Social Justice: Inclusion of Differently Abled Children

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I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusion is educating the children with disability in regular classrooms. It brings all students together in one classroom and community, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses and seeks to maximize the potential of all students. It is one of the most effective ways in which to promote an inclusive and tolerant society.

Very few schools have included children with disabilities; only few schools make appropriate adaptation to the curriculum, teaching and assessment methods and infrastructure. The rest of the schools either reject students with disabilities or they take in for the sake of enrolment. This injustice done for children with disability needs a definite study.

Education must be revisited in light of a renewed vision of sustainable human and social development that is both equitable and viable. This vision of sustainability must take into consideration the social, environmental and economic dimensions of human development and the various ways in which these relate to education: 'An empowering education is one that builds the human resources we need to be productive, to continue to learn, to solve problems, to be creative, and to live together and with nature in peace and harmony. When nations ensure that such an education is accessible to all throughout their lives, a quiet revolution is set in motion: education becomes the engine of sustainable development and the key to a better world.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

- Children with disabilities remain invisible to the education system.
- Families and communities are not supportive.
- Teachers lack training, leadership, knowledge and support to adapt curriculum.
- Poor quality education.
- Poor access to knowledge and information for – parents, teachers, administrators and policy makers.
- No proper inclusive education infrastructure - governance, policy, planning, financing, implementation and monitoring.
- Lack of public support for inclusion.
- Lack of accountability and monitoring mechanisms.

III. NEED AND IMPORTANCE

Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities declares that: ''States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. It further states that: ''States Parties should ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability. 'The mandate is clear: children and adolescents with disabilities have the right to be part of regular classroom programs, to have reasonable accommodations made for them, and to have ''effective individualized support measures . . . in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.''

The philosophy of inclusive education is aimed at helping all children learn, everyone in the class benefits. Children learn at their own pace and style within a nurturing learning environment.

Inclusion of differently abled children has become significant for the following reasons:

➢ Students with disabilities challenge the management to build a learning environment that provides a variety of ways in which learning content is developed and prtesented

➢ All children are able to be part of their community and develop a sense of belonging and become better prepared for life in the community as children and adults.

➢ It fosters a culture of respect and belonging. It also provides the opportunity to learn about and accept individual differences.
➢ A basis for an Inclusive societythat embraces and integrates an inclusive culture in civic participation, employability and community relationships.

IV. OBJECTIVES

- To know about the Socio Demographic details of the respondents
- To know about the Social, Psychological and Financial challenges faced by the respondents.
- To study about the efforts taken by the schools towards inclusion of Children with Special Needs on the basis of Academics, Extracurricular activities, Infrastructure.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Research design is Descriptive Research and the sampling technique adopted is PpurposiveSampling technique.

The universe consists of all survey elements that qualify for inclusion in the research study. The universe of the study was parents of the children with special needs in and around Madras Christian College in radius of 40 km.The field of the study was parents of children with special needs from various formal schools. The Sample size is 100 respondents and the tool used for data collection is Questionnaire.

VI. MEANING AND DEFINITION

SOCIAL JUSTICE
According to National Association of Social Workers, "Social Justice is the view that everyone deserves equal, economic, political and social rights and opportunities".
INCLUSION
Miller and Katz (2002) defines inclusion as; "a sense of belonging; feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best".
DISABILITY
The United States Government defines; "Disability as a physical or mental impairments that substantially limits one or more of an individual's major life activities".
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:-
'Inclusion is about putting the right to education into action by reaching out to all learners, respecting their diverse needs, abilities and characteristics and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the learning environment. An Inclusive Education not only responds and adapts to each learners needs, but is relevant to their society and respectful of culture – a two-way dignified process' (World Education Forum, 2015).

VII. MAIN FINDINGS

- Fifty four per cent of the schools do not provide separate curriculum for the differently abled students.
- Sixty three per cent of the schools do not provide the special method of teaching for the differently abled students.
- Thirty one per cent of the schools provided special care for the students by giving extra time to them during exams.
- Fifty seven per cent of the students are not interested in participating in different sports and extra - curricular activities.
- Fifty three per cent of the schools give opportunities to the differentially abled students to participate in the extra – curricular activities.
- Thirty five per cent of the schools provide facilities like ramps to the differently abled students.
- Eighty six per cent of the schools provide safe infrastructure facilities to the differently abled students
- Eighty one per cent of the schools does not have any integration with any NGO for the differently abled students.
- Sixty one per cent of the differently abled students are not able to cope up with the academics.
- Forty seven per cent of the parents felt happy enrolling their child in spite of the disability.
- Forty three per cent of the parents get emotional support from their social settings.
- Forty five per cent face financial problems with medical expenses.
- Sixty one per cent of the parents take their children to various places.
- Fifty three per cent of the parents faced conflicts with schools due to minimal inclusion support.

VIII.   SUGGESTIONS

- Government at all levels should safeguard and improve the living condition of disabled people and ensure that they share the fruits of reforms and development.
- Promoting the living condition of disabled people. It needs increased national effort and support.
- The government should establish a subsidy system, expand the pension scheme and medical insurance to disabled people.
- Involve people with disabilities-at an individual level, person with disabilities are entitled control over their lives and therefore need to be consulted on issues that concern them directly.
- Provide adequate funding and improve affordability for people with disability and ensure for inclusion everywhere.
- Public buildings and institutions should be made keeping the differently abled people in mind and including the required infrastructure like ramps, railings, lifts etc.

IX. CONCLUSION

In India, Inclusive education is at a very early stage of conceptualization and implementation. The fact that it is being discussed, debated and in some places implemented although falteringly, demonstrates a willingness to engage with elements of a new concept that has the potential to be developed in the future and in a positive manner.

Human resources potential aside, without education, marginalized children may not be able to fulfil their rights as citizens in the largest democracy of the world. Inclusive education thus needs to be implemented with full rigour in order to fulfil the mandate of Education for all as guaranteed by the Fundamental Right to education declared by the 86th Constitutional amendment act in 2002 and enacted as a law in the year 2009.

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