

Responsible Stakeholders: Key towards Successful Inclusion

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Abstract

Inclusion is a mind set and attitude and a way of life that respects individuals with their needs as they are. It focuses on interdependency and quality education without discrimination. Each and every stakeholder is very valuable in realization of ultimate dreams of the inclusion and each stakeholder deserves same respect, despite of their educational status in the educational process. It is very important for stakeholders to hold positive attitudes and beliefs about inclusion since it affects the extent to which philosophy of inclusion is implemented in the school. All the stakeholders should pay attention to both excellence and equity in the education. A change in attitude of stakeholders is very much needed so that diversity is celebrated everywhere not in the school only. Since inclusive classroom is heterogeneous having children with diverse needs, it is a challenge to manage such classroom for teachers and for educational administrators also. It is possible only when all the stakeholders such as teachers, parents, children, community members, educational administrators, non academic staff, resource teachers have interest in the process of education and supports each other so that the enterprise of education become successful. This paper clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the process of education. Role of every stakeholder has been discussed in detail which will work as guidelines for them. All stakeholders must have coordinated collaboration with each other to make positive inclusive environment in the process of education. If any one of the stakeholders doesn't show commitment then work and efforts of other stakeholders also will not give the desired output towards complete and successful inclusion.

Keywords: Inclusion, Stakeholder, Diversity, CWSN, Inclusive environment

Introduction

Inclusive education concept has evolved in USA. In India inclusive education practically came into existence when right to Education Act was passed in 2009. In Inclusive education disabled children are taught with normal children so that all children could reach to their academic and social potentials with the humanitarian approach of normalization. For main streaming of disabled children in school, settings have to be changed. The Right of Person with Disability Act 2016 had advocated for such children and now in the latest education policy i.e. NEP 2020 inclusive education has become a guiding force and this will act as a major reform in Indian education system. We have to make our school community as inclusive community where all are valued and all are included. All the stakeholders should pay attention to both excellence and equity in the education. A change in attitude of stakeholders is very much needed so that diversity is celebrated everywhere not in the school only. Challenging behavior of SEN children can be taken as an opportunity to develop a new understanding towards them and to develop a new skill of focusing on positive ways of

dealing. The environment around the children must be such that all the professionals and the parents work together to design programs of education so that the programs must be able to cater the students' need. Since inclusive classroom is heterogeneous having children with diverse needs, it is a challenge to manage such classroom for teachers and for educational administrators also. It is possible only when all the stakeholders such as teachers, parents, children, community members, educational administrators, non academic staff, resource teachers have interest in the process of education and supports each other so that the enterprise of education became successful.

Who are Stakeholders?

Stakeholder is someone who is directly or indirectly associated with the process of education. Stakeholder is someone who gets affected or has the capacity to affect the process of education. In other words stakeholder is either an individual or a group of persons which supports the process of education. They have interest in the process and their honest contribution is required to make the process of education successful. Here stake is the education provided in the school or higher education institutions (colleges and universities) and stakeholders are the children, parents, teachers, community members, educational administrators, non-academic staff such as office-staff, caregivers, NGOs and other agencies. The educational process becomes successful only when all the stakeholders co-operate with each other and educational institution functions smoothly only when all will focus on the educational process. For example it is the moral obligation of teachers to provide quality education and they have legal right to get good salary in return but if the school management failed to do so they will find some other ways of income. They can focus on home-tuitions, coaching centers' teaching etc. So the quality of education will reduce in the school means teachers and school administration affected each other. Another example is in this pandemic time the government has advised that without parents' consent school can't force children to come for offline classes. So even a school management has decided to start offline classes they can't conduct because they are affected by the parents' decision so the school management has to conduct classes in both online and offline mode. Another example is parents getting affected by the school policies that the school will increase 10% of the tuition fees every year or they have to purchase books, uniforms, stationery items, shoes etc. from a fixed shop or from the fixed brand. Thus we can say that every stakeholder can affect simultaneously each other. For education to become a successful enterprise each stakeholder has a specific roles and responsibilities. In case of inclusive education their roles and responsibilities are more significant because here Number of stakeholders are much more than regular educational process and greater co-operation and understanding with each other is needed. Main stakeholder in the process of inclusive education are the policy makers, School authorities, teachers, teacher educators, parents, assistant teachers, health professionals and counselor ,parents , sibling etc.

Types of Stakeholders

There are two types of stakeholders

Internal stakeholders: individuals or groups of peoples with in the school community who gets affected or have a power to affect the educational system are called internal stakeholders like students, teachers, school administrators, supporting staff etc.

External stakeholders: group of people or organizations outside the school are called external stakeholders they are government bodies, social workers, media Agencies, trainers, assistive device suppliers and many more. These also make individual or group efforts to make Inclusion successful.

Importance of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the people which directly or indirectly affect the educational process. They play an important role in decision making. It is tough to create an inclusive environment, for this all stakeholders have to come together with successful collaboration so that they can act as a source of inspiration, hope, reliance, love and caring for the children. Stakeholders' wisdom is needed in growth and development of children. Stakeholders have a strong influence on the effective functioning of educational institution. Stakeholders effectively communicate with each other so that they can learn about separate realities and apply logical consequences and create an environment with known punitive solutions for the situations. Stakeholders make constant effort to build on positive environment by encouraging, rewarding, praising the students. Stakeholders are responsible for making School policies, which promote belongingness, acceptance and supports diversity. They make School behavioral policy that includes clearly articulated practices for promoting acceptable behavior. The role of every stakeholder is crucial for the Welfare and success of educational institution, for structuring and developing the curriculum. They are responsible for successful implementation of inclusion. Let us discuss roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in achieving the goal of inclusion in education.

Role of Policy Makers

India is a democratic country. Our Constitution ensures freedom, justice, equality and dignity for all citizens and implicitly a mandate for an inclusive society where all are valued. For well - being of people including person with disabilities Government of India time to time created organizations and establishment time to time. In recent years there have been positive changes in the perception of the society towards the differently abled persons. It has been realized that if they have been given equal opportunity and proper and planned support then they can live a quality- life. This all has become possible due to the steps taken by the Government of India for betterment of person with disabilities. Government of India has passed various acts like Persons with Disability Act(1995) and comprehensive legislations like National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006 with reference to inclusive education.

- Role of policymakers is very important and very challenging because India is very diverse country with so many languages, cultures, demographical areas, difficult Geographical areas, religions and social believes etc.
- They should make policy in such a way that it caters the need of all children of different backgrounds and needs at the same time as well as it should be sensitive to all the learners also.
- At different stages of education, educational needs of learners changes so step by step new modifications in education system or policies is also needed.
- The basic principle of all policies must be to fulfill the human right approach which clearly said that every child is special in one way or the other, every child is unique.
- It is the responsibility of the government to provide equal opportunity and easy access

- to education at every level.
- The policy maker should state the provisions in such a terminology so that these make other stakeholders sensitive and responsible. Provisions must be such that they do not appear out of phase, they can be implemented at Grass root level also with ease.
- Person with disability has free access to education till attained the age of 18 in an appropriate environment. They should promote setting up of more and more inclusive schools or upgrade the previously existing schools with inclusive settings both in government and private sector so that child gets easy access to the school.
- Authorities must endeavor to equip the schools with CWSN with various facilities like assistive devices, support services, health professionals, vocational training facilities etc.
- Provisions are made so that a disabled person can continue his education at any stage of life. There should be no age bar for educational access, part time classes can be also be conducted for the children with disability who have dropped out from their studies for some reason or they were not able to continue their studies. Provisions should be made for imparting education via different modes and means like open school, distant education, online courses.
- Government should take steps to meet the resources; human resources as well as physical resources. In collaboration with NGOs and other Agencies
- It should develop teacher training programs so that requisite man power will be available for inclusive schools. Teacher education programs must be such that they develop responsible passionate and self-motivated human- resources .
- Official and Non-governmental Agencies should initiate researches for the purpose of designing and developing new assistive devices for teaching and helping and teaching materials which are local, low-cost and contextual so that they will help in providing equal opportunities to the CWSN.
- Policies must be such that they are suitable for all children because no two children with diverse needs are alike. For this policy is must be flexible enough to accommodate all types of learners accountability and responsibilities of the personnel involved in the whole process of implementation of inclusion at various levels such that state, district and block level must be highlighted or clearly stated to encourage the positive action. An established system of tracking the performance of teachers and professionals is very much needed to provide quality education. Policy related researches must be encouraged so that implementation and related issues can be addressed by further amendments in the policies.
- Policy makers always seek for suggestions so that the policy can be modified in response to the needs and difficulties in the implementation.
- The Government prepares a comprehensive education scheme which made provisions for transport facilities, supply of books, uniforms and other materials, removal of infrastructural barriers, Grants, scholarships , modification in examination system, various curricular adaptation for the benefit of children with various disabilities.
- The policy Framework must be such that it always has scope of innovation up to the permissible extent so as to meet local needs. Innovations in implementation are always welcomed and encouraged by policymakers. Feedback must be taken and reviewed for the further improvement.

Role of teacher

In the process of education teacher plays the role of lead actor .in the process of implementation of inclusive strategies percentage contribution of the teacher is much more as compared to other stakeholders. Both the regular and the special or resource teachers are very essential for implementation of policies. Roles and responsibilities of both are Identified and discussed separately.

- A regular teacher has to play most crucial role in the process of inclusion. It is the teacher who firstly identify that a particular child of the class is differently-abled. Early identification helps a lot in understanding the child and minimize the risk factor towards the child.
- It is the responsibility of teacher to create a learning environment, which accept all the learners as they are. Teacher should make maximum effort to accommodate diverse educational needs of the children.
- Teacher must observe the students behaviour and if they suspect on any student, they should refer to multi-disciplinary team for evaluation of disability so screening by teacher is very important for early detection of disabilities.
- Teacher can keep the motivation level of the class very high so that learners with disabilities do not feel inferior. Bullying and making fun of others in the class is strictly prohibited instead an environment is created by teachers and students where care and share become priority for all. Teacher must collaborate with special teacher or resource teacher to meet the needs of the children teacher blends various teaching learning strategies to ensure active participation of each child in the class
- Teacher creates an enabling environment in the class. Teacher develops a support system in the class so that the normal children will become aware and sensitive towards challenged children. Teacher provide Social Skills and communication skill training to all children in the class through classroom activities where Peer interaction takes place and non-challenged children act as buddies for CWSN. They always become ready to volunteer, to help CWSN along with their teacher.
- Teacher prepares the classroom, manages resources both physical and human resources, removes obstacles so that each child get equal opportunity with can result in active participation.
- Teacher modifies or makes various adjustments or adaptations in curriculum as per the need of the children.
- Teacher meet the special teacher and resource teacher to determine specific strengths and weaknesses and needs of the children and accordingly various classroom techniques will be adopted by him to help the CWSN.
- Teacher keeps a record of progress of CWSN so that he can discuss with other professionals. Also if a new teacher comes then this documentation helps to clear the children's picture to the new teacher. Teacher maintains records of success and failures of all the class children.
- Teacher uses various assessment techniques for an inclusive classroom because each children has different way of learning so evaluation techniques will also be different for them.
- Teacher communicates with the parents or guardians to develop individualized educational plan for the child, collaborates with other professionals in identifying and making maximum use of exceptionalities of children because co-teaching is very necessary for implementation of inclusive education strategies. Teacher uses evaluation data to obtain current goals and to set new goals for the class.

Role of Special Teacher

Special features have expertise in a particular field for CWSN . They have patience and are full of hope that they can make CWSN independent and happy.

- They present academic task to the CWSN in such a way that they understand and respond appropriately.
- They are experts in identification of disabilities, in Planning IEP and they are able to train the children for their daily routine. Special teacher help regular teacher in developing new teaching learning Strategies for CWSN. They use special equipments

and provide various supportive facilities to the regular teachers and other school staff so that they can become familiar with them. Their supports provide more opportunities to children as well as more opportunities for regular teachers also for experimentation and innovations in inclusive setting.

- Special teachers deal effectively with inappropriate or desruptive behaviour of CWSN having behavioural Problems in addition to their other exceptional abilities.
- They have techniques to control hyper aggressive children and persistently destructive children and help them to learn social skills
- They Use technology to the CWSN to improve their daily lives. Special teachers can give knowledge about the new devices and their working to the children with sensory and physical disabilities. They are able to evaluate advantages and disadvantages of these devices.
- They advocate CWSN by knowing laws and rights. They can give consultation to teacher, parents and others and make them aware of various legal legislations.

Role of Resource Teacher

Similar to special teacher role of resource teacher is very important, resource teachers give consultation to regular teacher whenever required.

- Resource teacher performs a variety of functions, work as a friend, guide, philosopher to the child, parent and regular teacher.
- Resource teacher arranges teaching learning materials, classroom notes, resource materials special equipments as per the need of the classroom, he provides plus curricular facilities needed Resource teacher prepare the child for social and cultural activities in the school. Resource teacher supports regular teacher to achieve his goals by identifying physical or academic adaptation needed by CWSN, by identifying strengths and weaknesses of the students, by gathering information about CWSN, by participating in planning programmes for mainstreaming a the challenged children
- Resource teacher help regular teacher in designing variety of teaching Strategies and teaching procedures which value individual differences in the class.
- They try to seek out consultative relationships with the specialist with school staff.
- They help in determining the course for the students which are appropriate, measurable and realistic.
- They evaluate students' present level and participate in orientation programs for promoting inclusive education.
- They provide flexibility to classroom processes by determining special services needed by the CWSN.
- They protect rights of disabled children through awareness programmes. They give assistance in availing the privilege from Government and other agencies.
- They prepare child for life skills, vocational skills and social skills.

Role of Peers

In any classroom lot of interaction takes place it may be teacher directed or not directed by the teacher during this interaction children discuss about family, games, food, films. School, teacher etc. So this is interaction must be constructive.

- Cooperative learning with peers is very helpful for CWSN to get rid of their learning deficit and problems.
- Peer tutoring is very helpful for CWSN because they feel safe and Secure with the peers and then able to come up on satisfactory learning level with the assistance of their peers.

- Peers can act as a role model for cwsn .Peers can encourage cwsn, for upliftment in their academic social and behaviour skills. In inclusive classroom cwsn may try to achieve their optimum abilities and potentials.
- Peers can lay the foundation of inclusive society from the classroom. No making fun of cwsn, no bullying, meaningful friendships, accepting differences, celebrating diversity are the characteristics of helping peers. These characteristics leads towards strong relationships and faithful network thus building an inclusive environment in the school. Interaction with peers without hurting the feeling of others and feeling of sensitivity towards the cwsn teaches the children social skills so that they will try to become a contributing member of the society.
- Peer support can reduce the feeling of dependency in cwsn. Small groups of children can be made and cwsn will be treated as respected and valued members of the group, this feeling of acceptance will lead towards the beginning of true inclusion.

Role of Professionals

In an inclusive set up services of many professionals are needed besides teachers for catering the various educational needs of CWSN. For the Adjustment and rehabilitation of challenged children many experts are needed like physiotherapist, psychologist, social workers, counselors, nurses, pharmacist etc. They play eminent role in main streaming of differently abled child.

- Physician are needed for looking after the physical health of children and nurses or a pharmacist must always be the available in the school in case of any emergency or daily routine requirement.
- Psychologist is helpful to administration in evaluating risk factor in disability. He or she conducts various psychological tests to find out deficiencies and difficulties(mental or physical) in a child.
- Counselor helps by giving guidance to solve emotional, social and adjustmental problems in cwsn. They also give personal, educational and vocational guidance to the children. Physiotherapist help the children with orthopaedic impairment, they conduct physical exercises and give medical treatment also.
- Social workers help school in finding differently abled children in the locality and encourage the children to come to school for their betterment .they help in collecting data about a child, previous history guides the other professionals and school to work in a right direction for the particular child.
- Ophthalmologist and speech and language therapist provide life-changing treatment, support and care for the children who have difficulties in eyesight and communication respectively.

Role of the Family

When a child with disability born in a family, family needs to make many adjustment, it affects the interpersonal relationships as well as psychology of the whole family.

- Family notices the child first if timely noticed then family members must seek help of professionals for diagnosis of the problem, its nature and severity and the required interventions. Early interventions help the child in acquiring self-help cognitive and social skills. Family member have tremendous impact on CWSN.
- When the child is very young a lot of body contact is needed which makes child happy and confident.
- Parents can take training for different equipments and see professional help in carrying them. Parent involvement is very essential for CWSN .school and teacher must always communicate with the parents to solve the problems of CWSN.

- Parents must have knowledge about the latest techniques, information regarding latest treatment, support, policies and provisions for their children. Parents can participate in learning activities at the school as well as at the home so that they can encourage the child to complete the activities. Siblings and grandparents can also play a major role in the development of the child. Their attention, love and affection and interest in the child's activities, can help in bringing up a happy and disciplined child.
- Family can attend the seminars or awareness programs conducted by the school or other agencies so that they can response in a right way to the child which will help in creating a positive environment in the family.

Role of Community

After the roles of Family comes the role of society or the community to which the family belongs.

- Community plays an important role in betterment of the child whether the child is a normal child or challenged child, community addresses the issues related to the child because the child belongs to it.
- Community can provide a positive and healthy environment.
- Community can provide sufficient resources and Rehabilitation for the children.
- Community is having various partners like local NGOs and organizations of persons with disabilities etc. Which can together empower CWSN and their families.
- Community can raise the fund which can be given to the families of CWSN to support them economically.
- It can facilitate housing, employment, health services and education facility in the area. Community can provide or arrange for human resources for raising communication skills.
- Community can collaborate with the teachers and the school administration regarding infrastructure availability, professional support and academic resources for the betterment of a school or can help in establishing an inclusive environment in the school.
- Community can make a record of the children and can plan for development and rehabilitation of these children. Community can also keep an eye on the progress of these children and provide assistance to them to make them contributing member of the society.

Conclusion

Inclusion is a global trend in the education which requires faithful involvement and sincere collaboration between various stakeholders. There are several challenges and constraints in the path of inclusion but confidence and involvement of stakeholders can overcome all these barriers. It is the responsibility of each stakeholder to contribute to the maximum extent to develop a child into a human being who has positive attitude, capable of doing work up to the maximum extent and give contribution to the society. Every stakeholder is very valuable in realization of successful inclusion. It is significant for stakeholders to convey and clarify to each other as what is expected of them to make inclusion effective. A good understanding of purpose and rational behind the inclusion prepare the stakeholders to hold favourable views and get ready to implement inclusion providing effective support. Inclusive education is need of an hour and demand of the day to make India a leader in the 21st century world.

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