

Inclusive Higher Education For Specially ABLED

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education and inclusion for the differently abled is a comparatively new concept. In the earlier decade specially abled was looked at differently, and families of such children found it a challenge to bring up such children. When we glance few decades back, there were no special schools or open universities to cater to their needs. Once challenged they remained challenged in all aspects throughout life. When all students are together in mainstream age-appropriate classrooms for general education, irrespective to the challenges that they have, we term it as having inclusive education that helps an individual to meet success in core curriculum with high-quality instruction, intervention and support (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010; Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Successful inclusive education happens primarily through having acceptance and understanding by attending to students differences and diversity which can embrace emotional, social, cognitive, academic and physical aspects.

However, in addition students may have to spend time out of their regular classes also for therapies – for instance occupation or speech therapy. But the goal is this should be the exception. In the current context the question is how the specially abled can be included in higher education.

KEY WORDS: *Inclusive higher education, specially abled.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a primary tool that is considered to be very useful in gaining insights and knowledge about various avenues. It provides an individual with a perspective related to his social responsibilities and aids in exploring various areas of their preferred expertise. It guides about the world around us as it stands as a stronger element in evolving us. In the modern world of industrialization, it plays a prominent role. Educational institutions stand as firm pillars of the education sector as they provide us with facts and job skills, that directly contribute towards better employment and further assists in eradication of poverty. Education has been a prime concern for persons with disability due to multiple constraints. Students with disability have various challenges and hurdles to overcome due to reasons like lack of infrastructural planning and learning experiences. At times students with disability encounter negative attitude and stereotypes from their peers.

Higher education has a stronger impact in individuals' growth and development. Studies have shown that people with some form of higher education earn more thus leading to positive health. Most of the jobs have written and verbal communication, it is during the higher education that an individual gets opportunities to polish these communication skills. At this stage, they get a platform to explore various facets of prospective fields and realize their passion and areas of interest. Higher education enables an individual to build professional etiquettes, develop organizational skills and encourage creativity and innovation. 21st Century has demonstrated progress in the inclusive learning sector. Inclusive learning focuses on a common learning environment for non-disabled and disabled individuals (including ones with need for special education). It is believed that learning in mainstream school will prove as a stimulating environment for persons with special needs. UNESCO promotes such inclusive learning systems that promote achievement of all learners. An inclusive environment shall lead to awareness of needs and promote better understanding and interactions between students from mainstream learning environment and persons with special needs or disability.

The Persons with Disability Act (1965) suggests that differently abled must have access and reach to education at all levels. The University Grants Commission (UGC), a statutory body that is set up by government

of India for maintenance of standards of higher education supports colleges and educational institutions throughout the nation to involve in special education activities in order to empower differently abled persons. UGC has suggested a scheme of support for Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (HEPSN). The schemes plans have evolved keeping in mind about the infrastructural needs for the specially abled. The HEPSN scheme is principally intended for generating a setting at the higher education institutions to improve higher education learning experiences of differently abled persons. Making awareness about the competences of differently abled persons, structure aimed at refining accessibility, purchase of equipment to enrich learning, etc., are the wide-ranging categories of assistance under this scheme.

Objectives of HEPSN

1. To deliver equivalent educational opportunities to differently/specially-abled persons in higher education institutions.
2. To create consciousness amongst the representatives of higher education about the explicit educational requirements of differently-abled persons.
3. To prepare higher education institutions with the amenities to provide access to differently-abled persons.
4. To give special policies devices to higher education institutions that will supplement the learning experiences of differently-abled persons.
5. To monitor the application of all present and future legislations and policies, which are relating to higher education of differently-abled persons.

The UGC initiated program HEPSN has 3 main components under its act:

1. Establishment of Enabling units

Functions of enabling units:

- Simplify admission process among various courses of differently abled persons.
- Providing counselling and guidance to differently abled individuals.
- Create awareness about the general issues concerning their learnings and needs of differently abled persons.
- Guide to gain successful employment in public and private sectors by assisting the differently abled graduates.

2. Accessibility of the Differently abled persons.

It has been observed that special arrangements are needed for the differently abled individuals to encourage their mobility and to function independently in the environment. Many institutions architectural infrastructure acts as a barrier that disabled persons find problematic for their day-to-day functioning.

3. Providing Special Equipment to enhance Educational Services for Differently abled Persons

Differently abled persons need special assistances and appliances for their daily functioning. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has made these services available through various schemes. The higher education organizations may also need assessment devices and special learning to help specially abled enrolled students apart from obtaining assistive devices through these schemes.

The UNICEF has estimated that globally 93 million children live with disabilities. Alike all children, special children or children with disabilities too have desires and visions for their futures. Like all children, to develop their skills and realize their full potential, they need good quality of education. Most of the times, children with disabilities are frequently ignored in policymaking, restraining their access to education and their capability to participate in economic, social and political life. Globally, these children are amongst the most likely to be out of school. They face continuous hurdles in receiving education curtailing from judgement, stigma, discrimination and the monotonous failure of decision makers to include disability in school services. Disability is the sole most serious barrier to education across the globe. Close to 50 % of children with disabilities are not seen in school when compared to only 13 % of their peers without disabilities. Stolen of their right to learn, children with disabilities are often deprived of the chance to take part in their societies, the workforce, and the verdicts that most affect them.

The purpose of this study is to enlighten individuals and educational institutions to encourage inclusive learning by highlighting various policies and schemes that are already by education sectors to ensure quality education for all.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Inclusive education is becoming popular because of the research Benefits of such an education. It is that both students with and without disabilities or special needs learn more. Numerous studies over the past 3 decades have instituted that students with disabilities have higher accomplishment and improved skills through inclusive schooling, and their peers without challenges have benefitted too, (Bui, et al., 2010; Dupuis, Barclay, Holms, Platt, Shaha, & Lewis, 2006; Newman, 2006; Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

It includes academic gains for students with disabilities (SWD), concerning literacy (writing and reading), arithmetic, and social studies — both on standardized tests and in grades — for better communication skills, and improved social skills and more friendships. More time in the general classroom for SWD is also associated with fewer absences and referrals for disruptive behaviour. This could be associated to findings about attitude — a higher self-concept is observed in them, they develop more liking towards their school and teacher and feel more motivated around learning and working.

Observations state that their peers without disabilities also display more optimistic attitudes in these same areas when in inclusive classrooms. They make better academic improvements in reading and mathematics. Research illustrates that the existence of SWD gives non-SWD new kinds of learning occasions. One of these results in serving as peer-coaches. Also, by learning how to support another student, their individual performance reflects progressive improvement. Another is that as teachers take into greater consideration their diverse SWD learners, they provide instruction in a wider range of learning modalities (visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic), which benefits their regular ed students as well.

Researchers frequently explore concerns and possible pitfalls that might make education less effective in inclusion teaching space (Bui et al., 2010; Dupois et al., 2006). But findings show different inferences. Time of engagement of students between the inclusive and non-inclusive classrooms does not differ. In fact, it has been observed that in many occurrences, regular education students report slight to no awareness about existence of students with disabilities in their classrooms. On being aware, they have demonstrate more acceptance and portrayed more tolerance for SWD on experiencing an inclusive education collectively.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Being a conceptual paper, this paper was written by the authors with the view of creating awareness about inclusion of specially abled persons in Higher education settings.

IV. SUMMARY

Education is the birth right for any individual. Education and specifically Higher education opens and broaden ones, knowledge, and insights into academic and non-academic areas of one's life. The especially abled sector hardly finds any opportunity for education leave alone higher education. Parents, caregivers and the specially abled struggle to find a place in this fast-moving world. Many live a miserable life, and many more are heckled and discriminated in this world, this is common in developing and poor Nations.

Agencies like UGC and UNICEF have clearly indicated that such specially abled population deprived of Inclusive Higher education is as High as 93 Million in the world. As Mental Health workers and special educators, we the authors feel that this approach and attitude of the world is not acceptable. More and more private and Public organizations, and the common Public should actively participate in this endeavour to make Higher education Inclusive for the specially abled. We Dream for and hope that Inclusive education for the Special or Gifted sector becomes a Dream soon.

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