

# Challenges And Opportunities To Implement Inclusive Education

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**Abstract-** This study is conducted in order to assess the challenges and opportunities to implement inclusive education in selected primary schools. In order to attain the objectives of the study, related literatures on international policies and concepts of inclusive education was reviewed in detail. Concerning the significance of the study it is expected that it will highlight those concerned individuals on the existing situation prevailing in connection with the problem under study and devise mechanisms for addressing the observed situation. Schools can implement inclusive education programmes if they are adequately prepared, are able to garner support of all stakeholders involved in the process and have basic resources to run the programmes. The guidelines also suggest ways in which curriculum adaptations, teaching methodology and evaluation procedures can be adapted to suit needs of children with special needs. Issues of role allocation and seeking support of parents and peers are also dealt with.

**Keywords-** Inclusive Education, Special Needs Education, Children with Disabilities

## I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education means welcoming all children, without discrimination into regular or general schools. By the change of attitude against differential treatment of education differences in people will likely be seen in a positive perspective. It calls for a respect of difference and celebration of diversity. (Disability in Ethiopia, 2005) It is not only accommodating children in the regular or general school rather it goes beyond that. For this, the same author said that “It is a focus on creating environments responsive to the differing developmental capacities, needs and potentials of all children. (Disability in Ethiopia, 2005) Inclusion is not just about placing students with disabilities in to mainstream classrooms. It recognizes that all children have individual needs, and that teachers who are trained to facilitate an inclusive classroom, can better meet the needs of all children (Tomlinson, 1996). Therefore, from the cited text we can understand that it is a shift in service from simply trying to fit the child into “normal setting”, to trying to change the system of education to accommodate the child.

## Barriers and Suggestions for Implementing Inclusive Education

While we cannot neglect the importance of inclusive education it remains unanswered why the practice of inclusive education is presenting problems. It appears that it is both levels of government and non government policy but rather at the level of implementation. While the policy states that all children should go to school and governments are enforcing this rule-in many cases quality learning is not taking place, which is contradictory to the ethos of inclusive education. The reasons for the non implementation of the inclusive education in India, is because of various barriers which according to Dash (Dash, 2012), are both external and as well as internal. The external barriers are confronted before coming to and getting enrolled in schools, which includes physical location of schools, non-availability of school, social stigmatization or economic conditions of the learners. The internal barriers are mostly psychological barriers like self concept, confidence etc which are sometimes imposed by the external factors and first step to remove the internal barriers is to remove the external barriers. The following are some of the external barriers. Inclusive education is a binding and priority for government. However, a wide gap in policy and practice exists in the country with respect to inclusive education. The challenges of inclusive education might be blamed on the students’ challenges instead of the shortcomings of the educational system. (Dash, 2012)

**Physical Barriers** - In some districts, students with physical disabilities are expected to attend schools that are inaccessible to them. In economically-deprived school systems, especially those in rural areas, dilapidated and poorly-cared for buildings can restrict accessibility. Some of these facilities are not safe or healthy for any students. Many schools don’t have the facilities to properly accommodate students with special needs, and local governments lack either the funds or the resolve to provide financial help. Environmental barriers can include doors, passageways, stairs and ramps, and recreational areas. These can create a barrier for some students to simply enter the school building or classroom.

**Curriculum** - A rigid curriculum that does not allow for experimentation or the use of different teaching methods can be an enormous barrier to inclusion. Study plans that don't recognize different styles of learning hinder the school experience for all students, even those not traditionally recognized as having physical or mental challenges.

**Teachers** - Teachers who are not trained or who are unwilling or unenthusiastic about working with differentlyabled students are a drawback to successful inclusion. Training often falls short of real effectiveness, and instructors already straining under large workloads may resent the added duties of coming up with different approaches for the same lessons.

**Language and communication** - Many students are expected to learn while being taught in a language that is new and in some cases unfamiliar to them. This is obviously a significant barrier to successful learning. Too often, these students face discrimination and low expectations.

**Socio-economic factors** - Areas that are traditionally poor and those with higher-than-average unemployment rates tend to have schools that reflect that environment, such as run-down facilities, students who are unable to afford basic necessities and other barriers to the learning process. Violence, poor health services, and other social factors make create barriers even for traditional learners, and these challenges make inclusion all but impossible.

**Funding** - Adequate funding is a necessity for inclusion and yet it is rare. Schools often lack adequate facilities, qualified and properly-trained teachers and other staff members, educational materials and general support. Sadly, lack of resources is pervasive throughout many educational systems. Organization of the Education System: Centralized education systems are rarely conducive to positive change and initiative. Decisions come from the school system's high-level authorities whose initiatives focus on employee compliance more than quality learning. The top levels of the organization may have little or no idea about the realities teachers face on a daily basis.

**Policies as Barriers** - Many policy makers don't understand or believe in inclusive education, and these leaders can stonewall efforts to make school policies more inclusive. This can exclude whole groups of learners from the mainstream educational system, thereby preventing them from enjoying the same opportunities for education and employment afforded to traditional students. Overcoming the many barriers to inclusive education will require additional funding, but even more importantly, it requires the change of old and outdated

attitudes. Studies support what many classroom teachers know by experience:

### **Some other challenges that teachers faces in inclusive education**

**Lack of experience in an inclusion setting.** Some teachers have not been exposed to special needs classrooms and this can be a disadvantage. Educators need to coordinate efforts and understand the needs of the classroom in terms of developing skills and lesson plans.

**Lack of experience dealing with severe and profound disabilities.** Students with severe and profound disabilities require more adaptation and medical attention than the average student. Teachers must be skilled in handling severe disabilities and create lesson plans based on individual abilities and adhere to dietary needs of the child. Lack of experience can lead to the child not progressing with skills or cause of adverse medical incidents.

**Including all students in all activities.** Special needs inclusion classrooms must be able to involve its students in all classroom activities. Teachers need to address how the classroom will communicate with each other and encourage participation. If there is a lack of adaptive equipment or adaptive communication and language tools, it makes it difficult for teachers to function as a united classroom.

**Educating students with less severe disabilities.** When there are children of all abilities in the classroom, both physical and academic, children in the middle can easily fall between the cracks. These children can have learning disabilities, hearing impairments, ADD or language delays to name a few. Providing the right amount of attention and adaptation can be challenging, especially if there is a higher teacher to student ratio.

**Shortage of teacher aides.** Normally, inclusive classrooms have a regular educator and special needs educator. Due to the nature of the classroom and size, it is imperative that there be an appropriate number of teacher aides to assist the teachers with day to day activities.

**Teaching compassion to students.** Not all students have been exposed to persons with special needs and this becomes a challenge to teachers. Teachers must not tolerate insensitiveness and cruelty and teach that all students are to be treated with respect, regardless of ability.

**Dealing with parents of "typically developing" students.** As some students are not use to dealing with persons with special

needs, parents are no exception. Teachers need to convey to parents how the classroom is conducted and that all educational needs will be met.

**Individualized lesson plans.** Because there are varying abilities in the classroom, teachers can be challenged to address individual academic needs based on ability.

**Coordinating therapies.** A special needs inclusion classroom needs to be well organized and allow for students to attend therapy sessions. However, this becomes a challenge in planning day to day activities and keeping all students engaged and learning.

## II. CONCLUSION

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education could be formed and developed in the context of an educational system which can provide some specific conditions in order to have a good practice in this field. Those conditions refer to a restructure of the curricula, more help from support teachers, more time for preparing the educational activities, decreasing the number of students in one class, creating and developing opportunities for interactive partnerships between teachers, students, support teachers and parents and so on. The reform of the curriculum should be made in parallel with a proper training for teachers regarding their knowledge of inclusion and its principles. The difficulties are inherent to any change or reform, but it is necessary to develop an educational system which can properly respond to all the needs, characteristics and individual differences of all children in school (Menon, 2014). The separate teacher education programs for regular and special education do not equip teachers with an integrated knowledge of the expected roles, functions and responsibilities to meet the diversity of learning needs in the classroom.

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