



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2019; 5(8): 70-74
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 09-06-2019
Accepted: 13-07-2019

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Curriculum adaptation in inclusive education

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Abstract

Inclusive education is defined as a learning environment that promotes full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective race, class, colour, gender, disability, learning style and language. The curriculum represents a crucial tool for fostering a broadened concept of inclusive education. Therefore inclusive curriculum development should be seen as a continuous process and closely intertwined with social inclusion. The main objective of this study is to investigate group of good practices in the adaptation of the curriculum for the inclusive education. In the written document of NCF 2005, it is clearly mentioned that the school should welcome differently able children, girls, minorities, children from poor socio economic culture, children from marginalised section as well as children from different circumstances who need to be benefited by education. This also represents bridging the gap between demanding curriculum and existing curriculum. Descriptive research methodology was used for the current study. Data are collected from various secondary sources. Then the article is going to be presented through meta-analysis studies. The study provides various suggestions like universal design learning (UDL) which is an approach to designing curriculum and different instructional strategies such as internet based communication, group work etc.

Keywords: Curricular adaptation, curriculum, inclusive education, diagnosis, NCF, UDL

Introduction

Inclusion is “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.” (UNESCO, 2005) Inclusion is the full acceptance of all students and leads to a sense of belonging within the classroom community. By the practice of educating all children together, children with disabilities have the opportunity to prepare for life in the community, and the same practice also helps the society to make the conscious decision to operate according to the social value of equality. Inclusive education is the best method of promoting wider social acceptance, peace and cooperation.

The child with disability is one who deviates intellectually, physically, socially, or emotionally so markedly from what is considered to be normal growth and development that he cannot receive maximum benefit from a regular school programme and requires a special class or supplementary instructions or service. The different types of available educational programmes for the children with disabilities are segregated (Special) education, integrated education and inclusive education. So Inclusive education is the provision of services to students with disabilities in their neighbourhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for children and teachers. It is a system in which all children from a given community learn together in the same local school including children with learning difficulties, special needs or disabilities. Provision for such a form of education inculcates a feeling of confidence in the minds of disabled children and offers them access to the formal system of education. Inclusive is an effort to make sure that the students with disabilities go to school along with their friends and neighbours while also receiving whatever “specially designed instruction and support” they need to achieve high standards and succeed as learners.

The concept of inclusive education has been spelt out in the Salamanca statement and the framework for action on special needs education 1994. It states that all governments have been urged to “adopt as a matter of law 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 all children irrespective of their disabilities or limitations.

As a system, inclusive education should be flexible. Its principle should be education in the regular classroom whenever possible. The need for flexibility must be reflected in the methods and materials used to give these children the widest possible access to the regular curriculum. When discussing the kind of service needed, the starting point should always be what is best for the particular curriculum. When discussing the kind of service needed, the starting point should always be what is best for the particular child. Emphasizing inclusive education does not rule out special schools or centres.

Types of challenged learners

- Physically handicapped
- Socially background
- Emotionally disturbed
- Mentally disturbed
- Communication disordered
- Learning disabled
- Sensory disabled
- Gifted and creative children
- Street and working children
- Children from remote and nomadic populations
- Children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities
- Children from other disadvantaged marginalised areas or groups

Principles of inclusive education

- The public school system is the foundation for inclusive education.
- Inclusive education at all levels benefits students with special needs and their peers.
- Each student is unique and needs an individualized approach to education to meet his or her intellectual, physical, social and their peers.
- The student’s views are listened to and taken seriously.
- Individual differences between students are a source of richness and diversity and not a problem.
- Inclusive education provides equal benefits for all.

Objectives of inclusive education

- To enrolled the disabled children in general schools by 2010.
- Educational opportunities and educational experiences of normal peers in the school should also be extended along with them to the disabled children.
- Disabled children should participate and interact in the natural environment with society, neighbours, and the normal people.
- The unfavourable attitude of the society towards the disabled should be so shaped as to make them creative citizens working for the progress of the nation.
- The national policy on education (NPE) 1986 advocates providing inclusive education for the severely children.

The objective should be to integrate the physical and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners to prepare them for normal growth and enable them to face life with courage and confidence. It is estimated that around 4 percent of Indian population suffers from varying degrees of disability. Nearly 20 percent suffers from milder forms of disability.

Need and importance of inclusive education

- Provide a diverse stimulating environment in which to grow and learn.
- Enables development of friendships.
- Provides opportunities to develop neighbourhood friends.
- Enabled self respect.
- Provides opportunities to be educated with same age peers.
- Provides peer models.

Characteristics of the inclusive education

- Schools welcome all types of children. No segregation of students regardless of ability.
- Teachers have additional teaching skills to teach normal as well as challenged learners of all types.
- Schools have sufficient devices and equipments to teach challenged learners.
- Teachers decide different types of objectives according to learner’s abilities.
- Teachers give personal attention to learners.
- Schools help for skill development among the challenged learners.
- Though there are many students in the class all of them participate in activities/programmes etc.

Barriers / issues of inclusive education

- Lac of awareness
- Lack of schools
- Shortage of trained teachers
- Negative attitudes
- Gender inequality
- Drop out
- Large class size
- Limitation of funding

Strategies for curriculum adaptation

- A strategy describes how the goals will be achieved by the resources. Strategy is important because the resources available to achieve these goals or usually limited. Strategy generally involves setting goals, determining actions to achieve the goals and mobilizing resources to execute the actions.

There are various strategies for curriculum adaptation discussing below

Instructional strategies

- Instructional strategies may be defined as instruction in how to learn and perform. (Lenz, Deshler & Kissam, 2004)." Learning strategies help students learn and perform by providing them with a specific steps for:
 - approaching new and difficult task
 - guiding thoughts and actions
 - completing task in a timely and successful manner
 - thinking strategically

- Learning strategies may include organizing materials, memorizing information, taking notes, reading text, and taking tests.

Inclusive classroom strategies

- While planning the students in regular Classrooms, their age is to be taken consideration rather than their academic level to foster friendship.
- The teachers should often evaluate both the groups with the same tasks.
- The general students and students with special needs are paired together common assignments to build cooperation.
- Games and problem solving make the classes more active.
- Curricular, co-curricular and extra - curricular activities are made community oriented.
- Giving teaching tasks to the students and helping them become part of learning activity.
- If she/he is co-teaching, commit to planning at least once a week with your co-teaching partner and determine your respective teaching responsibilities.

Use a variety of team teaching methods, including

- **Interactive teaching:** Teachers alternate role of presenting, reviewing, and monitoring instruction.
- **Alternate teaching:** One person teaches, reteaches, on enriches a concept for small group, while the other monitors or teach the remaining students.
- **Parallel teaching:** Students are divided into mixed-ability groups, and each co-teaching partner teaches the same material to one of the groups.
- **Station teaching:** Small group of students rotate to various stations for instructions, review, and/or practice.
- Be aware of students needs and provide the accommodation listed in your students individualized education programmers.

Tips for classroom management-

- Create a structured classroom. This may include designating separate areas for group and individual work and centers for reading or art as well as creating a daily class schedule.
- Display classroom rules.
- Develop classroom cues for setting down to work, getting out materials.
- Plan for transition times (between subjects or tasks, before and after launch, changing classes).
- Help students organize their materials by using checklists, folders and containers to keep materials organized in desks.
- Visually monitor student activity.

Tips for structuring lessons

- Provide opportunities for students to work in small groups and in pairs. If cooperate learning strategies are used, five conditions must be present.
- The task must be authentic, worthwhile, and appropriate for students working in groups small-group learning must be the goal.
- Cooperative behavior should be taught to and used by students.

- Group work should be structured so that the students depend on one another to complete a task successfully.

Role of teachers in inclusive education

- To teach in an inclusive classroom modify their curricula to meet the needs of their special education students.
- It is important for teachers to create a safe classroom environment that allows special-needs children to learn alongside their peers while experiencing positive socialization.
- Developing positive attitude between normal and disabled children
- Referring the identified to the experts for further examination and treatment.
- Preparations of teaching aids/adaptation of teaching aids which will help the children with disabilities learn.
- Providing remedial instruction to the children who require it.
- Construction of achievement and diagnostic tool.

Concept of curriculum development

Curriculum is highlighted part as the key to meet all students with disabilities, flexible and so more accessible. Curriculum as a concept is not easily defined. For example, debates are carried on over whether curriculum should emphasize the child versus as subject-centered curriculum approach, child centred approach, activity-centered approach, integrated approaches, transmission of culture or the totality of experiences learners encounter in schools. Such issues have generated a number of definitions of what curriculum is unfortunately many definitions of curriculum may confuse the teachers they were designed to help, unless they are seen as valid parts of a dynamic whole.

Curriculum development - a dynamic process

As discussed above curriculum should always be dynamic to meet the problems of the students. Therefore, it should be treated differently. First, curriculum development should be viewed at an ongoing, dynamic process, always be in a state of planned changes. Second, the process of curriculum design should be adaptable and applicable to many different subjects and situations. Finally, the teacher should have a primary role in the design process. They should not be relegated to a secondary position in identifying appropriate curriculum for their students.

Curriculum adaption is an ongoing dynamic process that modifies and adapts the prescribed programme of studies to meet the learning requirements of a student with special needs. Adaptation, accommodations and, modifications may seem like interchangeable terms, but when it comes to inclusion they carry significantly different meaning accommodation and modifications serve as two separate kinds of curricular adaptations. It enables the teaching team to welcome learners of all abilities and ensures that every student is challenged to learn. Curriculum adaptation is needed in every part in the student's day. Learning, socialization, independence and safety are assured for the students when all school staffs are aware of their teaching roles in the classroom as well as in the halls, library, gym, playground and launch room etc. Curriculum adaptation always requires education assistant support. An open mind and willing hands are not enough to help students learn in the inclusive classroom. Students and teachers both benefit

when an education assistant is present to provide supervision, tutoring and material preparation. With their knowledgeable support, academic and social skill can be taught that will foster independent learning.

LTLT (Learning to live together)

Learning to live together in peace and harmony is a dynamic holistic and lifelong process through which mutual respect, understanding, caring and sharing, compassion, solidarity, acceptance, and tolerance of diversity among individuals and groups are internalized and practiced together to solve problems and to work towards a just and free, peaceful and democratic societies. Learn together, live together is a diverse, bipartisan coalition of youth, young adults, and parents passionate about promoting, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity in schools. LTLT envisions a world where all children have access to diverse, equitable and inclusive learning environments that will allow them to flourish academically, socially, and as adults in an increasingly diverse world. LTLT developing, broadening or changing perceptions of an attitude toward ourselves and others and consequently, the way we behave in our daily encounters and interaction with others.

Features of curriculum

- Inclusive curriculum development should therefore be seen as a continuous process and closely intertwined with special inclusion.
- The curriculum should have a universal appeal so that it can be taught to differently able learners.
- Inclusive curriculum is a competency based approach to get progressive opportunities.
- Inclusive education should ensure both equity and quality. The integrated curriculum includes different forms and types of learning.
- Inclusive curriculum provides experiential learning, students input and self and peer evaluations.
- Inclusive curriculum should be innovative and disciplinary in approach to groom the students productively.

Challenges for an inclusive curriculum

- Traditional forms and contents of knowledge organization and modes of instruction.
- The lack of clear objectives and definitions which give rise to dilemmas in measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of inclusion in school.
- The diversion from rigid disciplinary routines, multiplicity of contextualized, inter-disciplinary and significant resources for the students.
- Usually children with special needs need more time to learn or to write. They usually do not get extra time; rather they are rebuked for not being able to complete the work in time.
- All students are not including in both formal and informal activities.
- Improper synthesis of multiple stake-holders, multiple approaches and curriculum vision.

National curriculum framework 2005

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2000) has recommended inclusive schools for learners with special educational needs by making appropriate modifications in the content, presentation and

transactions strategies, preparing teachers and developing learning friendly evaluation procedures.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (2000), Brought out by the NCERT, recommended inclusive schools for all without specific reference to pupils with SEN as a way of providing quality education to all learners. According to NCFSE: “Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with disabilities nor for general learners without disabilities. Societal requirement is that learners with special needs should be educated along with other learners in inclusive schools, which are cost effective and have sound pedagogical practices.” (NCERT,2000)

The national curriculum framework 2005 speaks as below

“A Policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout our education system. The participation of all children needs to be ensured in all spheres of their life in and outside the schools. Schools needed to become centres that prepare children for life and ensure all the children, especially the differently able.....”

“This includes children with disabilities, who may need assistance or more time to complete their assigned tasks. It should be even better if, while planning for such activities, the teacher discusses them with all the children in the class, and ensures that each child is given an opportunity to contribute. When planning, therefore, teachers must pay special attention in ensuring the participation of all. This would become a maker of their effectiveness as a teacher.” (NCERT, 2005)

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 had a clear provision in its Chapter 2 under clause 3 sub-section 2 stated that “For the purpose of sub-section (1), no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing the elementary education:

“Provided that a child suffering from disability, as defined in clause (i) of section 2 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection and Full Participation) Act, 1996, shall have the right to pursue free and compulsory elementary education in accordance with the provision of Chapter V of the said Act.” (Government of India, 2009).

UDL (Universal design to learning)

UDL is an approach to designing curriculum including instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessment that are flexible enough to accommodate learner differences. According to Meyer and Rose (2005), “UDL is built on the premise that barriers to learning occur in the interaction with the curriculum they are not inherent solely in the capacity of the learner. UDL represents a shift in how educators look at learner differences. It emphasizes the need for a curriculum that can adapt to student needs for a curriculum that can adapt to student needs rather than requiring learners to adapt to an inflexible curriculum.” The UDL is increasingly drawing the attention of researchers and educators as an effective solution for filling the gap between learner ability and individual differences. UDL framework can be used to proactively design lessons that address learner variability. Using UDL guidelines, teachers can integrate flexible options and supports that ensure that standards – based lessons are accessible to a range of learners in their classrooms. To understand what UDL is, it helps to understand what it’s not. The goal of UDL is to use a variety

of teaching methods to remove any barriers to learning and give all students equal opportunities to succeed. It's about building in flexibility that can be adjusted for every student's strengths and needs. Teachers can create a more nurturing, equitable and inclusive space by using different strategies. These includes the 3 major principles / guidelines such as: first one is Engagement: which is for purposeful, motivated learners, stimulate interest and motivation for learning, Second one is Representation: for resourceful, knowledgeable learners, present information and content in different ways, Third one is Action & Expression: For strategic, goal – directed learners, differentiate the ways that students can express what they know as well as reflecting diversity in teaching and supporting the social justice goals of fellow teachers. So it is to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights in to how humans learn. It capitalizes in new technologies and electronic devices and provide a new way of looking at students with disabilities.

Conclusion

An inclusive education is a burning issue towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with the normal children, the curriculum must be framed in such a way which should meet the needs of diversified section if students. While framing the curriculum the policy makers should unmark, the appropriate age, interest, psychology as well as the needs of the particular society. The curriculum should spread the concept of equity throughout the educational system where all the disable students identify their hidden talents and sharpen their ideas, thoughts to excel in their life. After all, a positive mindset of the society as well as teachers helps for the successful implementation of curriculum.

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