

Inclusive Education through Inclusive Planning in School

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Abstract:

The paper is about how inclusive education can be turned into reality through inclusive planning. It focuses on planning of disability as well as disable; it is something like personality and person. Disability planning revolves around planning in terms of less restricted architecture, curriculum, and administration and budgeting. The disable planning is all about using one's strengths and offering resources to give expressions to these strengths. A disable child also has same kind of hierarchy of needs as suggested by Maslow for a normal child. Author stressed that building self-esteem can be instrumental in planning growth and development of a disable child. In the end there are given some implications for teacher in terms of Physical, Social, Academic, Emotional and Cultural inclusion planning of a disable child.

Key words: Inclusion, inclusive planning, least restricted environment, disable, disability

Inclusion has been the dominant philosophy in dealing with special children in last two decades. Etymologically Inclusion actually means something opposite to provision of special education, but it has become customary to use word special education while it means inclusion as the first priority. At the same time special education leave some space for provision of special institutions. Inclusion advocates absorption of every

child in normal system of education and school. The change of terminologies from de institutionalization to mainstreaming to integration and finally to inclusion has done two things, one changing focus from weaknesses to strengths of the disable and secondly increasing scope of the terms. Inclusion in the broadest sense is one which advocates for access of everything to everyone irrespective of the type and category of disadvantage. The disadvantaged group may vary from country to country and society to society. In India it may include women, scheduled cast, scheduled tribe, economically poor, migrated population, minority groups and the like. The one universally accepted disadvantaged group throughout the world is handicapped/disabled/challenged/differently able etc. Disabled, in spite of being a big group has been the subject of gross neglect. There are of course some genuine reasons, but lack of political will of rulers has been the biggest hurdle. One of the major problems is the diversity of the disability i.e. the type of disabilities are quite large at the same time wide variety of disabled are found in one category. The lack of uniformity makes inclusion a tough task. Also inclusion is never complete and all-round, as disabled lack significantly in one area or another. But, it is also true that zero inclusion is never an option applicable to a disabled. In other words inclusion has to be planned in a careful manner to make it a meaningful venture.

Inclusive Planning

Inclusive planning is the planning which keeps disability as one of the essential elements while planning for Education. It may take form of planning buildings, classrooms, curriculum, activities and the like. Inclusive planning or planning for inclusion has two dimensions namely disabled and disability as represented in figure 1. For successful inclusion both disabled and disability have to be meticulously planned. In all other options inclusion remains an unfulfilled ideal social dream.

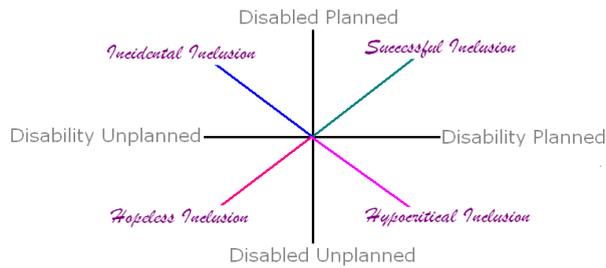


Fig. 1 Disable and Disability Parameters of Inclusive Planning

Disability Planning

Disability planning amounts to planning in general with an essential element of inclusion, even when there is no disabled in the school. It calls for making disability planning an essential part of every planning as we do in case of gender inclusion. It should be involved as a natural ingredient rather than from outside. Disability planning should be based on weaknesses or deficiencies associated with disability. It is by nature administrative planning. Disability planning in school should become a part of bigger frame work with the principal of least restricted environment. Following aspects should involve this principle.

- Least restricted architectural planning:** making school buildings accessible to disabled by virtue of arrangements like standard access routes, stairs, ramps, lifts, elevators, bathrooms, toilets, doors, entrances, crossings, detectable indicators (for blinds), drinking facilities, fire safety , parking ,signage and classroom infrastructure etc. The architectural planning includes two dimensions: degree of accessibility and units of building (school programs) accessible to the disabled child. The proposition can be illustrated through Fig.2. Inclusive planning requires both sufficient degrees of accessibility and at the same time should be extended to maximum number of units of the school building.

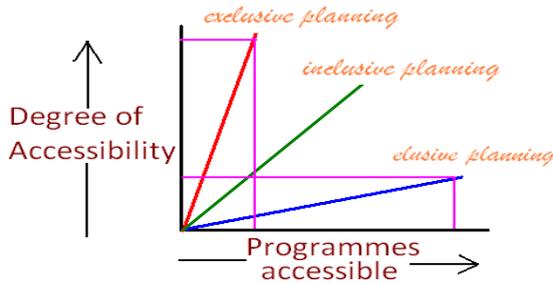


Fig.2 Inclusive Building Planning

Universal Design is an answer to the architectural planning and other aspects of inclusion. Universal Design is 'Design for All' provides guiding principles that promote design that considers the needs of everyone. These principles seek to create an environment that is usable by the greatest number of users, regardless of ability or disability. Implementing these design principles results in a higher level of performance than the requirements found in building codes and standards. Canadian human rights commission appointed an expert panel to survey the best practices from around 40 countries and came up with best form of universal design for architectural barrier free environment.

- **Least restricted curriculum planning:** making curriculum accessible through alternative media and material for content transaction and activities. Curriculum planning has two dimensions degree of accessibility of the curriculum and number of subject accessible for a disable. The proposition is illustrated through Fig. 3. School should endeavor to plan the curriculum in view of major categories of disability. It needs a flexible curriculum which allows removal or addition of some contents as and when required to accommodate a disable. Resource room is a fit answer to lest restricted curriculum.

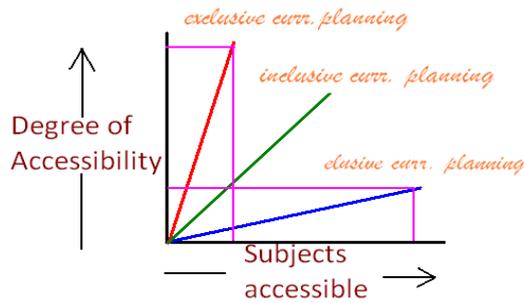


Fig.3 Inclusive Curriculum Planning

- **Least restricted administrative planning**

Rules and procedures of the institution are expression of the administration. Maximum number and to the greater extent institutional rules be accessible to the disable. Any rule framed which violates this spirit is anti inclusion administration. The condition for LRE is expressed in fig. 4.

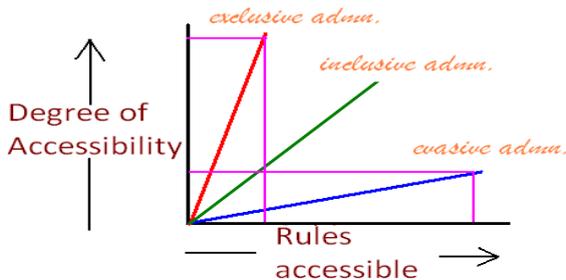


Fig.4 Inclusive Administration

A rule like compulsory physical activity for certification may exclude a physically challenged and a mentally challenged may face exclusion from mathematics or science course. Making some of the subjects and activities optional will be the appropriate answer to this proposition.

- **Least restricted Budgeting:** Budgeting needs to include a share for funds for making arrangements for including the disabled. Majority of funds should have provision for disability funding. As buildings need some special elements for inclusion which need finances,

resource room creation requires spending, similarly teacher's training for inclusion needs funds. School needs to create resources with public and private partnership for making inclusion possible.

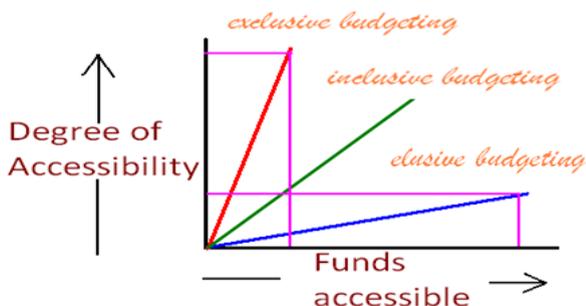


Fig.5 Inclusive Budgeting

After disability planning the school is ready to accept the disabled child in the school. But this does not automatically ensure inclusion. We need to study the strength profile of the child to match the inclusion aspects for the child. We must understand the fact that inclusion is a multidimensional concept as explained in fig.6. It explains that a type of disability

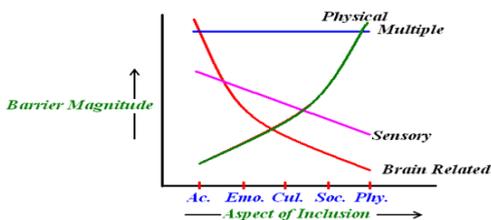


Fig.6 Aspects of Inclusion in respect of Disability Magnitude

results in poor inclusion related with disability, whereas complementary inclusion is very much probable. For instance a mentally challenged child will be difficult to include academically but have relatively more probability of physical inclusion. Complete as well as zero inclusion is never the state of affair for a disable child what so ever is the disability and its extent. Hence an inclusion (strength) profile of the child has to be prepared for planning of a disabled. The resultant planning

can be termed as Individualized education program (IEP) for the child. This individualized education program should again be based on the principle of least restricted environment. The least restricted environment existence is essentially a match between strengths of child and offerings of the inclusion program as shown in figure7. Once the LRE is reached the micro planning for the child with disability can be taken up.

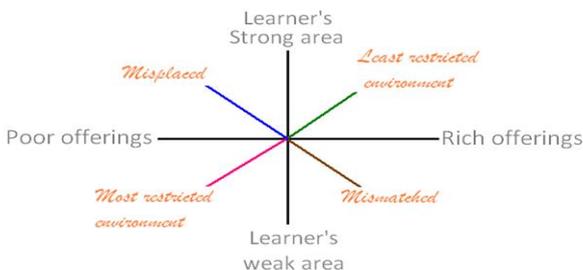


Fig.7 Defining Least Restricted Environment

Like any other child a disabled child also has five types of needs as described by Maslow (although Maslow categorically excluded disabled from sample while framing his theory). However, Maslow’s notion has been proved wrong by many researchers. The quality and extent of these needs may not be equivalent to their normal peers but majority of disabled have aspirations to fulfill these needs to the extent possible. These needs become more abstract and concentrated as we progress upward in the triangle (see Fig. 9). Also as disability become serious



Fig.8 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs

the needs get restricted to basic needs (lower needs). Child should be planned to fulfill these needs to the extent it is possible using internal and external resources. For planning

various aspects of inclusion these needs become the guiding principle. The levels of needs become the graded objectives to attain the final goal. It is a point of discussion where to start. I feel that self esteem is the need which can gather psychic energy to fulfill other higher as well as lower needs.

- Teacher should strive to build self esteem of the disabled learner. Feeling of personal worth, belief in oneself and opposite to helplessness, rejected, powerlessness, and self-depreciation is what we call self esteem. A disabled usually suffer from this psychic disability besides primary disability.
- Self esteem is affected by self image and psychological characteristics, teacher and school program. Thus we understand it becomes two dimensional entity varying with perception parameter and quality of inclusion in respect of aspects of inclusion (see Fig.9).

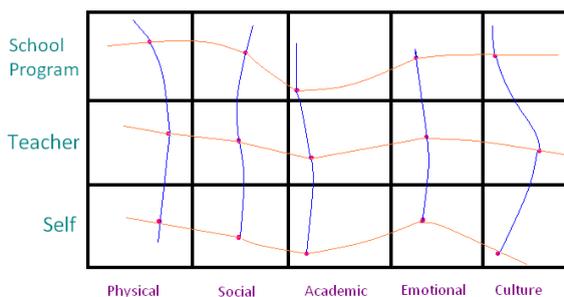


Fig-9 Probable Self Esteem Net of A Mentally Challenged Child

In Fig.9 the horizontal axis takes account of aspect of inclusion and vertical axis represents magnitude of perceived self esteem by the learner himself, by teacher and by the school program (evaluative). The horizontal profile indicates variation of magnitude in three parameters responsible for building self esteem with respect to aspects of inclusion. Longitudinal profile represents variation of magnitude of parameters playing role in building or demolishing one's self esteem. In this way after studying the self esteem net for disabled child one can work to improve on weak areas and reinforce stronger ones. Once the

self esteem is built other planning in regard of disable will go through very well.

Some Important Areas of Planning the Disable

Planning both long term and short term objectives for the child

Objectives should be planned in terms of strengths with underline principle of “one learns from one’s successes”.

Planning includes:

- **Physical inclusion planning:** it should improve the self esteem of the learner for sharing space with normal peers. Find the ways how self can be improved, how teacher’s perception can be improved and how school program can be improved to feel child valued in school and class?.
- **Social inclusion planning:** it should improve the self esteem of the learner for communication with normal peers. Find the ways how child can be improved, how teacher’s perception can be improved and how school program can be improved to feel child socially acceptable in class in particular and school in general?.
- **Academic inclusion planning:** it should improve the self esteem of the learner for ability to learn with normal peers. Find the ways how child can be improved, how teacher’s perception about the child can be improved and how school program can be modified to feel the child academically successful?. Find some ways to provide the disable a much needed success, it will work wonder for further progress.
- **Emotional inclusion planning:** it should improve the self esteem of the learner for ability feel oneness with the normal peers. Find the ways how child can be made aware of using emotions for making relations, how teacher’s perception about the existence of child’s emotional life can be improved and how school program

can be reviewed to provide occasions for expressing one self?.

- **Cultural inclusion:** it amounts to planning to share ways of life in respect of child's ability to respond on cultural calls. It should improve the self esteem of the learner for ability to respond to cultural calls as normal peers do. Find the ways how child can be developed culturally, how teacher's perception about the child's possibility to respond to cultural ways can be improved and how school program can be help in improving cultural inclusion?. Find some ways to help child to respond to demand of cultural compliance.

As disable lack the necessary skills for effective inclusion, planning disable in general should involve characteristics like catching or creating occasions for encouragement to mixing, appreciation work in public, highlighting strengths of the child and giving some role in social structure of the class. Once self esteem of the disable child is built effectively, it will help him to break the personally perceived barriers by virtue of disability. This we call "inclusion is achievable".

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say inclusion is not a chance, rather is a planned venture of school and society. One must understand that planning is the key to success for any child with or without disability. The only difference is important features of planning and the extent of those features. School should have a well defined quality program for planning of both disability and disable, without which the dream of inclusion will remain a dream for ever, which we don't afford. I would like to close my paper with a quote by King Abdullah II, Jordan "Only together can we create a future of inclusion and unity", consequently a call "Learn to plan, learn to include, learn to achieve and learn to enjoy the diversity".

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