

Integrated Education- What ,Why and How

Mr Suman Barman

Part time faculty in the department of Education, Bhawanipur Anchalik College.

Hemanta Saikia, Assistant Professor in the Department of Education, H.P.B. Girls' College, Golaghat.

Abstract:

Integrated education as a complementary means opens a lot of avenues for satisfying the growing demands of education among the masses. It is worthwhile to mention that special schools make special children feel aloof, not normal. Consequently, feeling of separation may deviate the children with disability from the crowd of normal students. Therefore integrated education has special bearing for mainstreaming students with disability. Integrated education includes imparting education for both the group of children i.e. disabled and non-disabled in a cohesive manner for overcoming the stereotyped barrier in terms of disability. Here the writer of this paper attempted to discuss the concept, needs and ways to impart integrated education understandably.

Keywords : Integrated education, Disabled children, mainstreaming.

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Introduction:

The greatest creature of creation is human being. At the heart of this human superiority is intelligence. Intelligence is a special human attribute that differentiate human being from others.

Every human being is born with some inborn qualities or natural endowments which are to be given ample opportunities for optimum development. Education in the true sense is a comprehensive concept. Its prime concern is to enlarge our vision for the development of human attributes for the benefit of the individual and society as a whole. Education helps us to acquire informations from the diverse situations of life based on which transformation in society can be made possible. Therefore, education has to include all categories of people irrespective of their caste, colour, sex, abilities, disabilities and so on. All of them have got an equal right to develop their unequal talents. Indeed it is a kind of democratic practices for upholding the democratic spirit of the country. The word 'integrity' is used in various domains of the society i.e. cultural integrity, social integrity, national

integrity, integrity in education etc. Then the word 'integration' has been derived from the Latin word 'integrare'. The word 'integrare' literally means bringing together scattered parts into a whole. Today our education system is fractured like general education, special education, remedial education and so on. So integrated education talks about integrating the teaching methods for mainstreaming the students to learn cohesively. Integrated education as its name signifies united the various scattered parts in the field of education to make it a holistic approach. Education today should not be confined to a particular group of people. Hence integrated education makes its facilities available so that special children can learn with normal children under one roof. There is a brief history of the development of the concept of Integrated education. The concept of integrated education is an outcome of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education 1986. The National Policy on Education recommended to provide equal opportunities to all for the greater accessibility of education and thus help to lead a better life in a better way. The mission 'education for all' is not an easy task to materialize into reality. It requires painstaking

efforts from the government as well as from the public. In this regard government of India initiated a scheme by the Ministry of welfare in the year 1974, called I.E.D.C. I.E.D.C. stands for Integrated Education for Disabled Children. It is a centrally sponsored scheme to open up educational opportunities for all irrespective of the barrier in terms of disability. Integrated Education for Disabled Children emphasized the following areas for working in a mission-mode-----

- 1) Integration of students with disabilities to regular school to bridge the gap between the disabled children and non-disabled children.
- 2) Providing financial support to create a conducive learning environment like a free supply of books, stationery, school uniforms, transportation, special equipment and aids.
- 3) Retention of special children in regular school.
- 4) 50% of assistance from the state government for the successful implementation of the programme in regular schools.

But the programme failed to accomplish its target as per the expected level due to the dearth of trained and experienced teachers, lack of awareness of the problems of disabled children and lack of an efficient mechanism to satisfy their academic inquisitiveness. Therefore the programme Integrated Education for Disabled children was revised in the year 1992. In the revised programme 100% assistance was available to the schools(integrated disabled children) for its grand success

Rationale of the Study:

Education is a driving force for the dynamic evolution of civilization. All people need to be educated for the overall development of society. It is worthwhile to mention that the sustainability of democracy largely depends upon the strong hands of future citizens. It is education that enables every citizen to embrace democracy to establish equality, social justice and peace in the society. But it is a disheartening fact of our country that a large number of young talents are excluded from the mainstream of education. It will pose a great threat to the country at large. Therefore integrated education is considered as

a means of giving them all kinds of opportunities to learn as per their capacities.

Integrated education can be seen as a stepping stone for the integrated society that we are longing for. It is such a platform where exceptional children can attend class either on a part-time basis or a full-time basis. The essence of integrated education is to treat each student equally without considering any kind of disability. Accordingly, it will help to bridge the gap between normal children and children with disability. The children with disability are now called differently able children for creating a conducive and motivating environment.

Objective of the Study:

The main objective of this paper is basically to find out the answers to three key questions to develop an insight into the topic undertook for study. These three questions are-----

- (a) What is Integrated Education?
- (b) Why integrated education is needed?
- (c) How to impart integrated education?

Literature Review :

Miles M.(2008) did a study on " Disability in an Eastern Religious Context : Historical Perspective" and revealed how different views and attitudes on disability in Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam that continue to influence the thoughts of half of the world's population.

Panda KC (1997) in his book " Education of Exceptional Children" especially in the chapter no 2 ,the heading of which ' Issues and Innovations in Education of Exceptional Children" defined the term 'integration' from a broader sense that includes physical, academic, social and societal integration. In this chapter he also added diverse issues emerge in the field of education and suggested some innovative steps for mainstreaming them.

Sarma Umesh (2005) conducted a study on " Integrated Education in India: Challenges and Prospects " and summarised the findings that financial constrain, attitude of non-disabled persons, lack of parental and school personnel awareness towards govt.policies and laws , lack of trained faculties at school to implement the special education

program, inadequate resources were found as the major obstacles and challenges of Integrated education. He also suggested some remedial measures like innovative training system, collaboration between different ministries, support from NGO's , alternative examination system, school-university partnership to overcome those obstacles .

Methodology of the study:

This is purely a conceptual paper based on secondary sources of data. Here all the required pieces of information have been collected from different books, research journals and websites. The objectives of this conceptual paper are analysed with the help of description.

Discussion:

(a) What is Integrated education?---

The concept of Integrated education can be better understood by the under-mentioned points----

1. Integrated education is a systematic process or an educational attempt to integrate disabled children with non-disabled children to learn in the same educational setting.
2. Normalization is a key process for the successful implementation of integrated education. The word 'normalization' simply means the process of bringing or returning something to a normal state or conditions. Normalization enhances the learning spirit of disabled children along with non-disabled children.
3. Integrated education can not be considered as the alternative means to special education. Rather it is complementary to special education
4. Integrated education is a holistic programme to comprehend the essence of democracy i.e. 'unity in diversity 'for satisfying the democratic aspiration of having education.
5. Integrated education is a system in which student support services are available to encourage all the children to participate in scholastic and co-scholastic activities together in the same local school.
6. Integrated education is devised in such a lucid manner to enable accessibility of education. Accessibility can be viewed as the

ability to access and benefit from some system or entity. The concept focuses on enabling accessibility for children with disability.

7. Integrated education is an honest attempt to ensure social integration.
8. Integrated education is a process of developing an insight to recognize and respect the diverse capabilities of each other.

Scope of Integrated Education:

Before going to the detailed treatment of the scope of integrated education, firstly we are to know what the term 'scope' means. Usually, in our day to day life, we say about scope in various spheres and use the term accordingly. The term 'scope' very simply means the areas of study. It denotes the extent of the area or subject matter that something deals with or to which it is relevant. Thus the scope of integrated education means all the subject matters that are to be dealt with within the boundary of integrated education.. The aspects that are associated with integrated education can be specified as follows-----

1. Imparting education for non-disabled children along with disabled children.
2. General education with some special Provision for special treatment to satisfy the special needs.
3. Prepare for the best-suited career and employability skills for entering the world of work.
4. Co-ordination of home and school for better understanding the psycho-physical state of a child.
5. Educational programmers' for hearing disability.
6. Children with learning disability like-learning disability in reading, learning disability in Math(Dyscalculia), learning disability in writing(Dysgraphia), learning disability in motor skills(Dyspraxia), learning disability in the language(Aphasia/Dysphasia) etc.
7. Children with multiple handicaps (blind and orthopaedic, hearing impaired and orthopaedic, visually impaired and orthopaedic etc)

8. Educational provisions for mentally retarded persons.

In light of the above discussion, it is apparent that the scope of integrated education is so wide that it covered all kinds of educational provisions for non-disabled children and disabled children of various types. Through operating the various educational programmes,

(b) Why integrated Education is needed?

"There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more"----Robert M.Hensel.

Education is an endless journey through knowledge and skills. It provides many opportunities to explore the inborn possibilities to reach the optimum level. There should no discrimination based on ability and disability. Education has its intrinsic values to foster the idea of oneness or a sense of association for an inclusive society. Moreover, education is one of the strongest instrument for bringing the desirable changes towards the vertical mobility of individual life as well as the life of the society. As a result of the concept of integrated education has become popularized. The concept of Integrated education has been developed with the prospect to open up a lot of avenues to equip oneself with the required knowledge and skills irrespective of the disabled and non-disabled children. Needs of integrated education can be specified by the under-mentioned points----

1. Integrated education makes both the disabled and non-disabled children optimistic and self-confident to face the diverse situations of life courageously.
2. It recognizes the hidden talents and accordingly gives enough opportunities to explore them to cope up with the ever-changing knowledge-based world.
3. It improvises the academic performance of the students using a co-operative learning strategy.
4. Integrated education is an honest attempt to promote a child-friendly environment where learning becomes enjoyable and motivating to move in the upward direction as per their capacities.
5. Integrated education, being an evolutionary force enables the disabled and non-disabled children to develop an insight to work for socio-cultural integrity.
6. Developing the Sense of respect towards individuality of each other and mutual bonding becomes possible when of different abilities can learn together in the same educational setting.
7. 'The destiny of a nation is being shaped inside her classroom', we all are familiar with the quotation of Kothari commission 1964-66 which vividly portrays the role of education in the process of nation-building. By rationalizing the idea we have come to know that the future democracy largely depends upon the citizens of the country. Their integrated education is needed to maximize the opportunity of having education for the development of healthy citizenship.
8. Integrated education is needed to provide supplementary assistance for translating the idea of education for all' into reality. Thus, integrated education has brought wider possibilities to fulfil the increasing demands of education to establish equity, equality and peace in society.

(c) How to impart integrated Education?

"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way that they learn"----Ignacio Estrada.

Teaching in the present century is not merely a transmission of the knowledge of curriculum, but also the provider of alternative views of the world and a strengthener of the will to explore the inner possibilities. The modern era in the arena of education belongs to the era of integrated education i.e. educating all types of children whether they exceptional or normal together in the regular classroom of the mainstream education as per the increasing educational demands of the people. In this regard, teachers play many key roles. A teacher has been recognized as the key person in the preservation, progression and projection of a nation's cultural heritage. Those who teach effectively may make a progressive and productive society. The approach of

a teacher should sensitize the students to create a strong, egalitarian and prosperous society where anyone can live with dignity. Therefore, teaching cannot be considered as everybody's cup of tea. Rather it is the most challenging job as it has to meet the diverse needs of the learners considering their psycho-physical state. Teaching is considered to be a noble profession. Because teachers not only teach students for vocation but also helps the students for worthy living and holistic development. A teacher has to plan skillfully for the successful completion of his task. To maximize the performance of learners through proper utilization of the available resources, A teacher has to play the following roles---

1. The teacher should make an honest attempt to develop the feeling of oneness or sense of association with a prospect to have an integrated society.
2. Records of every student should be maintained by the teacher to take immediate action if necessary.
3. Teachers should be updated with innovative methods and techniques to treat the children in a better way.
4. Teachers should deal friendly and impartially with the students regardless of their disability.
5. Recognize the differences in aptitude and capabilities amongst the students and strive to meet their individual needs.
6. The teacher should act as a facilitator and role model and understand the children in a broader educational and social context.
7. Teachers are to be professionally and ethically bound to nurture such an environment that guarantees equal opportunities to all learners.
8. Teachers should respond to the student's queries and confusions about the course material.
9. Teachers should encourage both disabled and non-disabled children to participate in various co-curricular activities following their interest.
10. Teachers should respect the individuality of the students to express their views and opinions.
11. Teachers should enhance the learning spirit of the students and accordingly use some

techniques to bridge the so-called gap between disabled and non-disabled.

12. Remedial teaching should be made available for children with special needs.

Thus the role of the teacher has become more challenging to teach the student keeping the balance between disabled and non-disabled children. The role of a teacher in integrated education is not simply confined to the dissemination of knowledge or imparting information rather it goes beyond to create a stimulating learning environment for ensuring all students to reach their full potential.

Conclusion :

Education itself has some intrinsic values for the upward mobility of the human race. Nowadays, it has been well-recognized that education should easily accessible for the wider benefit of humanity. Accordingly, special attention is to be paid to the education of women, the disabled and other backward sections of society. Integrated education carries a ray of hope for bridging the prevailing gap between the disabled and non-disabled children and thereby the establishment of an integrated society at large.

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