beyond Access model demonstration project, funded from 2002-2006 by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Inclusion provides intensive supports to children with need for special education services in order to be fully

The inclusive school managements encourage a compassionate environment where every learner feels inspired to realize and celebrate their unique potential. The study portrays the concept of best practices inculcated within an Inclusive organization and how the educational management with innovative objectives caters to the wholistic development of a learner.

The study represents various aspects of inclusive education and management practices within the educational organization. Sustainability of approaches and nurturing diversity in young individual minds by respecting differences in learning through ensuring equal participation substantiates the practice of child-centric learning within the organization. Inclusive education management and organizational systems followed for administration is studied to endorse successful inclusion measures.

Keywords: Inclusion, Special needs, Schooling, Children, Education, Management systems

participating members of typical classrooms in their neighbourhood schools. Jorgensen (2009) [2] explains in his research how authors have synthesized over 25 years of research and practices to recognize inclusive educational practices that were shown to support positive school and post-school outcomes for students with significant disabilities.

Inclusive schools create a compassionate classroom culture that inspires every learner to unleash their potential and to sculpt wholistic growth as individuals. The school structures the space with mindful and self-driven management practices varying across schools based on their regional location and availability of resources. Inclusive schools inculcate life-enriching education to empower learners and transform them into responsible global citizens.

Most inclusive schools are fashioned with the 21st-century learning pedagogy that aims to constructively build learners through inclusion is the cornerstone of contemporary education reformation. The spirit of personalization and individualization in the learning process of inclusion actualizes an inclusive environment with holistic and effective pedagogy.

Sustainability of approaches and nurturing diversity in young individual minds by respecting differences in learning and ensuring equal participation substantiates the practice of child-centric learning within the organization. Management practices of inclusive education have thrived to respond to the diversity of children by altering the curriculum and encouraging participation in mainstream classes, specifically designed with a least restrictive environment (LRE). Inclusion promotes child-centered learning by treating children from different learning levels equally through modified teaching methodologies.

Inclusive management is designed with a progressive mindset to embrace differences and respond optimistically to changes that can cater comprehensive growth to individual young minds and continues to be a prominent area of policy, research, and practice in special education. Learning extends collaboratively with real-life experiences and is successfully generalized through the authentic curricula and ingenious management methodologies. The inclusive schools offer learner-centric classrooms and a goal-oriented learning environment with a gilt-edged student-teacher ratio. The efficacy of the exceptional pedagogical design is practiced and facilitated by competent and fervent teachers across the learning space.

REINFORCING INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

- Hiring special educators with experience in the field
- Co-teaching by special educators alongside general education providers in one classroom
- Extensive training in differential instructions for teaching and non-teaching staff
- Integrating routines of the daily schedule for children with a need for special education services in a regular classroom
- Tailoring remedial one-on-one classes grounded on the needs of the child
- Interacting with Organisations to deliver support services.
- Inhouse therapists
- ✓ Speech therapists
- ✓ Physiotherapists
- ✓ Occupational therapists
- Counseling sessions
- ✓ Academic counseling
- ✓ Career counseling
- Special education services
- ✓ FUNCTIONAL CURRICULUM
- ✓ CUSTOMIZED CURRICULUM
- Vocational courses
- Life-skills enrichment

Review of Literature

Singh, JD. (2016) [3] defines inclusion as a holistic approach for educating children with disability and learning difficulties

regardless of their strengths and weakness. Inclusion insists on a comprehensive range of services by providing equivalent opportunities to children with disabilities in mainstream schools and enables their learning to occur consistently in a holistic way. Educators in inclusive classrooms carefully customize the student curriculum based on individual needs and use many creative strategies to inculcate learning in the children. The school nourishes an inclusive mindset in teaching strategies that are differentiated to ensure that no child is left behind in the spirit of inclusion.

Pivik (2020) [4] identifies the barriers to inclusive education and restricts the participation of the children. Blocks in inclusion include physical atmosphere (e.g., narrow doorways, ramps), social stigma and intended attitudinal barriers (e.g., seclusion, bullying), unintended attitudinal barriers (e.g., absence of knowledge, understanding, or awareness), and physical limitations (e.g., difficulty with manual dexterity). Inclusive schools aim at endorsing accessibility and full participation in the physical school space for children with a need for special education services.

Mohammed (2019) [5] proposes the influence of the idyllic personalized and individualized education that is tailored to be effective by integrating artificial intelligence techniques and intelligent learning environments (ILE). Indian children come from various cultural backgrounds and their learning preferences are individually planned to align children within an inclusive ambiance. Inclusive schools address the practical cultural issues and transfer effective learning with remedial instructions by aligning with the mainstream educational curriculum.

Jimenez (2018) [6] substantiates the evolution of personalized learning has transformed from different to a differential design by acclimatizing the learning methodologies and recognizing the high potentials in all students, including children with learning difficulties. Inclusion accommodates children with different learning needs into a single, flexible and multi-dimensional curriculum, thereby promoting appropriate pedagogy, accommodations and support to hurdle challenges and embrace opportunities for growth and learning in every individual student.

Measurement Instrument:

To carry out the conceptual study on ‘Inculcating Inclusive education: A Case Study on inclusive education management, the ‘**Quality Inclusive practices Checklist**’ developed by Heartland Equity and Inclusion Project supported by the U.S Department of Education and the Office of Special Education Programmes (OSEP) was used. The assessment instrument contains features that define high-quality inclusive childhood programs and practices of support, access, and participation within inclusive school environments.

The checklist consisted of 36 questions related to Access (14), Support systems (11), and Participation (16). The responses for the questions were categorized and rated as ‘yes’ (1) and ‘no’ (2) respectively.

PROCEDURE:

The data was collected by observation of the inclusive practices and the questionnaire was used to categorize the inclusive management features. The methods of inclusive management in schools were observed and enquired by the researchers using the tools prepared for this research. The data collected was

consolidated, interpreted and points were descriptively portrayed. The purpose of this conceptual paper is to add a theoretical contribution to the existing research on inclusion with a fresh perspective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Access (A1):

✓ UNIVERSAL DESIGN (UD)

The inclusive schools are modelled structurally and pedagogically to provide comprehensive learning through personalized methodologies for every student. Strategies that support access and removal of physical barriers is to be followed across the campus. The physical ambience of inclusive schools must support the Universal Design through encouragement of inclusive culture among learners and flexibility in facilitating the needs of the child across the learning sphere.

The framework of universal design (UD) and universal design for learning (UDL) offer exceptional ways to inculcate inclusiveness in our systems by applying the concepts of accessibility and inclusion beyond physical surroundings, to design teaching and projects learning opportunities in ways that are varied, accessible and engaging for all students, including those with differing needs for special education services mentions Dalton (2019) [7]. The seven key principles substantiated by Burgstahler (2015) [8] of the Universal design (UD) include:

- 1) equitable use
- 2) flexibility in use
- 3) simple and intuitive use
- 4) perceptible information
- 5) tolerance for error
- 6) low physical effort and size
- 7) space for approach and use.

Provision of equitable opportunities to children and staff is observed in the environment by ensuring full participation and successful transfer of perceptible information across the managing systems.

✓ UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

Intuitive use of the environmental design and child-centric classrooms bring out the unique abilities and interests of every student by inculcating curiosity in learning. Inclusive school management follows the heart of instructional strategies that practice Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL strives to remove discriminatory practices and eliminates the need to 'retrofit' teaching practices with specialized accommodations mentions Dalton (2019) [7] in his research. Multi-sensory methods of structuring curriculum content go in-hand with the intentional teaching strategies used to engage children in the learning process. The school equally promotes a variety of methods for children to demonstrate and express their knowledge and understanding.

✓ ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT)

Assistive Technology (AT) supportive classrooms are instilled with 'Low-tech' (Eg., Laminated picture boards, Pencil wedges) and 'High-Tech' (Eg., Augmented and alternative communication devices) devices to enable access to children and make them participate in a wide range of learning

opportunities. The efficacy of the use of assistive technology for children with a need for special education services allows them to capitalize on their strengths and areas of difficulties to harness potential highlights Rabonye (2020) [9].

✓ ADAPTATIONS

Classroom adaptations provide appropriate strategies that involve the independent participation of the child and ensure equal access to the learning community. Adaptations can be planned and intentional changes of educational components birthed in the teaching process of inclusion applications. Structuring appropriate instructional adaptations for students occurs with an evaluation of the student strengths, needs, and learning characteristics by the teacher to plan appropriate learning outcomes and strategies explains Fidan (2014) [10].

Participation (A2):

✓ EMBEDDED INSTRUCTION AND OTHER NATURALISTIC INTERVENTIONS

The inclusive school practice comprehensive set of instructional approaches that assist every child's engagement in the learning activities and promote a sense of belonging during play. Embedded instructions and other Naturalistic interventions are provided in the school across the classrooms during daily activities and routines that support individual learning goals from the Individualized Education plans (IEP) framed for each student. Embedded instructions are found to be an evidence-based strategy to support academic learning of individual students to embed academic trials in various inclusive settings, grade levels, and across the curriculum states Bree (2015) [11].

Tools that support child's engagement in the classroom community along with embedded instructions are disturbed within regular activities and routines. Educators use both incidental and intentional teaching methods collaboratively along with support peer relationships. Teachers facilitate smooth transitions between activities and classes using innovative techniques and instructions.

✓ SCAFFOLDING STRATEGIES

Practitioners use targeted and intensive support approaches such as modeling, response prompting, corrective feedback, and peer support to scaffold the maximum participation of all students. The ability to provide various assistance in the interaction of children with adults in the classroom to self-regulate and sustainably learn various concepts with a comprehensive set of instructions elaborates Ni'matuzahroh (2020) [12].

✓ TIERED MODELS OF INSTRUCTION

The examination departments of the inclusive schools are vibrant in delivering strategies that tie the formative assessment results with the teaching and intervention recommendations of the children. The managements follow a universal screening of the children to monitor their development and learning, thereby gathering information needed to guide instructions. Differential instructions are specified to students based on their needs, background, preferences, and differences. Progress monitoring of the formative assessments helps educators to arrive at intensive, explicit, systematic, and individualized instruction to contribute to the learning of every individual student.

Supports (System-level) (A3):

✓ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The inclusive school managements offer an elaborate orientation process for the newly hired staff and address the unique aspects of working in an inclusive classroom. Teachers

and practitioners are offered ongoing and comprehensive professional development programs conducted across the management, involving various departments. Extensive teacher training is given to ensure specific knowledge and skills on evidence-based practices to work in high-quality international curricula and inclusive environments.

✓ **MODELS OF COLLABORATION**

Collaboration of technical assistance, consultation, coaching, mentoring, problem-solving, and communities of professional practices are monitored systematically and authentically by the school management. Families, special educators, mainstream teachers, therapists, and support staff work together as a team to plan and implement the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Effective, ongoing two-way communication is facilitated by the management to collaborate successfully with community agencies and community partners.

✓ **FAMILY-PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION**

Inclusive schools establish consistent family involvement in the learning of the child by creating respectful and responsive relationships between families and professionals. Educators model cultural competence and engage the parents in decision-making to ground mutually agreed goals and develop appropriate resources, supports, and services that sustain transition between programs.

As parents begin to contribute more actively in planning for the education and care of their children, collaborative working relationships built on mutual respect and shared knowledge began to develop. Researches have confirmed the positive benefits of parent-professional collaboration on the education of children with disabilities and have identified the potential barriers to effective parent-professional collaboration which include attitudinal barriers, communication barriers, socioeconomic barriers, and cultural factors. Efforts are made by inclusive management to eliminate these barriers and ensure a smooth working relationship between the caretakers and the professionals.

CONCLUSION:

Inclusive school managements model quality practices that can be used to deliver effective learning in childhood environments.

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The schools represent innovative inclusive practices that serve as a catalyst for organizing and authenticating an inclusive culture within school environments. Management at the school premises promotes a diversity mindset in every individual who enters the space. Desirable inclusive experiences portrayed within the inclusive campus for students with and without need for special education services, create a sense of membership, positive social relationships, and maximize their learning potentials.

Practitioners follow strategies that involve access, support and participation of every individual student in the learning activities. Carefully structured, pre-planned, and systematic learning occurs in every classroom with an appropriate teacher-student ratio. ‘Learning’ in inclusion is acquainted with active experiences of children, their interactions with the materials, and participation in activities, that eventually progress to the goal achievement. Performance of children outlasts benchmarks as they carry their learning everywhere they go.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

- Exploratory study on online-mode of inclusive learning and impact/effect on children with learning difficulties
- Comparative study on inclusion practices: Home-based inclusion and Institute-based inclusion
- Case-study on the management structure and administration of inclusive educations setups and the barriers in execution

RESEARCH GAPS:

- This research models best management practices for inclusion and the impact of personalized learning in the inclusive space.
- Streams of special education integrated successfully to accommodate children with and without disability under the same curriculum using differential instructions and pedagogy.
- Effective transition programmes to work collaboratively under systematic management with extensive planning and innovation.

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