



Notes

21

## INCLUSION : CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

The Constitution of India states that everyone has the right to equality of education and of opportunity. The 86th amendment of the Constitution has reiterated the need for free, compulsory and universal elementary education as a fundamental right for all children from the ages of 6 to 14 years. The 93rd amendment of the Constitution of India has made education a fundamental Human Right for all children between the ages of six and 14 years, irrespective of caste, class, religion, gender and disability. They need to be brought into the fold of education. The National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, 2013 stresses the importance of, “providing integrated services for holistic development of all children along the continuum from the prenatal period to six years of age. Thus, ensuring a sound foundation for survival, growth and development of the child with focus on care and early learning.” (p.1).

The different education commissions and committees at national and international levels have highlighted the pressing need for education of children with different disabilities in the general education system. They emphasize that the educational needs of children with disabilities should be an inseparable part of the general education system. This is in the context of the National Policy of Education (NPE, 1986) which spells the need for equality in educational opportunities to children with disabilities. It focuses on pre-service training of general teachers and orientation of in-service teachers to meet the needs of these children. It also highlights provision of vocational training, establishment of special schools for severely disabled children and encouragement to voluntary organizations. It has suggested several strategies and several schemes for achieving equal opportunities and providing the children with disabilities access to quality education comparable to other children. The Government has also taken significant initiatives for the educational development of children with disabilities.



Notes

In the following lesson, you will study about the need and importance of inclusive education and its implications for classroom practice.



### LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- define inclusion;
- explain the significance of inclusive education;
- list strategies that can be adopted in an inclusive classroom;
- describe inclusion-related government policies and laws; and
- discuss the role of teachers, parents and community in promoting inclusion.

### 21.1 CONCEPT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is a process that increase the participation of all children, including those with special needs, in school. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education has advocated the need for inclusive education. India is a signatory to all such statements and has endorsed the concept of inclusive education. The Statement has urged all governments to adopt as a matter of law or policy, the principles of inclusive education and emphasised that children with special needs must have access to regular schools.

It reaffirms inclusion, which implies providing all children equitable and effective education that responds to their needs as learners in the existing regular school system regardless of:

- race
- class
- ethnicity
- religious belief
- being from disadvantaged and marginalized groups
- being from remote and nomadic population
- language
- gender
- geographical location

- culture
- disabilities

Inclusion entails remodelling and enriching the general education system, making it more comprehensive, supportive and responsive to the needs of all children. Inclusive education ensures that children with special needs are taught in regular schools with their age and grade peers with support services provided within the school system. Thus, it reflects the objective of providing quality education to all children by accommodating their needs and learning styles into the general curriculum. It means all learners are able to learn together in regular schools with appropriate support network. It believes that all children are valuable members of society, whatever their difference and diversities are. Besides, it is a matter of human rights of all children to be together in the existing general education system with their unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. Therefore, such an education system and programme needs to be designed so that needs of all learners are addressed and diversity is respected.

Inclusion involves a shift of focus from disabilities to the abilities of children and modifies the education system to suit the needs of all learners. It is about creating inclusive policy, inclusive culture and inclusive practices at all levels of the school system. It can be achieved by developing the capacity of schools to respond to children's individual needs. It implies the transformation of traditional approach to a new approach of teaching and learning. Inclusive education ensures holistic development of each child. It requires that we value diversity in teaching and adapt the teaching approaches to support them.

### **21.1.1 Benefits of Inclusive Education**

The benefits of inclusive education for Children With Special Needs are :

- Ensure the children right to equal educational opportunities in regular schools
- Provide opportunities for interaction that would not be otherwise possible in segregated settings
- Maximise educational potential of each child
- Involves children actively in their own learning as well as in the learning of their peers
- Provide a wide range of learning and teaching programmes that encourage all children to participate, learn and experience success
- Sensitize children and teachers to ensure that there is no discrimination
- Set the goals for children in the classroom according to their ability and interests



**Notes**



## Notes

- ensure appropriate behaviour/conduct from all children including children with special needs
- children with special needs are valued
- ensure the mobilization and involvement of all stakeholders like parents, community and voluntary groups to implement inclusion



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.1

State whether the following statements are true or false.

- All educational programmes must be designed to address needs of all children.
- Inclusive education is about 'enabling schools to serve all children'.
- Traditional methods of teaching are recommended for inclusive education.
- Inclusive education ensures holistic development of all children enrolled.
- Only age-appropriate goals are applicable to children with special needs.

### Differentiated instruction in practice—

A child with special needs in the motor area is barely able to draw a single line compared to others in class who may be able to do draw complex figures. If all children are to progress, each of these children needs to be addressed at their own level. In such an environment, the teacher needs to help the child according to their strengths and weaknesses to build greater competence. The teacher can accordingly modify the task as per each child's abilities. These interactions and modifications must be a part of ongoing, trusting relationships between the child and the teacher.

## 21.2 TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Now, the question arises, how to address the individual needs of all children in the classroom? How can we help all children learn in the same classroom? Researchers have indicated that innovative teaching strategies are more beneficial in an inclusive classroom for the children to learn. Inclusive classrooms require changes in methods of teaching and assessment.

Better results can be achieved by following these strategies in the classroom. These are:

- Differentiated instruction
- Cooperative teaching –Learning Strategies
- Collaborative Learning
- Peer Tutoring
- Assessment

### 21.2.1 Differentiated Instruction

This is a concept associated with individualized planning and teaching strategies for young children. It implies providing different types of experiences and environment as per the individual needs of each child. The preschool teacher



realizes, through observation that no two children learn at the same pace or in the same way. Some need a lot of practice while others may learn immediately. Some children in the class take to new material easily while others are slower to accept them. Some children learn from reading while some others from listening or from visual aids. There may be children who have trouble in writing while others can understand complex ideas.

In differentiated instructions, the teacher learns to identify what works with each child and ensures that the teaching methodology contains activities and content for each child in the group to “connect with” and benefit from.

### **21.2.2 Cooperative Teaching- Learning Strategies**

Cooperative learning involves more than one child working together to achieve a shared learning goal or task. Cooperative learning is a means of grouping children in small mixed-ability learning teams. The group is presented with a problem to solve or to perform. Children in the group then work among themselves, help one another to complete the task and receive a group performance score. Children work in small groups and cooperate with each other to learn the task also. The role of a teacher is to promote cooperative interdependence among children. There are several benefits of cooperative learning strategies for children with special needs. These are:-

- actively engage in classroom activities
- children articulate their thoughts more freely
- receive confirming and constructive feedback
- engage in questioning techniques
- enjoy enhanced interpersonal relationship with other children
- develop self-esteem better
- use a team approach to solve problems while maintaining individual accountability
- are encouraged to understand and appreciate of diversity
- clarify their ideas through stimulated critical thinking
- enhance self-management skills
- observe and learn problem solving techniques from peers
- receive additional practice on skills, and
- have increased opportunities to respond.

Further, when children are thinking aloud while discussing, teachers are better able to assess child and group needs and intervene when needed. That is, by actively monitoring children’s learning, teachers are able to redirect groups toward learning tasks and provide re-teaching during discussions, as required.



## Notes

### Method of organising a cooperative learning based task in a preschool

**Task:** Colouring the given figure.

**Traditional learning approach:** Each child will be given a sheet and crayons to colour. Children complete the given task individually and submit the same to teacher for feedback.

**Cooperative learning approach:** All children including Children With Special Needs would be divided in small groups, may be groups of five children. Each group is asked to sit in a circle. Each child is given an individual colouring sheet. Each group is given two packets of crayons. Each packet contains 12 crayons. The children are asked to colour the sheets and help each other in their colouring. The group is required to submit the sheets together.

- Reflect on the above task:
  - i. Are children collaborating in the task?
  - ii. How?
- Challenges one may encounter:
  - i. More than two children may wish to use the same crayon at the same time
  - ii. Children may scribble over each other's sheets
  - iii. The child finishing early may want to finish another child's drawing

Including and respecting all children in the group, reflects the spirit of inclusion and develops the classroom as a community. For example, by being a member of same group the child with speech impairments may learn to express him/herself to others more freely and confidently via gestures and his/her communication skills might improve. Similarly, the other members of the group may learn to accept him as a member of the group and include him/her in the other activities also. Cooperative learning can help promote tolerance, acceptance and empathy by working together in the group.

#### *Comparison of both the approaches*

Traditional approach	Cooperative Learning approach
A good class is a quiet class	Learning involves healthy noise
This is an independent task.	This is collaborative teamwork
Keep your eyes on your paper	Ask your partner for help
Sit quietly	Get up and look at what others are doing
Talking is cheating	Talking is learning



### 21.2.3 Collaborative Teaching Strategy

Collaborative teaching strategy is a teaching method in which children work together on an assignment. In this method, children can produce a small part of a larger assignment individually and then assemble the final work together, as a team. Each child is free to work as per individual learning style. Collaborative teaching is sometimes confused with cooperative teaching, which is a method where children work together in small groups on a structured activity. In collaborative learning, children are individually accountable for their work and also for the work of the group as a whole, where both the end products are assessed.

#### 22.2.3.1 Characteristics of Collaborative Teaching Strategy

- **Parity in collaboration:** Each child's contribution is equally valued and children have equal power in decision-making.
- **Voluntary-collaborative relationships:** These are most successful when they are entered into freely and exist by choice.
- **Mutual Goals:** Collaboration occurs in response to a goal, problem, or need that is jointly shared by the children. These goals must be agreed upon by all participants.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Participants share responsibilities in the decision making.
- **Shared Accountability:** Participants have equal accountability for the outcome of their work.
- **Shared Resources:** Participants share materials and human resources.

#### 22.2.3.2 Benefits of collaborative Teaching Strategies

Some benefits of these practices are:

- All children benefit from the expertise of all the members of the group.
- It develops leadership and responsibility.
- Children can learn from each other and solve problems together.
- Instructions take into account different levels of ability.
- It facilitates active participation by all children in the classroom.
- Proper planning ensures active learning by all children.
- Children are assessed based on the individual performance as well as performance of the group.

Thus, we can say that an atmosphere of trust is essential here if teams are to work effectively.



## Notes

## Collaborative Method

**A poster of a big tree for the class**

Teacher lays out the required art material on the table for children.

The teacher asks them to make a poster of a big tree to be hung in the class.

Teacher initiates the discussion on which part of the tree each child will be drawing and colouring trunk ,branches, leaves, fruits/flowers. .

This activity will have children working on the part assigned/chosen by them to complete the picture of the tree.

The task will be assessed on:

- Individual performance
- Group performance

**21.2.4 Peer Tutoring**

Peer tutoring implies children teaching children. A peer tutor is someone who is of a similar status as the person being tutored. In peer tutoring, both the tutor and the tutee are of the same grade and the peer tutor helps the peer tutee. There are many benefits for both the tutor and the tutee in this relationship. The peer tutor can establish a rapport with the tutee in a way that a teacher cannot. A child who is not capable of teaching an academic skill, could teach a non-academic skill related to hobbies or interests such as coin collecting, stamp collecting or any other creative art activity. A peer tutor is not involved in the assessment of any task. This strategy is more effective with older children in formal settings.

**21.2.4.1 Benefits of Peer Tutoring**

Some benefits of peer tutoring are:

- Peer tutors are often effective in teaching children who do not respond well when adults teach.
- It develops a bond of friendship between the tutor and the tutee.
- Tutors themselves are benefited by teaching other children as they practice their learning while teaching other children.

**21.2.5 Assessment**

Assessment involves observing, collecting information and making decisions based on that. It involves identifying what the child knows, what the child understands and what the child can do. Assessments should be continuous. It



can be diagnostic as it provides information about the children area of strength and recognize the areas that require further attention. In an inclusive setup, the assessments and evaluative processes should be flexible and adapted as per the learning style of children. For example, varying nature of the task according to the child's abilities, giving extra time and assistive resources required etc.



Notes



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.2

Fill in the blanks:

- \_\_\_\_\_ is associated with individualised planning and teaching strategies for young children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is an instructional method in which children work together on an assignment.
- In \_\_\_\_\_ learning, each child's contribution is equally valued and they have equal power in making decisions.
- An atmosphere of \_\_\_\_\_ is essential if teams are to work effectively.
- Peer tutors are \_\_\_\_\_ by teaching other children as they practice their learning while teaching other children.

## 21.3 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The changing approaches to disability from the charity model to the human rights model have resulted in diversity of policy and practice. In the 1970s, the IEDC scheme was launched by the Government of India for providing educational opportunities to learners with SEN (Special Educational Needs) in regular schools. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in 1990s, adopted by representatives of 92 Governments and 25 International Organisations has, in fact, set the policy agenda for inclusive education on a global basis.

### 21.3.1 Significant Milestones in Legislation

#### i. Inclusion of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC, 1974)

The government launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). The scheme aimed at providing educational opportunities to learners with disabilities in regular schools, and to facilitate their achievement and retention. The IEDC scheme provides for a wide range of incentives and interventions for the education of children with disabilities.



## Notes

## ii. The National Policy on Education, (NPE) 1986 and its Plan of Action (POA), 1992

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 states that children with mild disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms, whereas children with moderate to severe disabilities should be placed in segregated schools. The NPE brought the fundamental issue of equality, center stage. To reduce dropout rate, the POA suggests a pragmatic principle for children with disability who can be educated in a general school should be educated in a general school only and not in a special school. The NPE, 1986 envisages measures for integrating the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with confidence.

## iii. The RCI Act 1992

The RCI Act provides standards for rehabilitation professionals. It also sets standards for special education teachers trained to teach children with different disabilities. The RCI Act is solely concerned with manpower development for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

## iv. The National Trust Act, 1999

The National Trust Act (National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability), 1999 is a landmark legislation which seeks to protect and promote the rights of persons who come within the disability sector, and have been even more marginalised than others. Its prime decision is to make a body of persons for those with disabilities aimed at providing total care and managing the properties bequeathed by the Trust.

## v. National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006

It was released by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in February 2006. As per the policy, every child should have access to appropriate pre-school, primary and secondary level of education by 2020. The programme provides children with disabilities, “financial support for books, school uniforms, transportation, special equipment and aids,” with the intention of using these aids to include children in mainstream classrooms. It also emphasises that children up to the age of six years may be identified at the earliest and necessary interventions be made urgently so that they are capable of joining inclusive education at the right age.

## vi. Right to Education, (RTE) Act 2009

The RTE Act safeguards the rights of the children belonging to the

disadvantaged groups and the weaker sections, protecting them from any kind of discrimination and ensure their completion of elementary education

It is not disability-specific but is inclusive of all children with disabilities, with specific sections that address the educational rights of children with disabilities.

### vii. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

The Act replaces the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. It fulfills the obligations to the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is a signatory. The Act came into force during December 2016.

The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities. The Act includes:

21 disabilities: Blindness, Low-vision, Leprosy Cured persons, Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing), Locomotor Disability, Dwarfism, Intellectual Disability, Mental Illness, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Chronic Neurological conditions, Specific Learning Disabilities, Multiple Sclerosis, Speech and Language disability, Thalassemia, Hemophilia, Sickle Cell disease, Multiple Disabilities including deaf blindness, Acid Attack victim, Parkinson's disease.

Every child with benchmark disability between the age group of 6 and 18 years shall have the right to free education.

Responsibilities assigned to the appropriate governments to take effective measures to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.3

Give the full form of these abbreviations:

- (a) IEDC
- (b) PWD
- (c) RTE
- (d) POA
- (e) RCI



Notes



Notes

- (f) CWSN
- (g) NPE

## 21.4 ROLE OF TEACHERS, MANAGEMENT, PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN PROMOTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A school accepting all children of school going age irrespective of their strengths or weaknesses, gifts or disabilities, is an inclusive school.

Inclusive education is a pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allow all children to feel respected, confident and safe so they can learn and develop to their full potential. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centered on the best interests of children. Inclusive education is put into practice within school communities that value diversity and nurture the well-being and quality of learning of each and every child. Inclusive education advocates that all children should study together in the school available in the vicinity of their home.

### 21.4.1 Role of ECCE Teachers, Management and Other Functionaries

To help promote inclusiveness in the learning setup, all stakeholders need to contribute and cooperate. Each must be aware of their roles and expectations. Let us learn how the various stakeholders can contribute to inclusive education programme.

#### a. Role of ECCE Teachers

1. Early identification of the children with special needs
2. Being sensitive to the needs of children and providing the necessary support
3. Planning and modifying the curriculum by incorporating needs of all children
4. Spreading awareness and sensitising people about the benefits of early identification
5. Counselling and sharing strategies on how to support children with special needs
6. Creating a supportive environment by involving other members of society
7. Making the centre accessible for Children With Special Needs.
8. Encouraging participation of Children With Special Needs in the activities as per the abilities of the child



9. Prepare case profile of Children With Special Needs to share with other stakeholders
10. Referring the child for special needs services as provided under various schemes of Government policies and programmes
11. Extending the support to formal schools so that the Child With Special Needs gets adjusted to new teachers, school environments and the new teachers and school thereby enabling successful and smooth transition.

### **b. Role of Management**

The Management's support is essentially in the form of:

1. Making the centre accessible to all children
2. Keeping the premises learner-friendly
3. Being sensitive towards the needs of Children With Special Needs
4. Having a positive and supportive attitude
5. Providing required material and support to prepare inclusive and need-based teaching learning material
6. Arranging for professional services like speech therapist, special educator, psychologist
7. Organising identification and assessment camps, etc.

### **c. Role of Parents**

The support of parents is essential in making the inclusive ECCE center a success by:

1. Providing support in enrolling Children With Special Needs in the ECCE centre
2. Realizing that girls with disabilities also have equal rights and require opportunity for developing their potential. Therefore, they should be encouraged to be enrolled in a nearby preschool/ECCE centre
3. Sharing success stories of special needs children so that the motivation level remains high
4. Visit doctors or special education centres as prescribed/suggested by the ECCE teacher
5. Parents can establish:
  - Family moral support group
  - Education support group



## Notes

## 6. Volunteering for caregiver training to support the school

The **other functionaries** include the helpers or ayahs, administrative staff, peon, gatekeepers and any volunteer from the society helping in smoothly running the centre. They could also be sensitised about these children and contribute accordingly.

**ACTIVITY 21.1**

Visit the home of a child with special needs and find out:

- a. The parent's understanding of the disability of their child and the probable ways of handling it
- b. Any special resources and facilities available for the child in the neighborhood

**d. Role of Community**

The community members include the parents, Panchayat members, village education committee/preschool management committee members, local administration and authorities etc.

They can support inclusion of Children With Special Needs by:

- Encouraging enrolment of Children With Special Needs
- Emphasis on enrolment for Girls with Special Needs.
- Preventing their dropout by bringing awareness, motivating the parents and providing necessary support
- Organising awareness and identification camp
- Organising resource support-both human and non-human
- Sharing success stories of Children with Special Needs
- Ensuring Children With Special Needs enrol in nearby formal regular school after completing preschool education.
- Having confidence in the abilities and talents of Children with Special Needs



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 21.4

Match column A with column B.

Column A	Column B
(i) Peer tutoring	(a) Special needs services
(ii) Inclusive schools	(b) Plan and modify curriculum
(iii) Referring the child	(c) Organise resource support
(iv) Role of management	(d) Special pedagogical practices
(v) Role of teacher	(e) Student-student



### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson you have learnt :

- Concept and significance of inclusive education
- Benefits of inclusive education
- Teaching learning strategies for inclusive education
- Differentiated instruction
- Characteristic, significance and benefits of cooperative learning strategies
- Characteristics, significance and benefits of collaborative learning strategies
- Characteristics and benefits of peer tutoring
- Role of government in promoting inclusive education
- Significant milestones in legislation:
  - Inclusion of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC), 1974
  - The National Policy on Education, (NPE) 1986 and its Plan of Action, (POA) 1992
  - The RCI Act, 1992
  - The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
  - The National Trust Act 1999



Notes



## Notes

- National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006
- Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009
- Role of teachers, management, parents and communities in promoting inclusive education



## TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What do you mean by inclusive education? List the benefits of inclusive education.
2. State the benefits of cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and peer tutoring.
3. Explain in brief the Acts and policies of the Government for persons with disabilities.
4. Briefly explain the role of teachers and management for promoting inclusive education.
5. Suggest five ways in which the community can help promote inclusive education.



## ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

## 21.1

- (a) True
- (b) True
- (c) False
- (d) True
- (e) False

## 21.2

- (a) differentiated instruction
- (b) collaborative
- (c) cooperative





- (d) trust
- (e) benefitted

**21.3**

- (a) Integrated Education for Disabled Children
- (b) Persons with Disabilities
- (c) Right to Education
- (d) Plan of Action
- (e) Rehabilitation Council of India
- (f) Children with Special Needs
- (g) National Policy on Education

**21.4**

- i. e
- ii. d
- iii. a
- iv. c
- v. b

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