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• Health Services • Life Skills Education • Healthy School Environment



The National Life Skills, Values Education & School Wellness Program

Healthy Schools Healthy India

Education is not preparation for life...
Education is life itself
- John Dewey

Guidelines

Submission Guidelines

- Submission emails must contain an inline **declaration** stating that the research work is the author's original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for publication.
- Brief information and line of works of the author should be sent as a separate cover note.
- The **subject** line of the **email** should be marked "**Submission for IJSHWB: [Author's Name]**".
- The attached file must be in **‘.doc’ or ‘.docx’ format** only. Papers must be typed in 1.5 line spacing, Arial or Times New Roman font, size 11.
- All submissions must be accompanied by an abstract summarizing the main points of the paper.
- APA 6th Edition citation and referencing style should be followed.
- The submission should have a clear and informative title.
- Submissions should be engaging and accessible to non-expert readers as well.
- Initial acceptance of any submission does not guarantee publication. The editorial board shall do the final selection.
- If necessary, the editors may edit the manuscript in order to maintain uniformity of presentation and to enhance readability.

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9. **My Voice:** In this section multiple perspectives are provided by patients, caregivers and paraprofessionals. It should encompass how it feels to face a difficult diagnosis and what this does to relationships and the quality of life. Personal narratives, if used in this section, should have relevance to general applications or policies. The word limit is 1000 words.

10. **Announcements:** Information regarding conferences, meetings, courses, awards and other items likely to be of interest to readers should be submitted with the name and address of the person from whom additional information can be obtained (up to 100 words).

Faculty members are invited to be the guest editors of the journal on a theme relevant to the topic of school mental health in schools.

Sending The Manuscripts to the peer-reviewed and refereed
Indian Journal of School Health and Wellbeing (IJSHW)

Entries are to be submitted via e-mail to:

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Editor's note

An inclusive classroom is one where students and staff recognise, appreciate and capitalise on diversity so as to enrich the overall learning experience. Fostering an inclusive learning environment encourages all children regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or political beliefs– to develop personal contacts and effective intercultural skills. On account of government policies on inclusion as well as implementation of Right to Education Act, schools in India are increasingly becoming heterogeneous in their structure and social, cultural, ethnic, and economic diversity is visible in the classrooms. Teachers frequently seek and experiment with accommodation methods that use creative management, instruction, and assessment strategies to foster academic proficiency and social responsibility.

The concept of inclusion involves a radical rethinking of policy and practice. Through inclusive education, persons with disability have access to a rich spectrum of life experiences. In the context of school, these experiences include not only academic aspects but also social skills training, career education, co-curricular activities, self-advocacy training, leisure and recreation assistance, and family living skills. Outside school, these experiences include group activities, religious activities, social responsibilities, and opportunities to practice personal autonomy.

Though encouraging results are evident worldwide, the present educational system in our country, requires major changes aimed at making education more inclusive at all stages. It needs to reach out to children and youth who are vulnerable or at the brink of marginalisation and exclusion. Rather than being a mere form of tokenism to reach out to the marginalised, inclusive education is an approach that looks into ways of transforming the education system in order to remove the barriers that prevent pupils from participating fully in the process of education.

The present issue of the journal focuses on **Inclusive Education: Perspectives and Practices**. Papers were received from teachers of schools and colleges as well as researchers associated with faculties and departments of universities and research institutes. Parents have also shared their views. The students of special education have brought to fore their experiences from the field. These experiences are of immense significance since they are drawn from micro experiments and innovative pedagogical strategies aimed at facilitating change in learning behaviour.

It is hoped that with the varied writings on Inclusive education, this issue will provide a worthwhile experience to learn vicariously and build perspective on the potential and possibilities that characterise the world of persons with disability.

Prof. Namita Ranganathan

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Message

It is a matter of great happiness to note that the latest issue of the Indian Journal of School Health & Wellbeing published by the Expressions India is being released. It is a well known fact that Research publications and Journals in particular are the most authentic sources of verified knowledge and experiences. The sharing of such knowledge and experiences not only amongst the Researchers, Scientists, Policy Planners and Implementers, but also the Activists working in the concerned area and persons having special interest in that area benefits all. It is our privilege to reiterate that the Expressions India has been doing pioneering work since long, in the field of Health Education under its banner of “Holistic Health and School Wellness Programme” to enable the school education and teachers holistic facilitation in realizing the goal of Health Education in Schools. The present publication is a momentous indicator of this initiative.

The major bottleneck in the way of achieving the objective of Health Education has been the particularistic conceptualization of its transaction process. The goal of development of holistic health and wellbeing of young learners cannot be attained by making them gather certain information and rote-learn those. It can be attained only by a transaction process focused on experiential co-scholastic methodology that ensures active participation of learners and substantially contribute to the development of life skills enabling young children to manage their lives more competently and grow as truly empowered human resource of the nation and human society at large. To facilitate this process it is very critical to encourage and empower the teachers, so that they act like facilitators and mentors.

The formal school education system need to look towards interacting and taking the support from the initiatives like the one taken by Expressions India under its National Life Skills Education & School Wellness Programme aimed at realizing the Goal of “HEALTHY SCHOOL.....HEALTHY INDIA”. It is pertinent to state that the Schools and other educational institutions that have been associated with such endeavours have strongly felt the need for such programs to be adopted by all schools including Higher Education System.

It is this context the Journal of School Health has potential to reinforce the process of realizing the vision of Health Promoting Schools getting integrated into the education system in India. We are more than confident that the present issue of the Journal will strengthen this grand endeavour and empower all who are creatively engaged in the promotion of Health Education in Schools. With immense pleasure we would like to express our gratitude for Advisory group, Editorial Board and Members of the Executive Editorial Committee for their valuable contribution, ungrudging cooperation and keen interest and also for making available the benefits of their rich experiences and knowledge.

“If there is will, there is way, and if the will is reinforced by enlightened path-breakers, the way would lead to the destination at the earliest “.

Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, M.D., D.N.B.

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Reflections from the Field

Inclusion: Moving Towards Reality

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Abstract

A teacher can make all the difference especially when it comes to Inclusive classrooms. What is needed is a change in attitude that only a teacher can bring about. Movies like 'Black' and 'Tare Zameen Par' appreciated by most people, including educationists, for aptly showing how a good teacher could transform a student's life. But how sensitised are teachers today, when it comes to acceptance of special children in mainstream classrooms? Children with special needs are facing challenges majorly due to barriers in the environment, indifferent attitude of students, teachers and administrators and absence of skilled workforce. As public spaces, schools must be marked by the values of equality, social justice and respect for diversity, as well as of the dignity and rights of children. An enabling learning environment is one where children feel secure, where there is absence of fear, and which is governed by relationships of equity and equality. The failure to provide this will result in the failure of the system, and hence needs to be treated as the utmost priority.

Key Words: *Inclusive classroom, teacher-student relationship, education, schooling*

Are we honestly inclusive? Can we have a completely inclusive educational environment in near future? Is it possible to make the society inclusive through acts or legislations? What about attitude? Where, how, what....should be included? Better growth of an individual with special needs is possible in inclusive set up or special setup? Answer to these questions is really tough. It is really very difficult to understand that from where we should start. A lot of initiatives have been and are being taken to achieve the aim of inclusion. But sometimes it is felt that so many things are happening in so many different directions and somewhere we are losing the direction/focus. The various aspects to achieve inclusion must be looked at from holistic perspective. It should include everything like infrastructural facilities, learning facilities, facility to work independently and live independently, right attitude etc. The need to have a barrier free environment is very important. Barriers of all type like, physical, social, emotional attitudinal etc.

It is also argued at various platforms that. if we want an inclusive education system then why do we still need courses which are called as "special education" courses specially in the area of teacher education. There is a strong need to break all such barriers to make the society inclusive in real sense. The class room teacher is most important individual in the life of differently able child and a great support to family of the child especially the parents.

Inclusion is possible only when a teacher is sensitized and having a very positive attitude. She/he holds the power to mould the system to make the inclusion possible.

"An 'inclusive' education system can only be created if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become better at educating all children in their communities. The Conference proclaimed that: 'regular schools with [an] inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system' (p. ix). (UNESCO)

Here some very interesting and important first hand experiences are being discussed as contributed by the teacher interns as well as teachers who are doing internship/teaching in inclusive/special schools. They were told to write about their views on inclusion after gaining first hand experiences through observations as well as working with children with special needs. The following paragraphs will provide write-ups of teacher interns as well as practicing teachers. Permission was taken to publish their details (Name and designation). The excerpts have been only been edited for grammar and spellings so that authenticity of expression and thought can be maintained.

Shivangi Gupta, Teacher Intern

The school where I am doing internship supports students in different ways. During the initial phase I observed two classes, one has functional and another one was academic. lass and they try to present information and content in different ways to support understanding of children with disability. They offer options and support to all so everyone can create, learn and share. The school building is completely accessible. They try to provide equal opportunity to everyone. The school promotes collaboration between parents and teachers. The philosophy of inclusion is being practiced, but more specialized teachers are required. The teachers should have sufficient time to plan things in a different way in spite of following traditional or old techniques.

Akanksha, Special Educator (teacher)

Inclusion in itself suggests "including". Inclusion means catering the needs of all the people who are under one roof. Inclusion in school is not a new process; it existed in the Indian education system since ages. Government policies nowadays also promote inclusion in the school. Some private schools have also accepted the concept of inclusion in their schools but not full inclusion rather partial.

I am also working in a school where partial inclusion can be seen. I see students with cases of learning disabilities more but very less of intellectual and physical disabilities. At my work place we have 2 special educators and 1 counsellor who deal with the children with disabilities as well as children with behavioural problems.

Students with behavioural problems have a majority or you can say very high number in the schools nowadays which is growing at an alarming rate. Inclusion of these students is also important and the need of the hour too because they are all struggling with their mind and feelings and constantly fighting conflicts with themselves, what to do and what not to do. Constant support, motivation, counselling helps these children to deal or resolve with their conflicts better. Also inclusion supports not only children with disabilities but also children from economically weaker sections too. Students are enrolled in school on the basis of the EWS quota and hence get good education.

So as far as I see inclusion, I not only see including or accepting the students with disabilities in the schools but also students with behavioural problems, students from economically weaker sections too. Inclusion should be accepted be it in partial form like admissions of students with academic struggles, intellectual disabilities (mild), learning disabilities or full inclusion which will include admitting students with moderate to severe disabilities level in regular classrooms.

Eva Meghna Minz, Teacher Intern

The school where I did internship gave me unique experience to understand the process of inclusion to some extent. Classes there were divided in 2 sections, which are Academic and Functional. Each intern got an opportunity to be placed in both Academic and Functional sections simultaneously.

Initially, I was placed in the academic section for the observation. In this section, I observed that the time table was fixed for the class. Some of the students needed Speech Therapy and done went for occupational therapy, according to their time table. Students were taught different subjects such as English, Maths and Environmental Studies (EVS) along with Art and crafts, Physical Education, Music as Co- Curricular activities.

Afterwards I was placed in Functional section. There were minimum academic subjects in these classes. The main focus was on functional activities, activities to improve motor skills, Activities of Daily living and other such activities. The children, who were not so good in the academic area but were good in other than academics, were put in Functional sections.

The division of sections as Academic and Functional was an effective way for the students as they were able to study and learn according to their interests and capabilities.

The best thing about the school is the inclusion of all the children in almost all different activities, whether it is Dance, Music, Clay Modelling, Physical Education or classes for Art and Crafts. I found that the Teachers were very supportive, caring and understanding towards each student; even if the students were from some other class. The academic lessons or classes for Art and crafts, dance, music or drama was modified according to the level of the students, which was highly effective and appreciable. There was a lot of aspect which helped me in developing a better picture of modifications and inclusion. It gave us numerous ideas, as to how we can create an inclusive environment in the class as well as in the school environment.

Nisha, Teacher Intern

Each intern got an opportunity to be placed in classes till upper primary. School is accessible in terms of physical infrastructure. It is equipped with all the facilities like sports, cultural, medical etc. Building is fully secure, of course everything with heavy cost. Fees structure is too high.

During my placement in grade III it was observed that curriculum revolves around the interest of the student. Students were taught different subjects such as English, Maths and Environmental Studies (EVS) along with Art and crafts, Sports, Music, Dance as Co- Curricular activities. Students may or may not participate in particular co-curricular activity, for e.g. if someone is not interested in dance, then he or she was allowed to go back to their respected classes

Moreover, what I observed, children who were not good in the academic area were allowed to participate in co-curricular activities and teachers always encouraged them and put their efforts to help the children to participate more in other activities like dance, music or arts other than academics. I found that the teachers were very supportive and caring and very much sensitized towards the needs of children with disability. This was a very good initiative made for the students as they were able to study and learn according to their interests and capabilities. School focuses not only on academics but holistic development of the child. This is how we can create an inclusive environment in the class as well as in the school environment. Nurturing Multiple Intelligences and honing life-skills of children, this approach for inclusion of all children is a way to enhance creativity in the children. I found this aspect to be very much successful in the life of children.

Ravneet Kaur, Teacher Intern

There was only one special educator in the school where I was placed. Therefore a lot of work load was on a single person, besides this there was a good exposure of observing children with learning disabilities but not very fruitful observations for other disabilities. Inclusion is being practiced in the school as all children study together in same classrooms. We can say it a partial inclusion (integration) as children with special needs come to the special educator whenever they are called by her in a separate room. The curriculum was also different for children who were already identified. Some children were not yet diagnosed but being assessed. The basic special education facilities like occupation therapy, speech therapy were missing and children were expected to adjust as per the institution and not vice versa. The school maintained very good discipline but was not very open about special education and tried to keep it confidential at every point of time that is why the children with special needs at upper primary classes were not good in maintaining social relationships with their peers. Also the number of children with special needs were really less, only two to three students with intellectual disability in whole school and one or two with mild hearing impairment . All the teachers in the school were not completely aware of the disabilities but knew that some children were different. The role of special educator was not very specific, and she was not really very free to teach as per her choice. Altogether the experience was good for observing children with learning disability but for other disabilities there was not much scope.

The training period at school was quite useful as it provided insight about actual inclusive practices going on at international school. Students are taught according to their individual needs and styles. Their needs are taken care of by professionals, educators and therapists. However there are some limitations also, for e.g. some of the regular classroom teachers were not seem to be interested to teach children with special needs. They used to send those children to special educators even for simple tasks that could have been done in classroom with other children with little alteration in their regular teaching aids. Most of the time students with special needs were in their remedial teaching room or in therapies.

There is strict code of conduct regarding checking of work and it was observed that sometimes to showcase their success, some of the teachers used to correct themselves the work done by students, instead of trying to put extra efforts to make children understand or to do themselves.

Some of the students are in school since long and therefore school is giving them coaching to participate in Para-Olympics. There is largely no issue of bullying of special needs children by normal students and all the students interact positively with each other. But in some of the classes' students with special needs were not found to be involved normally in classroom activities and ignored by their peers.

Remedial teaching rooms are also used for children without special needs if there was some problem in their academic area and also for those who migrated from different region and had language related issues. In this particular school some of the children were having personal shadow teachers who used to assist them all the time. Infrastructure was disability friendly and there were many opportunities for growth of all children. There is long way to reach but we have started journey towards inclusion.

Shivangi Tiwari

I was placed in one functional and one academic class. The first observation was in functional class and it was my first exposure with the children with Autism. At first sight I thought of it as an integration practice but then recalled that saying “Inclusive Schools change themselves for you and will adapt themselves as per the child’s need”. It was need of those children to learn functional and daily life skills. Their system was as per the child’s unique needs and had qualified professionals who worked very hard with children. The next class was Academic Class; here I observed that students were given academic exposure to a larger extent. Students had extra classes for the subjects they are interested in. If any student had higher abilities to perform any task than rest of the class, they were given individual lessons and training by the professionals. Their focus solely was not on the curricular activities rather they believed in holistic development of child. Tours were arranged for children to learn things in an easy way.

There were several other things practiced in the school which were good to see:

- Parents and Teachers decide the goals for child and also the techniques. Parent Teacher Meetings take place regularly to track the progress of the child.
- Every class was made interactive with different activities and Teaching Learning Materials.
- Separate ADL Lab was there to help functional class students to learn those skills in school.

Inclusion practice is being implemented in a very unique way. Students are being allotted classrooms as per their unique needs and where they can learn best.

It is tried to prepare the child independent so that he/she can be included in the society smoothly. They treat students with empathy not with sympathy.

Shivani Sharma

Inclusion is often talked about in the current educational setup as the perfect solution towards a unified society, where each child is provided with equal opportunities based on their different needs. The term inclusion can be explained in one word, an “all-embracing societal ideology”. Regarding individuals with disabilities and special education, inclusion secures opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their non-disabled peers in general education classrooms. The concept of inclusion not only is an ideal solution to include everyone in the society regardless of their differences but it is an excellent way to learn how to coexist and learn about our strengths and how to make it mutually beneficial.

In my practice school I found that the school works with the motto of “education for all and under one roof. So as students of Lady Irwin College, we the future special educators were given an opportunity to observe the inclusive setup and teaching practices in this school. We were highly obliged and grateful for this internship as it provided us with a fruitful and inexplicable experience. In an inclusive setup general education teachers and special education teachers work together to meet the needs of students. This type of classroom gives special education students the support they need and allows them to stay in the least restrictive environment. All students can benefit from the additional resources and supportive techniques used in an inclusion classroom.

Hence we can collectively concur that inclusion is the need of the hour not just for Children with Special Needs but for each and every child. At the first glimpse of the school’s infrastructure the school appeared equipped with all the facilities to provide an all round experience to the students. The infrastructure provides excellent accessibility to the physically handicapped. The first thing we noticed in the school was the well equipped classrooms. The classrooms had big windows for natural light, wide doors and heavy curtains to avoid distraction in the middle of the lesson. In each classroom there is a reading corner which is carpeted; these corners act as a positive reinforce for anyone who completes his work early.

As for the inclusion setup, each classroom has two teachers, one regular teacher and a special educator to assist the students through a different method and strategy. Usually primary classes are provided all learning activities in the classroom itself and only have individual setups for occupational and speech therapy, but for higher standards there are remedial rooms for the special attention the students require. Each activity done by the students is properly planned by the special educators and is formatted in such a way that the student does not lose touch with the classroom lessons. So, each and every activity done by the student is in accordance with what is being taught in the classroom. Remedial rooms are designed especially for children with learning disabilities to put in that extra effort. In cases of autism the students are provided with individual special educators and sessions of occupational therapy and speech therapy help in moulding them. Mostly, students with behavioural needs are being benefitted by the consistent efforts of the occupational therapist. Some students who cannot perform well in academic activities are trained for sports in a recreational aspect. In addition to academics there is an emphasis on sports in the school. There are many different indoor and outdoor sporting activities that are conducted at the school and nobody is excluded from these activities. During our time there, the teachers were highly cooperating and even provided us with valuable information about the behaviour of the child and their handling mechanisms. The main strength of this institution is that it is changing the concept of conventional and traditional educational pattern in our society.

Tanvi

Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes. Students are not just put under one roof but their individual differences are also addressed. This is theoretical aspect of inclusive education but practical aspect is very different from what we read in books and documents. Sometimes there are not enough resources, lack of trained teachers and barrier free environment which itself becomes a big barrier in the way of educating children. Other times it is observed that the setup which has all the facilities available for children with special needs, lacks acceptance on the part of parents to keep their child in the small group setting. When the child needs call for putting the child in a small group setting, it is difficult to make parents understand the fact that their child needs small group setting. Apart from this, there is always a push from parents at a very early stage to shift their child in the inclusive class as soon as possible when the child is not even ready to move to an inclusive class and when the child is ready to join an inclusive class, teachers are not sensitized and they have difficulty including that child in the class and to do justice to individual needs of the child. Even if they are sensitized, due to overload of work they are not able to pay full attention to the children.

Sukriti

Environment in my practice school was flexible, accessible and frequent communication between regular teacher, Special Educator, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Games Coach etc. The faculty is very much adaptable to the sudden schedule changes, affectionate towards students, determined for progress in children, diligent towards their work, flexible in their schedules, congruous with every child’s needs.

Someone has rightly said; “Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is Success”. So, the secret behind this qualitative success to make the environment inclusive, is the team that never tires and works exuberantly and which I found in this school.

Here a variety of learning options are offered to children. Specific skills are targeted and learned by embedding them within the experiences of the day. Focus was mainly on their abilities rather than on their disability. A child with autism named in class 5th was being trained in different sports he loved to play. He was being recommended for interschool competitions and other state competitions by the school authority for table tennis, which reflects at the point of including him and focusing on the abilities. Regular students are being taught in such a manner that they have become very much sensitive towards the philosophy of inclusion. There was a child with ADHD who was very impulsive at a point of time during assembly and his meltdown was accepted effectively by the students of class 1. It reflects that students in this school are able to accept and include everyone very well.

There is ample of staff for making it a safe zone of inclusion. Special educator and regular teacher coordinate based on the lessons to be taught in the class. According to the child’s ability, special educator accommodates and adapts the lessons. Special educator sits with the child in regular class where the lesson is taking place and explains in simplified terms accordingly. The coordination was very good which lead to inclusion. Regular meetings held every day to discuss every child’s progress and solutions to the limitations were found to minimize them for better learning.

There are resource rooms which are being used when the inclusion seems impossible after all the efforts. Though the learning environment was great but Inclusion at a better level could be possible if some services such as Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy could be reached to the child instead of child coming to take such services. There were rooms assigned for students to take their occupational therapies and so on which is still a limitation for full inclusion. Work at school level, management level, and faculty level needs to be done with efforts in order to bring complete Inclusion at ground level.

Raziqa

I got an opportunity to do my internship in a very good school. The school had amazing infrastructure and other facilities. The major learning experience for me is that I experience inclusion in real sense in this school. I was able to relate theory to practice to a great extent. It was actually being implemented in the four walls. In a country like India, Inclusion is at initial stage. Ongoing process of shifting from integration to inclusion is taking place largely in our country, but I found that philosophy of inclusion is being practiced in this school.

Inclusion in terms of dictionary means the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. The term **inclusion** captures, in one word, an all-embracing societal ideology.

Inclusion is based on the concept of Equity rather than equality.

Why Inclusion?

Inclusive education values diversity and the unique contributions each student brings to the classroom. Students with disabilities can be integrated socially with their peers. They can create long-lasting friendships that would not be otherwise possible, and these friendships can give them the skills to navigate social relationships later on in life. Their peers can act as role models for social skills through their interactions with each other. Students with disabilities can also benefit academically in an inclusive setting. Students without disabilities can also gain strong friendships that would have been impossible otherwise, as well as appreciation and acceptance for people who are different from them.

The experiences shared here clearly reflect the teachers' or teacher interns' understanding of inclusion, which they are developing as a result of their exposure to practice as well as what they are learning theoretically. For these teacher interns it is very important to provide them appropriate opportunities to understand, learn and imbibe best practices of inclusion and hence they are placed in good schools for internship. Therefore in all the reflections, all have expressed their satisfaction on the practices being followed in the schools.

After studying the extensive curriculum of B.Ed special education, as well as rigorous and very long internship they develop a very rational and practical approach towards educational inclusion

of the child. The new B.Ed special education curriculum requires them to be placed in all three different types of setting one by one; that is special, inclusive and cross disability. It helps in developing a better understanding of the various barriers in inclusion and the ways to overcome these barriers. But can we be thoroughly inclusive will always remain a question because a few experts still feel that special education is better for the children with special needs.

After the implementation of Right to Education Act all the schools are supposed to be inclusive schools but the reality is far behind. It is challenge for all of us to fulfil the aims of RTE Act 2009.

Reference:

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Gender Roles Representation and Portrayal: An Analysis of Primary level NCERT textbooks

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ABSTRACT:

School textbooks are the primary sources of information for children. When children enter the school environment, the images of females and males as portrayed in textbooks contribute in shaping their concepts about gender roles. These images also influence their expectations from themselves and others as well as their future aspirations. This paper discusses the representation and portrayal of gender in the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) English language textbooks for Classes I to V. It reveals that females have been under-represented in pictures as well as in text. The occupational roles assigned and the adjectives used for both females and males are gender stereotyped. Females are shown as engaged in popular and socially accepted occupations such as teacher, nurse, doctor or as cooking at home while males are shown in a much wider variety of economically productive occupations. In terms of games too, females are depicted less in outdoor sports than males. This kind of representation in textbooks reinforces the gender bias already existing in our society. The paper also attempts to put forth a few recommendations to remove stereotypes in language, visuals, depiction in occupation and overall representation of women and men.

Key Words: Gender representation, Gender roles, Gender socialisation, Gender stereotypes, Textbook bias.

Introduction:

Gender roles and socialisation-

Families act as the primary source in the process of socialization whereas the schools play the second major role in socializing young children. Socialization that occurs in schools can be instrumental in reinforcing or changing what has already been learnt at home. For socialization to be effective, schools must provide a gender neutral environment to students and the curriculum must try to generate gender sensitivity among them to build a better future free of stereotypes.

The curriculum followed in schools is a strong tool to transform and transmit the culture, values and beliefs of society to the learner. The formal curriculum is implemented through the textbooks and learning material. The gender bias and gender stereotypes portrayed in the textbooks used to impart the lessons of the curriculum cannot be ignored. Research has shown that “students spend as much as 80 to 95% of classroom time using textbooks and teachers make a majority of their instructional decision based on the textbook” (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007). The National Curriculum

Framework (2005) also emphasizes on using textbooks as one of the primary instruments of equality because they are the only accessible and affordable resources for education for majority of school going children and teachers. It emphasizes on addressing gender concerns in discussion of any historical event and contemporary concerns. It also throws light on the importance of gender sensitive language in curriculum. It recognizes that unequal gender relations not only perpetuate dominance but also create anxieties and stunt the freedom of both girls and boys to develop their human capacities to the fullest.

Since every society has its gender belief system and gender stereotypes, the same images of women and men are reflected and portrayed in their formal curriculum. When children enter the school environment, the images of females and males portrayed in books, shape their concept about gender and consequently their own self-image, their behaviour, their aspirations and their expectations. If any change in the gender stereotypes is needed, serious and concerted efforts are required, firstly to analyse the learning material and secondly, to present those desired modified images (Mirza, 2006).

The need for incorporating women's issues in the syllabus and textbook material was given emphasis at the first National Conference on Women's Studies (NCWS) in 1981. Review of curricula in different disciplines undertaken by the NCWS highlighted the absence of women/girls in the curricula. Since then there has been a serious concern for incorporating women's issues, experiences and contributions visibly in the curriculum. Studies conducted by the Department of Women's Studies, NCERT in the 1990's have revealed that a partial approach of inclusion of women in different disciplines was adopted. Stereotypes were visible in depicting women's contributions (NCERT, 2013-14).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), serial number 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) and serial number 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), also focus on gender equality. These support the development of curriculum and textbooks free from stereotypes and discrimination since gender bias in textbooks can affect children's self-esteem, lower their engagement in schools and limit their expectations about their future opportunities, including career options. The present paper is an effort to document the gender representation and portrayal in primary level textbooks of NCERT followed in many schools of Delhi.

General Objective:

To identify the achievements and gaps in representation of gender in primary level NCERT textbooks used in the schools in Delhi in terms of visibility of females and males in visuals and text, as protagonists, the occupational roles assigned to them, their depiction in games, and gender specific expressions used in language.

Methodology

This paper discusses the materials analysed from English language textbooks (*Marigold – I to V*) for Classes I to V prepared by NCERT and published by Delhi Bureau of textbooks. The first edition of these textbooks was printed in 2009 and the books which are critiqued in the paper are the 2014 and 2015 reprints of the same. The language textbooks were chosen for this analysis as they offer a wider scope to portray characters and diverse situations in our lives and help students understand overtly and covertly about their roles and responsibilities in the society.

Findings

Gender stereotypes were clearly visible in all the five textbooks in some form or the other as discussed under various domains.

Visibility of females and males in visuals

The number of females and males in visuals and content were counted. It is to be noted that while counting the visuals and names mentioned in the content, the repetition was clearly avoided. The names of the same character mentioned more than once in the chapters were counted only once. Similarly, the visuals of girls and boys repeated in the same chapter were counted only once.

To begin with, women were found to be invisible in pictures as compared to men in four out of five textbooks. The percentage of women in visuals was between 27% and 34% in four of the textbooks and touched 49% in one of them (Table 1). The representation of males in visuals was between 51% and 73%. This included the visuals within the chapters, exercises after each chapter and teacher's page to facilitate discussion in the classroom. On an average, there was merely 34% female representation in the five textbooks in contrast to 66% representation of males.

Similar pattern was observed in the representation of females and males in the text. Female representation was low ranging between 28% and 44%. It was found to be as low as 28% in *Marigold – V*. In the five textbooks observed through a gender perspective, females were referred to in the text as low as making the average representation of females 35 % in text 202 out of 580 times (Table 2). The average representation of males in the text was 65% in all the five English language textbooks with 378 out of 580 mentions being those of males.

This under-representation of females in school textbooks seems to be a universal phenomenon from the available review of literature. Dipta Bhog (2002) looked at NCERT language textbooks for classes III, V and VIII. Out of 75 lessons that she reviewed, 34 i.e. nearly 50% had only male actors in text with no female characters in the narratives.

However, merely looking at the equality or inequality in representation and visibility of females and males in the text and pictures will be a very superficial way of looking at the problem. It does not provide a complete picture of the gender inequality which is deeply rooted in each of the textbooks in some form or the other. These have been elaborated using in depth parameters used for textbook analysis.

Protagonist-

All the five English language textbooks had ten units comprising of either two or three chapters.

Some chapters having female protagonists like ‘My silly sister’ in *Marigold – III* did not portray the protagonist in a positive manner. The girl was referred to as silly and childish. ‘He is my

Textbook Level	N u m b e r o f Females	Percentage (female)	N u m b e r o f Males	Percentage (male)	Total
Marigold I	86	33%	175	67%	261
Marigold II	97	49%	101	51%	198
Marigold III	62	27%	170	73%	232
Marigold IV	62	34%	120	66%	182
Marigold V	96	30%	229	71%	325
Total	403	34%	795	66%	1198
Table 1: Presence of females and males in Pictures					

Textbook Level	N u m b e r o f females	Percentage (female)	N u m b e r o f males	Percentage (male)	Total
Marigold I	19	34%	37	66%	56
Marigold II	61	44%	77	56%	138
Marigold III	30	36%	54	64%	84
Marigold IV	45	33%	90	67%	135
Marigold V	47	28%	120	72%	167
Total	202	35%	378	65%	580
Table 2: Presence of females and males in content					

Textbook Level	Number of chapters with Female protagonist	Percentage (female)	Number of chapters with Male protagonist	Percentage (male)	Number of gender neutral chapters	Percentage (neutral)	Total
Marigold I	3	15%	9	45%	8	40%	20
Marigold II	4	20%	11	55%	5	25%	20
Marigold III	3	15%	7	35%	10	50%	20
Marigold IV	4	19%	11	52%	6	29%	21
Marigold V	3	14%	14	67%	4	19%	21
Total	17	17%	52	51%	33	32%	102
Table 3: Chapters with female and male leading actors/protagonist							

Textbooks of class I to III had 20 chapters and those of Class IV and V had 21 chapters each.

In each of the textbooks, only three or four chapters out of 20 or 21 had female protagonists making female representation as low as 14%. Overall, out of a total of 103 chapters reviewed, merely 17 chapters had female protagonists making it 17%, and on the other hand, 51% had male protagonists while the rest 32% chapters were gender neutral. (Table 3)

brother’ in the same book had a young girl Meena as the protagonist who was carrying her younger brother on her back up the hill. It was made very clear in the story that she did not feel any load of carrying her brother on her back. It very subtly reinforced that taking care of the younger brother is the responsibility of the elder sister which can go to the extent of carrying him over the hill top.

Textbook Level	Pictures		Text	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Marigold I	Teacher, doctor	Artist, Astronaut, Dentist, Farmer, Pilot, sailor, postman, tailor, fruit seller, Balloon seller, shopkeeper	Nurse, wife wanting child,	Farmer
Marigold II	Teacher, milking cow, Musician, Granny oiling hair, cooking	Sailor, clown, musician, magician	Teacher, cooking	Sailor, musician
Marigold III	Teacher, nurse	Farmer, newspaper boy, vegetable man, Postman, clown, astronaut, musician, driver, librarian, cobbler, dramatist		Farmer, singing, balloon man/ seller, newspaper boy, vegetable ma, postman, washer man, school master
Marigold IV	Teacher, fetching water, librarian	Magician, thieves, Milkman, policeman, grocer, wrestler, ice-cream man, Pundit, King, shopkeeper, Carpenter	Farmer, teacher, grocery shopping, librarian	Magician, thieves, King, hunter, Milkman, policeman, grocer, wrestler, ice-cream man, Farmer, thieves, principal, Pundit, King, Tailor, Singer, Gatekeeper/ Guard, Shopkeeper, Carpenter
Marigold V	Caretaker, cooking, teacher	Ice cream man, milkman, mason, chef, painter, carpenter, electrician, hunter, soldier, barber, sailor, magician, skier, bus driver, train driver, conductor, signalman	Cooking	Ice cream man, king, chef, hunter, barber, magician, farmer, shopkeeper
Table 4. Occupational roles of adults in pictures and text				

Textbook Level	Female authors	Percentage (female)	Male authors	Percentage (male)	Total
Marigold I	8	89%	1	11%	9
Marigold II	16	94%	1	6%	17
Marigold III	8	89%	1	11%	9
Marigold IV	16	94%	1	6%	17
Marigold V	10	91%	1	9%	11
Total	58	92%	5	8%	63
Table 5: Textbook authors					

Certain chapters which depicted young girls in active roles and made them constructively visible in the textbooks included ‘Helen Keller’, based on the achievements of a physically challenged girl who could not see or hear; ‘Going to buy a book’, in which a young girl was the narrator of the story who along with her brother was given money by her grandfather to buy books because she loved to read; ‘Malu Bhalu’, which is about a mother polar bear teaching her female baby to swim with the use of positive affirmative words for her daughter like

brave, fearless and special. Another chapter was a folk tale from Manipur, in which Sanatombi, a five year old daughter of a king and queen was made the ruler of their kingdom leaving behind their three sons in a competition. The strong female characters in these stories can provide good role models for young girls who are in their formative years and are vulnerable to gender impressions being made in their raw minds.

On a positive note, some chapters were gender neutral in approach in terms of the text and language but the pictures shown along with the

text were of males. The poem 'A Kite' in *Marigold – I* is a gender – neutral poem. However, the accompanying picture in the book depicted a boy with a kite, making it gender stereotyped and instilling the idea that kite flying as a sport or leisure is meant for boys. Also, there were chapters having animals as protagonists. However, these animals were assigned male gender. 'A Little Fish Story', 'Puppy and I', and 'The Ship of the Dessert' in *Marigold – III* had animals as protagonists which were assigned the male gender. 'Kang has a Dream' had a male Kangaroo, the chapter 'I want', had a male monkey as protagonist, 'Storm in the garden' in *Marigold – II* had a male snail as a protagonist playing with his friends who suddenly encountered a storm. Similarly in 'The Mumbai Musicians', in which a male donkey Goopu played the protagonist, 'Funny Bunny' in *Marigold – II* had a male rabbit as the protagonist, 'Strange Talk' in *Marigold – II*, a poem in which the frog, the duck, and the pig were assigned male gender, 'The Tiger and the Mosquito', parrot and crow in 'Mittu and the Yellow Mango' in *Marigold – I*, chicks in 'Lalu and Peelu' in *Marigold – I*, elephant in the 'The Tailor and his Friend' in *Marigold – I*, and pigs in 'Three Little Pigs' in *Marigold – I*. There was also a chapter 'The Bubble, the Straw and the Shoe' in *Marigold – I* in which these objects were assigned male gender. Some other chapters had geese, ant, lion, mouse, crab, cat, dog, wolf, donkey, horse that were all assigned male gender while only dove, dog, ant, crow, and tiger were assigned female gender.

52 out of 102 chapters (51%) had male protagonist portrayed in various roles like ice-cream man, chef, barber, king, bridegroom, elder brother, tailor, milkman, carpenter, famer and some other hypothetical characters in stories.

Review of the literature revealed that that women lacked visibility in the school curriculum and the lessons in the NCERT textbooks were found to be largely male centric. Karlekar (2002), drawing on a 1986 study of the Hindi textbooks published by the NCERT, Delhi, showed that the ratio of boy-centric stories to girl-centric stories was 21:1. Out of the 13 English language textbooks published by the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, boy-centric stories outnumbered girl centric stories by 81:9. This huge difference in representation of men and women in textbooks can reinforce the beliefs of young girls and boys in the male dominated nature of society that we live in. Young girls

will see no or very few female role models whom they could look up to for building their careers in economically productive professions.

Occupational Roles associated with each gender-

Little effort had been made to depict women in contemporary occupations in both visuals as well as text. Women were largely shown as taking care of children, cooking, fetching water and milking cow. Women depicted outside their nurturing role at home were shown as teacher, nurse, doctor, librarian and farmer.

Males, however, were portrayed in a variety of economically productive roles and occupations including that of artist, astronaut, dentist, farmer, pilot, sailor, postman, tailor, fruit seller, balloon seller, shopkeeper, sailor, clown, musician, magician, newspaper boy, vegetable man, driver, librarian, cobbler, dramatist, hunter, milkman, policeman, grocer, wrestler, ice-cream man, principal, priest, singer, gatekeeper/guard, carpenter, mason, chef, painter, electrician, soldier, barber, conductor etc. (Table 4).

Another study in Pakistan investigated the representation of females in the textbooks of Urdu and English for secondary school classes. Men had been assigned a wide range of activities. The work associated with male images involved intellect, seeking knowledge, political and religious activities. On other side, female images were found to be associated with service-oriented work e.g., housewife, seeking knowledge, religious activities and very small proportion as working women (Khurshid, Gillani & Hashmi, 2010).

Apart from this, at the end of each unit in all the textbooks in the present study, on the page devoted for teachers to facilitate discussion in the classroom, picture of female teacher was given. Teaching was majorly the only economically productive occupation that women were shown in. This is not to devalue the role of women as nurturers but it has to be recognised that this is a socially constructed and accepted role of women. However, it is time that we start recognising the economically productive roles that women play in their everyday lives. The problem with the present way of representation is that the young girls and even boys internalise the stereotypical and socially acceptable roles that they are exposed to from the early years and may never believe that their capability is much beyond what is traditionally depicted in textbooks.

It is time that the young generation starts questioning these traditional occupations attached with a particular gender and choose the occupation according to their interest and not because of their belonging to a particular gender.

Games, Sports and Physical Mobility

In terms of games and physical mobility of females and males, females were shown in soft sports which did not require them to be physically strong like riding on a merry go round, swings, painting, playing in the rain, playing with dolls, watering the plants, dancing, walking, running, cycling, solving jigsaw puzzle, playing sitar. They were mostly depicted in such indoor sports which do not require them to possess leadership skills and competitive spirit. Swimming, skipping, mountain climbing, climbing tree, horse riding, basketball and relay race were some outdoor sports that they were shown to be engaged in at certain places in the textbooks.

Males were shown playing a variety of outdoor sports including playing tennis, flying kites, playing with balls, doing karate, climbing on a tree, cycling, digging the ground, playing cricket, hockey, boat racing, running/racing, long jump, tug of war, archery, horse riding, dumbbell, jogging, swimming, basketball, football, riding bicycle, swinging, boxing, guli danda (game played with two sticks), scuba diving, kabaddi, volleyball, relay race, mountain climbing, boating, running, skiing, shooting marbles.

There were efforts to represent both girls and boys playing together in games such as basketball, relay race, solving jigsaw puzzle and playing with a ball. Girls were shown swinging on swings and merry-go-round, as were boys. Both girls as well as boys were also shown engaged in certain activities like painting, making clay balls, playing in the rain and visiting a zoo. What needs to be highlighted is that girls need to be shown equally involved in those activities rather than taking a secondary position for instance, in *Marigold – I*, a girl was shown holding the thread while the boy was flying the kite.

However, male dominance was clearly visible in games which are associated with physical strength and are played outdoors.

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of another similar study conducted in Tamil Nadu in which English textbooks from Standard I to IV were analysed and it was seen that textbooks reinforced gender stereotypes not

only in occupations and language used but also in games. Boys were shown in outdoor games and activities that included more physical activity, team work and higher level of competition like football, cricket, hockey, etc. Team leadership, management, and tasks that involved physical strength were seen as men's domain, and these were reflected in these gender stereotyped games. Girls were shown in indoor games which were more sedentary or required less physical activities like blind folding, playing with pebbles, playing with sand and drawing. There were also gender stereotyped games and activities associated with girls like hopping, skipping, hop scotch etc., depicted in these textbooks. The books also reinforced gender specific teams where girls and boys played separately, instead of promoting healthy inter-gender interaction. Very few games like chess, carom, kite making and clay modelling were depicted wherein both girls and boys participated together (Amruthraj, 2012). By perpetuating gender stereotyped games and activities, these textbooks promote gender discrimination and gender inequality giving the message that girls and boys have different gender roles.

Personality Attributes used for females and males:

Grade I and II English textbook had short stories and poems, and most of them had animals as their characters. The adjectives used for both females and males were hence less in number. The adjectives associated with females included happy, beautiful, wise, nice, talkative and short woman and those associated with males included sad, brave, nervous, nice, tall, wise, funny and lazy.

Starting from grade III, stereotypes were seen in the adjectives used to describe personality traits of females as well as males. Some adjectives used to describe females included happy, sad, crying, fat, silly, childish, naughty, funny, thin, fair, delicate, kind, pretty, little girl in a skirt and crying. In the story of Helen Keller, some traits used to describe the protagonist included bright little girl, smart, wild and angry, which tried to break the traditional stereotypical image of women. There is a dire need to include such stories and poems depicting women and girls in strong roles and highlighting the strengths that they display while encountering challenging situations and everyday life.

Men and boys had also been ascribed traits traditionally associated with them which included wise, curious, happy, cruel, heavy, young, strong, rich, learned, naughty and clever.

It is important to mention here that the textbook included a song in one of the chapters titled ‘The man in an Onion Bed’ which depicted a man crying very hard which could help children normalise the belief that it is okay for men to cry. However, the man was crying while cutting an onion. On the contrary, wherever women and girls were shown crying, there was some emotional reason associated with it. For instance, a girl named Rita had been depicted as crying, in one of the exercises, when she lost her dog Sheero and could not find him when she reached home. An exercise for punctuation marks in another chapter included a sentence, ‘Laxmi, why are you crying?’. It is imperative to substitute these kinds of pictures and sentences with more gender sensitive texts and visuals, since such portrayal could make young girls and boys internalise the belief that crying is the only coping mechanism for females when dealing with a challenging situation. Also, it may internalise another belief that it is not okay for men and boys to cry when faced with an emotional upheaval. In order that both these belief systems do not nurture in our children, the textbook writers need to be careful about the context and situations in which women and men are depicted as crying.

First-ness in Language used

First-ness in language can provide evidence of gender imbalance. Although effort has been made to use gender neutral terms like children in the exercises in all the five textbooks, especially on Teachers’ page, expressions like him/her, boys and girls, he/she have been used at 43 places in the five textbooks analysed. Some other instances of male-first occurrences included use of expressions like fight with your brother or sister, what work do these men or women do, and dada-dadi, nana-nani, father-mother, papa and mama, where the male was addressed first and then the female. If talking about first-ness in terms of female, only at 16 places the expressions like girls and boys, her/him, she/he, mummy-papa and sister-brother were used to address both the genders. There is a scope for making the textbook gender sensitive by substituting the above phrases with more gender neutral or gender sensitive phrases. In many a situations with the use of plurals, gender first-ness can be addressed and also both genders can be imagined to be involved in the tasks.

A similar study conducted on Punjab board’s English language textbooks for classes VII to X in Pakistan also concluded that gender bias in school textbooks needs to be addressed. The

language used in the text of class VII textbook itself was gender biased. ‘He’ had been used in the examples to explain a point reinforcing in the minds of young children that women do not have an identity of their own (Mattu & Hussain, 2003). The female first-ness to male first-ness ratio of 16:43 reflects that the pattern followed in all the five textbooks is in fact a reflection of society’s preference for males. It is a reflection of the superiority that is associated with being a ‘man’ which is engrained in the mind-set of the population.

Gender specific expressions in Language-

Use of various gender specific expressions in language could be seen in all the textbooks except *Marigold – II*. Many of these expressions stereotype and limit various occupations to one particular gender. Such terms used included policeman, ice-cream man, milkman, signalman, balloon man, newspaper boy, vegetable man, washer man and school master.

In addition to this, it was found that in many exercises and to explain a point, a child was referred to as ‘he’, for instance, “[E]veryone is great in his own way”, “[T]he more confident he feels, the more motivated he will be....” and “[T]he child should learn to trust himself.....”, “[E]very child sees every story he hears..” , “[H]e learns that each of his friends has...”, “[A] child can let his friends see the....”, “[C]hild’s freedom to express how he thinks”, “[A] child can stand on his head through the practice of yoga”, “[H]e (child) can never be clever enough....” and “as sad as a man can be”. These expressions may be a result of inadvertently displaying the personal perceptions and learned ways of writing but they definitely perpetuate the male-centric bias in thinking. These have to be addressed through a conscious effort of unshackling archetypal mindsets.

There were instances where girls and boys were labeled with certain stereotypical traits like, in a chapter ‘The magic garden’ in *Marigold – III*, the use of expression ‘the boys are good to us too. They dig the ground so well’, labeled boys to be physically strong who could dig the ground while girls watered the plants in the accompanying picture. In a poem ‘First day at school’ in *Marigold – II*, a child was wondering, “If my teacher will look like Mom or Gran...” reinforcing the stereotyped teaching profession for women.

It is time that we do away with such stereotype expressions reflecting our patriarchal society, at least in our textbooks to begin with.

Textbook authors

However, the skewed gender representation in textbooks could not be linked to the involvement of female or male authors during writing and publishing of the books as more female authors were involved in writing and developing the content of the textbooks in consideration. (Table 5).

So this under representation and stereotypical portrayal of females can be attributed to the general mind-set of both females and males in our patriarchal society. The textbook authors whether female or male, after all are part of this society which seems to be dependent on actions led by men and women being more emotional and subservient to men. Until and unless a firm resolve to be gender neutral is made, it becomes tough to avoid what appears to be natural due to the process of socialisation they have been through.

Conclusion & Recommendation:

It can be concluded that since textbooks reflect the curriculum, they are extremely important sources of information for young students.

Stereotypes in representation of females and males were seen in visuals, texts, depiction in occupation, leading actors in chapters, depiction in games, language used and overall representation of females and males.

Both invisibility of women and stereotypical portrayal wherever visible are issues of great concern in the textbooks analysed. The textbooks depicted lesser number of women in visuals and content including chapters and exercises as compared to men, signalling a biased opinion that women contribute less to society as compared to men. Women and men were engaged in stereotypical roles both in content and visuals. There were significantly lesser number of females in the textbook and whenever and wherever they were present, they were shown to be in their traditional stereotypical roles like, teachers, nurses, doctors, cooking and other such nurturing roles. There was no contemporary occupation or role defined for them. It is difficult for young minds to find a female role model in the present textbooks since they did not focus on the range of roles that women and men play in our constantly evolving society. This is instrumental in shaping the vision of girls and boys about who they are and what they can become, and such distorted images and portrayals can have a detrimental effect on the construction of gender identity among young children. Through this under-

representation of women and stereotypical portrayal of both women and men, young children are constantly being exposed to the message that males are superior and females are inferior. This is really detrimental to the socialization of the young minds as they are being made to believe in such stereotypical gender roles since their foundation years. In societies where they already enter the school environment with a pre-set belief about gender roles and occupations from their socialization in families, the textbooks further reinforcing their belief system will reiterate the gender biased ideology in their minds.

It is extremely important and necessary to remove such bias from the content, visuals and exercises from school textbooks beginning right from preschool till higher secondary level across all states and countries. From the studies reviewed, the stereotypical depiction of women and men in the textbooks can be called as a universal phenomenon. If, as a society, we want to broaden the potential for growth and development of both women and men, we need to address this issue at the earliest. Otherwise, we can only expect that the formal curriculum at schools would further reinforce the traditional gender roles that young minds have been socialised into from their families and other sources of socialisation.

In terms of language used, it is recommended to pay attention to the adjectives used for females and males. More stories and poems highlighting women and young girls in strong roles need to be included rather than depicting girls as crying in some statements used in exercises. Also, for textbooks to address both females and males equally, it is important to substitute 'he' which was used more in examples with 'she' or 'he' depending on the context or use 'she/he' where both sexes are applicable in the subject or use plurals like 'they'. The approach of using only he/his/him is a sexist approach and needs to be substituted with a more gender neutral approach. The use of plural pronouns like 'they/them/their' instead of 'he/she/her/him' is a good alternative. Also, 'it' can be used in stories where animals are playing the protagonists instead of representing them as males.

In terms of appropriate representation of both the sexes in both visual and text, both women and men should be shown in realistic roles depicting a progressive society. Instead of constantly showing women in their traditional roles of teacher, nurse and doctor, they should be shown in other professions such as engineers, lawyers,

architects, along with representations from all types of work and jobs they take up now-a-days. Even though the numbers may be less, for instance, women in call centres, as cab drivers, pilots, in army and police services, as scientists and lab technicians and men as cooks, stewards in hospitality and washing clothes and caring for children and old people etc., a gender-neutral representation will help the students to break free from the stereotypes.

However, that doesn't mean that the domestic work that they do should be looked down upon or criticised. In fact, it is equally important to acknowledge the fact that men may be equally interested in cooking. Men may also like to care for their children and play with them. Men may not always like to be masculine or be engaged in

outdoor sports and therefore they need to be relieved of this burden of a macho image. So whether talking about unpaid tasks performed at home or paid professions people may be engaged in, outside of the home, stereotypes need be done away with in order to depict a more realistic and progressive society and inculcate the right gender ideologies in the mind-set of young girls and boys.

Since, the teachers majorly rely on textbooks for imparting knowledge to their students irrespective of the grade and standard, the textbook writers and authors need to be careful about all the above aspects. It is not just the visibility of women and girls which is important, but correct and fair representation of each gender is crucial.

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School Health: An Integrated Model For Good Practices

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Abstract

School Mental Health is an important component for the overall wellbeing of school going children as well as the teachers, and other ancillary staff. Stress and anxiety in children and adolescents by bullying, peer pressure, high expectations in academic or other performance etc are aggravating the stress and related issues. Present study was undertaken to highlight the importance of school mental health in India for the good practices and shed light on the current scenario on how teachers can be sensitized about the psychosocial wellbeing of school going children. It has been pertinently recognized that schools provide a most appropriate setting for both health services and health education for children and young persons. The need of the hour is a comprehensive school health policy integrated within the national, regional levels of the educational system.

Key words: School mental health, stress, childhood, health education

Introduction

Mental health is an integral component of health. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. In the positive sense thus, mental health is the foundation for the well-being of the individual and the effective functioning of a community. Mental and behavior problems are part of the increasing health problems the world over. The burden of illness resulting from psychiatric and behavioural disorders is enormous. Psychiatric symptoms are common in general population in both sides of the globe. These symptoms viz. worry, tiredness, and sleepless nights affect more than half of the adults at some time, while as many as one person in seven experiences some form of diagnosable neurotic disorder. (Mental health: strengthening our response, 2016)

It is estimated that around 20 percent of the world's adolescents have a psychological or behavioural problem. Up to 50 percent of mental, behavioural and psychological problems have their onset during adolescence period. The stress faced by the children and adolescents in current situation is enormous and the reasons are multifarious. The empowerment of children and adolescents is very essential in today's context in India as there is rapid globalization and urbanization with disintegration of joint families and the traditional social support systems. There

is growing evidence of increased psychological problems in children and adolescents; especially, behaviour problems, substance abuse, and suicides. The prevalence rate of psychiatric disorders in India is 12.5 percent among children aged 0-16 years and 12 percent among 4-16 year old children. Suicide-death rates in India are among the highest in the world.

Most of the risk taking behavior and psychological problems among children and adolescents emerge during adolescence period. This can be overcome through preventive and promotive school mental health programmes. Crime, violence, sexual permissiveness, drug abuse, academic competition, bullying, and school dropout rates are on the rise among the youth. These problems have strong impact on children's participation in the classroom, scholastic achievements, relationship issues, mental health, and psychological well being. Promoting competencies has the potential to prevent high risk behaviours, psychological problems and enhance resilience among children and adolescents. World Health Organization defines Child and Adolescent Mental Health as the 'capacity to achieve and maintain optimal psychological functioning and well being. It is directly related to the level reached and competence achieved in psychological and social functioning'.

All over the world, increasing attention is being given to the initial prevention of mental illness and risk reduction to vulnerability in mental illness. Research in the West has shown

promising results in enhancing the skills of adolescents including positive youth development; prevention of violence; decreased bullying; increased self-esteem; better peer relations; positive student-teacher relations; improved problem solving; enhanced emotional and social awareness. In India, the existing policies such as National Health Policy, Integrated Child Development Scheme and National Mental Health Program stress the need for developing comprehensive child mental health programmes and services at various levels. Many of the mental, behavioural and psychological problems, among children and adolescents can be prevented if the intervention happens at an early stage. School-based interventions possess a great potential in reducing the risk factors and increasing the protective factors to promote the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents. A well-timed comprehensive program in the schools using teachers as a facilitators has the potential for building competencies and results in yielding high long term returns on investment on children and adolescents.

Global Research

The global mental health landscape has transformed over the past 25 years because of the higher visibility of the burden of mental health and substance-use disorders. These disorders comprise 7.4% of the global disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) and 22.7% of the global years lived with disability. The main contributors worldwide are depression and dysthymia (9.6% of all YLDs), anxiety (3.5% of all YLDs), and schizophrenia; substance-use disorders and bipolar disorder form just over 2% of all YLDs. (Florence Baingana, 2015)

Alcohol and substance-use disorders come in second for most of the developing world, more so for southern Africa (drug use) and Eastern Europe (alcohol). The burden of mental health and substance-use disorders is expected to increase worldwide in the coming decades, and the steepest rise can be expected in low and middle income countries (LMICs) as a result of rising life expectancy, population growth and under-resourced health care. Untreated mental health disorders are associated with a high economic burden. Furthermore, pervasive stigma and human rights violations compound the suffering associated with these disorders and exacerbate social vulnerabilities.

As the health, social, economic, and human costs of mental and substance-use disorders become better documented, political need and

multilateral commitments to scale up mental health care in LMICs have grown. The World Health Organization has introduced a series of policy initiatives that articulate both high-level aspirations and pragmatic guidance for mental health and substance-use services delivery in LMICs. The most recent, the Global Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020, challenges the member states, partners and the Secretariat to collectively meet ambitious goals by the year 2020, including increasing mental health care coverage by 20% for severe mental health illness and reducing national suicide rates by 10%.

Key funding initiatives have supported research to accommodate scarce resources and improve availability through task sharing, integration of mental health care into existing primary health-care infrastructure, and enhancement of diagnostic assessment.

Prevalence of mental disorders as per World Health Report (2001) is around 10% and it is predicted that the burden of disorders is likely to increase by 15% by the year 2020. At the international level, mental health is receiving increasing importance as reflected by the WHO's focus on mental health as the theme for the World Health Day (4th October 2001), World Health Assembly (15th May 2001) and the World Health Report 2001. In 2008, the WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme (MHGAP) was launched which aims at scaling up services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders for countries especially with low and middle income.

Taken together, mental, neurological and substance use disorders accounted for 13% of the total global burden of disease in the year 2004. Depression alone accounts for 4.3% of the global burden of disease and is among the largest single causes of disability worldwide (11% of all years lived with disability globally), particularly for women. The gap between the need for treatment and its provision is large, all over the world. WHO Mental Health Atlas 2011 provides data that demonstrate the scarcity of resources within countries to meet mental health needs.

The Director General, World Health Organization, launched the Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020 on 7 October 2013. The action plan recognizes the essential role of mental health in achieving health for all people. It aims to achieve equity through universal health coverage and stresses the importance of prevention. The four major objectives of the Action Plan are to:

- Strengthen effective leadership and governance for mental health.
- Provide comprehensive, integrated and responsive mental health and social care services in community-based settings.
- Implement strategies for promotion and prevention in mental health.
- Strengthen information systems, evidence and research for mental health.

Every year on October 10, the World Health Organization joins in celebrating the World Mental Health Day. The day is celebrated at the initiative of the World Federation of Mental Health and the WHO supports this initiative through raising awareness on mental health issues. The theme of the day in 2013 was “Mental Health and Older Adults”. On 10 December 2013, the Human Rights Day, the WHO launched the **Mind Bank**. It is a new online platform which brings together key international resources and national policies, strategies, laws and service standards for mental health, substance abuse, general health, disability, human rights, and development. **Mind Bank** will facilitate debate, dialogue, advocacy and research in order to promote national reform in line with international human rights and best practice standards.

Current Scenario in The Society

According to various community based surveys, prevalence of mental disorders in India is 6-7 percent for common mental disorders and 1-2 percent for severe mental disorders. In India the rate of psychiatric disorders in children aged between 4 to 16 years is about 12 percent and nearly one-third of the population is less than 14 years of age. With such a magnitude of mental disorders, it becomes necessary to promote mental health services for the well being of general population, in addition to providing treatment for mental illnesses. Treatment gap for severe mental disorders is approximately 50% and in case of Common Mental Disorders it is over 90%. In India the Government has been implementing several programmes to address mental disorders, as explained below:

National Mental Health Programme

The National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) was started in 1982 with the objectives to ensure the availability and accessibility of minimum mental health care for all, to encourage mental health knowledge and skills, and to promote community participation in mental health service development and to

stimulate self-help in the community. (Lakshminarayanan, 2011)

National Mental Health Programme proposed to integrate mental health with primary health care, provision of tertiary care institutions for treatment of mental disorders, eradicating stigmatization of mentally ill patients, and protecting their rights through regulatory institutions like the Central Mental Health Authority and State Mental Health Authority.

Gradually the approach of mental health care services has shifted from hospital based care (institutional) to community based mental healthcare, as majority of mental disorders do not require hospitalization and can be managed at community level.

Perspective of School Authority and Parents

To achieve an integrated model for good practices, the school may aim to:

- Overcome barriers to learning and enhance achievement as a holistic concept.
- Nurture healthy development of children and young people in the realms of school, home, community and peer group so that they can learn, grow, and make a positive contribution now as well as in the future.
- Evaluating and assessing the range of activities they are involved in, identifying immediate areas of need, and setting goals for promoting well being.
- Enhance the communicative links between schools and their communities in promoting positive learning and health outcomes for young people.

It has been pertinently recognized that schools provide a most appropriate setting for both health services and health education for children and young persons. The need of the hour is a comprehensive school health policy integrated within the national, regional levels of the educational system. Around the globe, ‘school health’ has been an important national programme for several decades, comprising largely of school health services and school health education. Attempts to view student’s health more holistically through a more comprehensive approach need to be strengthened. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005, formulated by the NCERT has categorically stated that health is a critical input for the overall development of the child and it influences significantly the enrollment, retention, and completion of school.

Childhood and adolescence provide immense opportunities to develop the foundations for mental health and prevent mental health problems; and the school is an important and unique resource to help achieve this. Schools can help tackle the problem of the increasing number of children and young people who experience mental health problems. Around 25 percent of children and young people in the developed world have an identifiable mental health problem (Harden et al., 2001), of which 10 percent fulfill criteria for a mental health disorder. Schools can also promote positive mental health and create resilience, providing the child or young person with resources to thrive and, in adverse conditions, to cope by buffering negative stressors. For children who come from less than optimum home backgrounds and neighborhoods, the intervention of the school can be the turning point (Gross, 2008).

The importance of school for identification and prevention of mental health issues, and the opportunities it provides for interventions has been evident for some time, and the last two decades have seen considerable growth in mental health research. There are literally thousands of school mental health interventions in operation across the world, some of which have been evaluated. These go under many names: mental health, 'social and emotional learning' (SEL), 'emotional literacy', 'emotional intelligence', 'resilience', 'life skills' and 'character education'.

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Sensitizing the Teachers to Identify The Issue

School based intervention programmes are recognized as effective means of promoting mental health of students and prevent the development of behaviours which are unhealthy. There are comprehensive school mental health programmes designed to reduce risks and enhance psychosocial competencies and resilience of adolescents in schools, found to be feasible and acceptable by teachers. It is universal as it applies to all students. The findings from the study suggest that trained teachers can effectively deliver mental health promotion intervention in schools. The health professionals who are working in the area of child and adolescent mental health have a significant role in promoting mental health of children such as:

- Development of a comprehensive model/program on "Promotion of Mental Health and Psychological Well-Being of Adolescents in Schools".
- Using teachers as FACILITATORS to implement the programme in the schools.
- Using structured program and activities with participatory experiential approach.
- Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being of adolescents through enhancing psychosocial skills and resiliency as outcomes. (Vranda, 2015)

A Gateway for Girl's Inclusion in Education: Exploring CCT Scheme 'Ladli' of Delhi

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Abstract

Educational attainment is considered intrinsic to achievement of gender equality. Since Delhi state government launched a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) scheme called 'Ladli' to address the distorted sex ratio at birth and promote education among girl children by providing a conditional cash grant of about one lakh Indian rupees to a beneficiary girl. This paper attempts to assess the effectiveness of such efforts in shaping educational and career aspirations of girl students. In-depth interviews were conducted with girls and other stakeholders involved in implementing the scheme to gain insights into the perceived benefits of the schemes and hurdles in accessing the maturity claims by the students. Appreciative of the financial support, the girls were confident to pursue education. The stakeholders from schools reported high enrollments every year due to scheme's attractive maturity amount. They had a positive view towards scheme's contribution in retaining girl students in senior secondary classes. However, delays in the process of registration into the scheme, approvals and delayed renewals posed challenges in the smooth roll out of the scheme. The study suggests greater synergy and collaboration among the stakeholders towards timely disbursement of monetary incentive. This could positively influence investment of scheme's benefits and available family resources in girls' education for their better future.

Key words: Girl Child Education, Financial Inclusion, Ladli scheme, Conditional cash transfer

Introduction

The social aspect of development calls for the system that strives to achieve distributional equity, adequate provision of social services including health and education, gender equity, and participation. Gender equity, has thus become the very guiding parameter for measuring development. The vision of Development as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to achieve 'Good health and Well-being'. UN member states have agreed on a list of 17 broad goals and 169 more specific targets including gender equity in educational opportunities. The SDGs, like Millennium Development Goals, are based on a broader commitment that all indicators should be disaggregated by sex, age, residence (urban/rural), and other characteristics, as relevant and possible to give priority to most vulnerable.

There is widespread acceptance today that development needs to be evaluated not just in terms of economic growth, but also, in terms of the advancement of human capabilities, and that, enhancing human well-being is not just a means but also an end in itself [9]. If development means the expansion of human capabilities, then participation of women in the workforce and

equality between both the sexes in all aspects of life should form an integral part of any exercise for evaluating developmental progress.

Women constitute almost half of the entire population of India but they form the largest restrained group in relatively all aspects. As the social canvas of India is predominantly patriarchal, and contributes extensively to the secondary status of women, they have been denied their basic rights and freedoms leading to poor socio-economic status of women. This has further resulted in substandard representation of India in terms of Human Development Index. Gender-related Development Index clearly reflects inequality in survival, education and economic contribution of women and men. All these factors are interlinked and are culturally rooted in patriarchy. India has been traditionally and culturally plagued with the problem of gender discrimination of the worst form: the avoidance of female births [10].

Sex ratio is taken to be a powerful indicator of women's position in any society and is used to measure the extent of the prevailing equity between males and females in a society at a given point of time. A change in child sex ratio index reflects the underlying attitude towards the

girl child and the state of gender relations. The recently released data from the Indian census of 2011 [2] has refocused the world's attention on the dark side of India's demographic change — a low and falling ratio of girls to boys. For the last 40 years, each successive census has found the number of young girls shrinking relative to boys. Interestingly, the decline in the child sex ratio has occurred in the phase of rising living standards and improvements in every other indicator of demographic change and human development, that is, average life expectancy, infant mortality, male and female literacy, fertility rate, and enrollment of children in school [8].

Education, it is argued, enables people to live with dignity, develop their full capacities, participate fully in development and improve the quality of their lives (UNESCO, 1990). The importance of education as a strategy in poverty reduction is made explicit in the international targets of sustainable development goals, which seek to end the vicious cycle of exclusion from education leading to chronic poverty and further social exclusion. Education also acts as one of the critical factors in influencing the aspirations of girls and their capacity to work. It holds the key to economic growth, social transformation, modernization and national integration. The literacy rate in the national capital of India, that is, Delhi, is about 86%, a figure that has always been high due to the city being the country's capital and home to some of the most important educational institutions.

To propose the problem, it may be recalled that though several Indians have achieved national and international honour in the fields of science, politics and leadership, business, sports et cetera; these progressive developments cannot hide one of the worst looming crisis faced by India with rapid diminution of women's population — "gender". During 1961 and 2011, India's population at the collective level witnessed a decline in child sex ratio (CSR) by 69 points (from 976 to 914 females per 1000 males). Delhi is one of the bottom five states, with lowest sex ratio (Census 2011). In fact, Delhi's sex ratio has registered a marginal dip in child sex ratio, from 868 in 2001 to 866 in 2011, according to a report on the capital's provisional population count, as revealed by the Directorate of census operations. Only 3 districts in Delhi- East, West and Northwest have shown improvements over the 2001 CSR. It is lowest in the South-west district even though being the wealthiest and the most educated, where the sex ratio figure stands at

836:1000. This indicates a marked preference for male children which may be due to the differentials in parents' aspirations for their sons and daughters [2].

To reverse the distorted sex ratio at birth and improve the welfare of girl children, Delhi state government launched a special scheme called 'Ladli' with Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), effective from 1st January 2008, with girls being the target group of the scheme. The objective of the Scheme is twofold – the direct and tangible objective is to provide a set of staggered financial incentives for families to encourage them to retain the girl child and educate her and the more subtle and intangible objective is to change the attitudinal mindset of the family towards the girl- by linking cash and non-cash transfers to her well being. This will force the families to look upon the girl as an asset rather than a liability since her very existence has led to cash inflow to the family [11]

It is vital to recognize what determines aspirations (defined as a desire to achieve) [1]. Markus and Nurius (1986) have reported aspirations as one's ideas and hopes of 'possible selves' that is, what a person would like to and what would not like to become or achieve. In psychology, aspiration level has been defined as the level of quality of a task which one desires to attain.

Sex of the child might be an important factor in shaping the self- perceptions. Hence, enrollment in *Ladli* Scheme may play a major role in molding their perspectives about their own future aspirations. Beyond the macro factors, like place of residence of a family in a rural or urban vicinity, micro factors, like parents' education, occupation, self drive, and role models of an individual, might be important factors in influencing the aspirations of any individual.

As a significant number of women are reaching great heights, the mindset of girls are also expected to undergo transition. Thus, the study was carried out to gain insight into the aspirations of girls enrolled under *Ladli* scheme regarding education and future employment. Since very little is known about scheme's implementation and its effectiveness, the paper also attempts to examine the implementation of the scheme at the school level.

Methods

The state of Delhi has the lowest sex ratio of 866 in the country [2]. As a reflection of various initiatives taken by the state governments and

the momentum generated around the status of girl child, assessing the effectiveness of such efforts was thought to be important and formed the basic research question. The study was carried out in Delhi to assess the effect of the Ladli Scheme in shaping educational and career aspirations of girl students.

Among the State run schools by Delhi Government, three (3) Government Girls Senior Secondary Schools (GGSSS) and three (3) co-

education schools, Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas (RPVV), were purposively selected, for understanding and comparing the differentials in implementation of Ladli scheme through schools. The schools located in different administrative districts and zones of Delhi were chosen purposively in order to analyze the synergy in functioning between the departments (inter and intra departments) responsible for implementing the Ladli scheme.

Table 1: List of selected schools

S.No.	School Code	School Name	District	Zone
1	1001111	Govt. Girls. Sr. Sec. School Jhilmil Colony, Delhi- 110095	East	1
2	1003261	Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya Gandhi Nagar, Delhi- 110031	East	3
3	1104142	Govt. Girls. Sr. Sec. School Karawal Nagar, Delhi - 110094	North East	4
4	1208092	Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya Nai Basti Kishan Ganj, Delhi-110040	North	8
5	1516141	Govt. Girls. Sr. Sec. School West Patel Nagar, Delhi- 110008	West	16
6	2128031	Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya Link Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005	Central	28

For the sample for the study, 120 girls were purposively selected (20 girls from each school studying in Classes XI and XII and enrolled under Ladli Scheme) considering that they were close to finishing school and making career choices. After taking due permission from the nodal agency responsible for implementing the Ladli scheme i.e. Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Government of NCT of Delhi and from the school authorities, the school principals and teachers appointed as Ladli coordinators were also interviewed using in-depth interview guides to gain insight into the structure and functioning of the scheme and examine synergy among the stakeholders responsible for implementing the scheme. The beneficiary girls were interviewed using an in-depth interview schedule to understand their aspirations towards education and future employment in the school premises.

Findings of the study

- Perspectives of stakeholders from school administration

Role of school functionaries

A Ladli coordinator is appointed in every government school to look after the tasks related to Ladli scheme. Apart from fulfilling his/her academic duties, he/ she has various other roles and responsibilities. All the Ladli coordinators and principals from selected schools used morning assemblies as a platform to inform the

girls about Ladli scheme. They further informed the girls about the eligibility criteria through class teachers and motivated them to get enrolled and avail the benefits. All the coordinators used to procure the application forms from the district office of Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD). They helped the girls in filling the application form and completing the documentation required for enrollment such as girl’s birth certificate, residence proof and affidavit as proof of annual income. They maintained the records in hard copy (in a register) as well as digitally (in a CD). Along with the filled application forms, the CD was also handed over to the concerned official at the district office for enrollment of girls under the scheme.

All the Ladli coordinators were found to be aware of scheme’s eligibility criteria for enrolling under the scheme due to the frequent visits made by them to their respective District offices. But they lacked knowledge about the importance of renewals required at various milestones as planned under the scheme and the procedure to claim the maturity amount.

The Ladli coordinators were also appreciative of Ladli scheme and its role towards motivating girls to study and make a career for themselves. They reported high enrollments every year due to scheme’s attractive maturity amount. They had a positive view towards scheme’s

contribution in retaining girl students in senior secondary classes.

Challenges faced during implementation:

All the Ladli coordinators felt overburdened due to maintenance of a lot of records of beneficiary girls and multiple visits to district offices. Moreover, DoE (Directorate of Education) and DWCD (Department of Women and Child Development) of NCT of Delhi, the two important stakeholders of the scheme, did not send any notifications to their schools regarding the procedures or deadlines of submission of forms. They also faced difficulties in dealing with parents of beneficiary girls due to their low literacy levels and lack of experience in dealing with the required paper work. No guidance regarding the procedure to be followed, loss of classes to meet the needs of application and registration under the scheme, affected teacher's regularity in holding classes. In addition, personal expenditure on travel for visiting district offices several times more than stipulated were other factors responsible for affecting the scheme's implementation.

Suggestions for better implementation

All the school Principals and Ladli coordinators suggested that DWCD should conduct trainings and organize seminars on a yearly basis for imparting information regarding the scheme and solving their queries. The role of a Ladli coordinator should be restricted to enrolments and filling up of forms. Many of them also suggested that some printed material, either a manual or handbook, should be distributed to all the schools implementing Ladli Scheme by the department so that any teacher appointed as Ladli coordinator could use it to acquire the necessary information about the scheme. All of them mentioned that they should be entitled to travel allowance for the required visits to the district office at least as they volunteered to spend their time and energy in order to ensure timely registration and renewals for the beneficiary girls. Further, the scheme should be widely publicized to improve its reach and awareness among the people, who need it the most.

Beneficiaries' perspectives

Profile of beneficiary Girls: The selected girls belonged to the age group of 16-18 years and were studying in the 11th and 12th grades of Government Girls' Senior Secondary Schools across Delhi. Out of 120 beneficiary girls from Government Girls Senior Secondary Schools (GGSSS) and Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas

(RPVV), majority belonged to the General category, 24% girls belonged to the SC/ST category and only 3% were from the OBC. Out of the selected girls under study, 80% of the girls from RPVV and 74% from GGSSS lived in a nuclear family setup. 60% of the girls had 2-4 members in the family and others had medium sized families with 5-7 members, depending on the number of siblings. The parents of most of the girls were migrants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh and earned between Rs.5000-10000 per month.

Awareness about the scheme and its procedures:

(a) Objectives of the scheme: All the respondents stated 'promotion of girls' education' as the prime objective behind initiating Ladli scheme. 70% of them believed that the scheme was implemented to support the girls' marriage while 60% of them felt prevention of female foeticide was important objective of the scheme.

(b) Amount promised: Majority of the beneficiary girls believed that they would receive the proposed sum of one lakh rupees upon maturity, irrespective of the enrollment at any stage under Ladli scheme. Only a few beneficiary girls (n=12) from RPVV were aware that one lakh is entitled to those who get enrolled since birth and around Rs.20, 000 if a girl gets enrolled in class VI.

(c) Eligibility Conditions: They all were aware about the three eligibility conditions to be fulfilled to enroll under the scheme that is, birth certificate issued by MCD as proof of being born in Delhi, Voter ID or Adhaar card or Ration Card as a proof of being a bonafide resident of the N.C.T. of Delhi for at least 3 years preceding the date of birth, and an affidavit as a proof of having an annual family income of less than one lakh rupees. 50% of total girls were aware that two daughters from a family could enroll and avail the benefits under the scheme. While only 40% of the respondents from RPVV and only 10% girls from GGSSS knew that studying in government school is not an eligibility criterion.

(d) Stages of enrollment: Since all the girls were enrolled in either class VI or IX, they all knew about the stages of enrollment. 54% of the girls were aware of last stage of enrollment in class XII; while for other stages, they all were unclear and had mixed responses.

(e) Renewals: 80% of the respondents from RPVV were aware of renewal stage of class IX. They had partial knowledge about different

milestones at which renewals are done. Only one beneficiary girl from RPVV and two from GGSSS had complete knowledge about all stages of renewal and its importance. Other girls from GGSSS were completely unaware of the meaning and various stages of renewals.

(f) Bank account: All the respondents knew that a bank account is required in the name of beneficiary girl to receive the benefits under the Ladli scheme. But they all were unaware of the requirement of having a bank account in State Bank of India for the fund transfer upon maturity.

(g) Amount at maturity: 55% of the beneficiary girls were aware that the maturity amount differs from beneficiary to beneficiary and it depends on the stage of enrollment and number of timely renewals while others had partial knowledge regarding the same.

(h) Maturity Conditions: 80% of the respondents from RPVV and all from GGSSS were aware of the requisite of passing class XII to be eligible to claim maturity amount. All of them knew that attaining the legal age of 18 years was another maturity condition. Though the department releases the maturity amount if a beneficiary girl enrolled under the scheme at any stage passes class X while studying from a regular school, public or private; none of the respondents were aware of it. Around 53% of them knew that remaining unmarried till 18 years was another condition to claim maturity amount.

(i) Confirmation of enrollment: All the girls, except for 15%, knew that a letter sent by the Ladli department (officially known as acknowledgment receipt) confirms the enrollment into the scheme. Majority had received the same from the department pointing towards efficient working of Ladli coordinators at the school level.

Importance of education: All the beneficiary girls were appreciative of attending school and getting educated. They believed that exposure at school has made them more aware about issues and events that are important to understand day-to-day life. Also, they strongly felt that education makes one self-sufficient and self-reliant. Some girls from RPVV schools who were selected under the Chief Minister's Super Talented Children Scholarship Scheme launched by Delhi's government exclaimed that education boosts up confidence and gives financial independence.

Educational Aspirations: In RPVV, all the respondents had high hopes and a desire to assert

their individuality. Belonging to different streams, 40% of them wanted to clear competitive exams to become a doctor or an engineer. Four of them, with the help of Chief Minister's Super Talented Children Scholarship Scheme launched by Delhi's government, had been taking coaching classes from 'Vidya Mandir', a popular private coaching institute. Some (28%) wanted to become a schoolteacher, 17% wanted to join the police services and 15% wanted to become IAS officers. They all aspired to be independent and earn for themselves and their families. On being asked about the plan of expenditure of Ladli money, they all wished to utilize it in pursuing higher studies or to be invested somewhere. In GGSSS, majority (84%) of the girls wanted to pursue Diploma in Elementary Teacher Training (DIET) or Junior Basic Training (JBT) as they could foresee themselves as school teachers. Some of them (16%) wanted to pursue nursing or join police services. Their aspirations were very restricted and narrow as compared to RPVV girls due to limited exposure.

Aspirations related to future employment and their reasons: Majority of the girls wanted to have a government job and believed it to be best suited for girls because of its work timings and social acceptance. Few (n=14) were interested in jobs related to communication technology like computer science, IT or journalism. Reputation and self-identity were significant factors for being employed for 75% of the girls. Around 17% of the girls wanted to pursue a job for money while others wanted to make use of their acquired skills. It clearly illustrates that even though the beneficiary girls belonged to a conservative environment but still they aspired to make their lives better signifying a positive and gradual change in their lives.

Problems faced: The major problem faced by the beneficiary girls was lack of information about the scheme and its procedures. Some of the students (n=24) exclaimed that their enrollments were delayed due to delay in procuring all the necessary documents; especially MCD approved birth certificate. Along with many trips to the MCD office by their parents, they had paid Rs. 2000- 3000 to the middlemen in order to get the birth certificates made in time. Those who lived as tenants (n=63) faced difficulties to provide residence proof of Delhi. The other common problem faced by almost all the beneficiaries was lack of surety of receiving the due amount on maturity.

Suggestions for better implementation: The beneficiary girls suggested publicity of the scheme through newspapers and advertisements on television and radio to get awareness about the procedures of enrollment and renewals of the scheme. They also suggested that department should put all the information on a banner with in school premises and also on internet and the link should be shared with the school teachers and students. Also, knowledge sessions should be held with parents at the time of admissions to inform them about the scheme. Keeping in mind the educational status of parents who apply for the scheme, the overall scheme and its procedure of filling up forms and the number of documents to be attached should be simplified.

Conclusion

Irrespective of the various efforts made by the appointed Ladli coordinators at schools to ensure seamless implementation of the scheme; there are various gaps at different levels. The stakeholders had very limited communication with each other. The nodal agency (DWCD) never conducted any training/ seminars/ workshops with teachers to guide them about the procedures to be followed. They learnt it previously while dealing with different cases at school and seeking help by visiting district offices again and again. The Ladli coordinators were not entitled to any acknowledgment, appreciation or incentives. They were overburdened and faced difficulties to balance their academic responsibilities and scheme related work. Being the key players in

implementation of the scheme, work done by them needs recognition and some incentive if possible linked to their performance.

The incentive scheme seems to have contributed to 'shaping' favorable attitudes among girls. They were generally very appreciative of the scheme and perceived the scheme as a support system for continuing higher education after school and shaping up their educational and career aspirations. However, lack of knowledge about the scheme's procedures made them face problems in complying with requirements at various milestones planned under the scheme.

The leading suggestion that came across was that the government should create awareness by making use of digital and mass media, disseminate complete information about the scheme to schools by holding workshops, and notify each stakeholder from time to time regarding the changes/ updates. The overall scheme should be simplified in order to smoothen the process of implementation and to help the scheme reach its full potential and build people's trust.

Incentives like cash transfers can play their expected role in galvanizing the process of change in educating girl children and in improving the well-being and value of girls. Therefore, schemes like Ladli supporting education have a great potential in achieving the targets articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provided the implementation snags are duly addressed.

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School Teachers' Perceptions of Inclusive Education with Reference to Children with Special Needs

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Abstract

The concept of inclusion rests upon the values of equality and non-discrimination and thus can be viewed from a human rights perspective that suggests that any form of segregation in schooling is morally wrong. Thus, the process of implementation of the concept of inclusive education becomes a rich area of exploration.

This article reports the findings of a study designed to examine the perceptions of school teachers toward the inclusion of students with special needs into regular classrooms. A semi structured interview schedule was prepared to analyze various aspects and dimensions of the theory and practice of inclusion. A two-part questionnaire and a rating scale were used to collect data from participants. Thirty elementary school teachers were interviewed and a thematic analysis of their responses was carried out. One can gain insights about various barriers to inclusion like lack of expertise in assisting children with diverse abilities and non-availability of collaborative institutional structures. Findings reveal the need for collaboration between regular and special education teachers and underline the responsibility for different stakeholders in making inclusion work.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, inclusion, children with special needs*

“One goal of inclusion is, for every school to be ready in advance to accept children with diverse abilities. This may involve not only a change in the way our schools are structured and work but also a change in the attitudes of many special and regular education teachers, who view their job as to educate a certain ‘type’ of child. Most schools advocate the use of a child-centered approach to education, which implies that all teachers should be willing to meet the needs of all children (Loreman 1999)”.

Introduction

More recently, ‘inclusion’ and ‘inclusive education’ have been key terms in the vocabulary of educators and the discourse of education. Inclusion is a discipline of extending our boundary to take into consideration another’s needs, interests, experiences, and perspectives, which will lead to clearer understanding of ourselves and others, fuller description of the issue at hand and possibly a newly negotiated boundary of the community to which we belong. (Eric H.F. Law 2000). Inclusive education helps to represent children with diversity abilities in classrooms and allows teachers to become facilitator for all.

Inclusion means enabling pupils to participate in the life and work of mainstream institutions to the best of their abilities, whatever their needs.” (Maitra and Saxena, 2008).

The earmark of inclusive education is the teachers’ ideologies and their beliefs related to children with special needs as their attitudes

have implications for children’s education. While the policies related to education are framed, it is unfortunate to note that, the voices of teachers continue to be underrepresented as their perspective is not taken into consideration. As an impact of these policies and the changing ideologies of schools, Children with Special Needs (CSN) have become a part of the regular schools. However, the extent to which the needs of these children are addressed, is a question, which can only be answered by actual practitioners of these policies or perspectives. Teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about developing an inclusive classroom must be borne in mind, as it is likely that these perceptions may influence their behaviour towards and their acceptance of Children with Special Needs.

It is easy to find legislative policies and acts like “The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992”, “Article 45 of Indian Constitution”, “UNESCO Salamanca Statement 1994”, “The Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of

Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995”, and “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2002”, for realization of the goals of inclusive education. The Salamanca Statement declares that every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning, and, every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs. When these policies are framed, we must ensure that decision makers are not out of touch with classroom realities. But, we often neglect the fact that teachers are the ones who are in direct contact with the children in the real field, that is, classrooms, and it is important to gauge their perceptions and beliefs derived from their experiences and interaction with other agents of the process of inclusion.

Objectives of the study

The study taken by the two authors, aims to examine the perceptions of school teachers towards the inclusion of CSN into regular classrooms. The objectives of the study were:

1. To find out the attitudes of regular teachers towards the concept of ‘inclusion’
2. To gain insight into the teachers’ beliefs and perceptions of an ‘inclusive classroom’
3. To investigate the factors that support the practice and implementation of the ideology of ‘inclusive education’
4. To examine the different kind of barriers to inclusion faced by teachers that prevent them to address the needs of Children with Special Needs (CSN)

Sample

The total sample size for the study was thirty elementary school teachers of Delhi. The subjects were selected through the convenient sampling technique. The teachers who were willing to participate were selected.

Procedure of data collection

Keeping in view, the broad objective in mind, following tools were used for data collection:

1. Questionnaire

A semi structured interview schedule was employed to elicit teachers’ responses to various aspects and dimensions of the theory and practice of inclusion. This main research instrument was divided into the following two components:

- Part A: It was designed to gather information about demographic variables like teaching experience and qualification.
- Part B: With the help of open-ended

questions, another section explored the teachers’ lived experiences of inclusive classrooms and their awareness of policy frameworks of inclusion. It also investigated concerns related to actual practice of inclusion. For instance, it involved questions like:

- Can you share any classroom experience that shows that there is a need to rethink about the existing policies related to inclusion? Give example.
- Do you face any challenge in teaching Children with special needs? If yes, what are these?
- What impact do you see on classroom environment as a result of inclusion?

2. Rating scale

Rating scale comprised of questions and statements used to elicit attitudes towards the policies of inclusive education. A Likert-type inventory (eighteen items) was adopted to measure the teachers’ attitudes and beliefs associated with ‘inclusion’. It included items and statements with three point rating response (‘Agree’, ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’ and ‘Disagree’) indicating the strength of the respondent’s approval or disapproval of the statement. For example, the scale contained statements like -:

- Inclusion of CSN within regular classrooms will help in their socio- emotional development.
- CSN are a source of problems related to classroom management and discipline.
- I feel competent and empowered enough to teach in an inclusive classroom.

The present study builds upon qualitative analysis of rich experiences of the practitioners of the policy of ‘inclusion’, that is, the school teachers. It is our inviolable belief that teachers’ beliefs can be investigated effectively only with the qualitative approach comprising of the usage of semi-structured interview and consequent thematic analysis of their responses. The rejection of a purely quantitative approach can be attributed to various factors like the interrelationships between the complex constructs of attitudes and inclusion, the social desirability bias factor, low return rate of questionnaires and the cynicism towards questionnaires among teachers.

Analysis of data and discussion

The obtained information was organized and processed to suggest the given findings. The responses were analyzed and certain themes emerged which are enlisted as follows:

1. General attitude and beliefs of teachers towards the concept of inclusion

- Teachers are the prime agents of inclusive education whose vision and commitment make it practicable. To know the teachers' understanding of inclusive education, questions were asked about the definition and meaning of 'inclusion'.

- The opinions of the participants, that is, the school teachers reflected that they were mainly positive towards the ideology of 'inclusive education'. Almost every participant demonstrated the belief that the Children with Special Needs can be included in regular classrooms along with the provision of support to learning. For instance, one of the respondents shared her understanding of 'inclusion' as: "Inclusion means 'including' every child and every kind of learner in school and in classroom settings and not marginalizing them by creating a different kind of a school for them. Basically, it is about including 'special' children in a regular setting and understanding individual differences."

- Similarly, another teacher stated that "Inclusion means creating an environment where the child feels accepted and is given equal exposure as every other child irrespective of his/her background. Equal opportunities mean adequate support to the child in both physical and cognitive terms."

- In the same manner, another respondent voiced out that "inclusion means to 'include' children of varied abilities/ learning styles into the system. The system is altered according to needs of the children thereby giving centrality to 'need of learner' in the system."

- Recent research, again, indicates that teachers' attitudes play a role of paramount significance to make inclusion successful in real classrooms. Positive teacher attitudes are essential to making inclusion work. (Sharma and Desai 2002)

- The teachers' perceptions of 'inclusive education' support its meaning as defined by policy frameworks well. According to the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (2000), brought out by the NCERT, "Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with disabilities nor for general learners without disabilities. Societal requirement is that learners with special needs should be educated along with other learners in inclusive schools, which are cost effective and

have sound pedagogical practices." (NCERT, 2000)

- Moreover, the results of the study indicate that children with emotional and behavioral difficulties were perceived as causing more concern to teachers than other kinds of special needs. Such illustration is found in a participant's response when she remarked, "At times, there are CSN who indulged themselves in hitting other children or screaming badly, or exhibit certain behaviour so frequently that may hamper learning of other children." It is again exhibited when another school teacher told about an autistic child who did not connect with teachers and peers initially and he became destructive and used to throw things anywhere in the classroom. Thus, it can be said that the nature of special needs influence the attitudes of teachers which in turn affects the practice of inclusion.

1. Factors promoting the concept of inclusion

- The teachers believed that few support services provided by school and its positive impact on classroom environment encourage the teachers to practice inclusion.

Ainscow (2004) describes the factors that bear on inclusive developments within an education system as possible 'levers' that can help to move the system forward.

- The only factor that made the attitudes more positive, optimistic, and pragmatic is 'Classroom atmosphere'. Most teachers mentioned that students are more sensitive and cooperative among each other in an inclusive classroom as they acknowledge the differences among their peers. The children develop empathy with each other and they are willing to learn together with the spirit of collaboration and teamwork.

- Moreover, the teachers felt that students are able to develop in different domains along with learning life skills and social skills. This belief of teachers is reaffirmed when all the participants agree to the statement that 'Inclusion of CSN within regular classrooms will help in their socio- emotional development.

- These reflections by teachers support the growing body of research that highlights that there are benefits of inclusion for children with and without disabilities. McGregor and Vogelsberg (1998), in a comprehensive review of the literature mention these benefits as: 'high levels of social interaction with non- disabled peers', 'improvement in social competence and communication skills', 'advanced academic

success with more rigorous educational program', 'enhancement of social acceptance of children with diverse abilities with the help of frequent small group work nature of their instruction' and 'development of friendships'. Thus, the teachers' experience of 'inclusion' supports findings of literature.

2. *Barriers to inclusion*

Being the regular education teachers of different schools, their responses reflected levels of support received by them. On the other hand, they also spelt out and expressed concerns which stand in their way of making their classrooms significantly inclusive. These are as follows:

- The teachers stated that there was a lack of professional training, knowledge and expertise. They said that they were less confident of their instructional expertise. They demanded professional training at both pre- service and in-service levels and accepted that they did not feel equipped to design and deliver appropriate curriculum for CSN with effective teaching strategies for them. One of the teachers used the phrase 'having no concrete ideas to help the child' to describe her inability. While few teachers pointed out that they were inducted to the idea of 'inclusive education' and 'children with special needs' in their pre- service teacher education programmes, there could be more focus and elaboration on practical knowledge of how to assist CSN.
- Not having enough material resources like teaching- learning aids and assistive technology to support CSN, is another major problem faced by teachers. Most of the teachers talked about the dearth of material resources and infrastructure for CSN. It was appalling to note that few schools did have curricular materials allocated to them but those remained locked and unused in the almirahs and shelves in specific rooms. One of the teachers said in response that "the materials were available but not too accessible". It would not be incorrect to say, here, that successful implementation depends upon resources, both material and human; rather, it depends more on the vision, approach and policy of schools.
- Owing to organization of schools and classrooms, most teachers could not plan well for CSN. One of the teachers indicated that "...but foremost, the entire system is still not very friendly in 'actually accepting' these children, which, is the real problem. Layout of classrooms and structure of school were the prominent issues for teachers.

- The matter of insufficient support from community including parents also left the teachers disturbed. In some cases, it was parents' apathy due to which the teachers could not contribute in the learning of CSN.

- Besides, there were factors like high student- teacher ratio, different non- academic and administrative tasks for teachers like lot of paper work, and non- availability of special educators as per the strength of students etc, that were obstacles to inclusion of CSN. All participants disagreed to the statement 'I have sufficient time in my schedule to include CSN in mainstream classroom' in the Likert scale.

3. *Status of implementation of policies of 'inclusion': The current scenario*

- The teachers expressed and conveyed awareness of different policies and initiatives. However, they also felt that their voices are not represented in framing such policies. A common response was that they must be included in the process of policy formulation as they are the ones who are dealing with learners in the actual setting- that is the classrooms. They were of the opinion that there are gaps between policy and practice that need to be bridged.
- Others pointed out that teachers still need to be more sensitive towards CSN and adapt their teaching in accordance with their needs. Few teachers commented that the implementation of 'Inclusive Education' fails in government schools, which have inadequate number of teachers for students in spite of the policies designed after critical and thorough research. Again, some teachers added that there is an urgent need to empower teachers and make the infrastructure of schools ready for inclusion.

4. *Gaps to be filled to make inclusion a complete success*

The respondents were also asked to suggest possible facilitators to the barriers identified, in order to promote full participation of CSN. The proposed changes in the classroom and school environment by teachers as well as the previous research conducted in similar areas are as follows:

- Schools must have a vision and belief in the concept of 'inclusive education' and work towards building a healthy and positive atmosphere.
- Capacity building among teachers with the help of comprehensive training, workshops, and sessions with the assistance of resource persons is the key to the success of inclusion. The respondents seek training and knowledge to

design meaningful educational experiences for CSN.

- Provision and placement of special educators in schools as per the nature of special educational needs and total strength of students in school is the demand of the time. Most teachers shared that they wanted that special educators were available and assisted them to organize and prepare pedagogic interventions for CSN at the level of the curriculum. Working with and for CSN on ground realities-identification and assessment of CSN and planning for them is advocated.
- Collaboration among different stakeholders- regular teachers, special educators, parents, administrators, and support staff etc. can prove to be of utilitarian value. There should be effective and collaborative organizational structures like teamwork of general education teachers with special education teachers, and peer learning among classmates etc.
- Support services in school like technological support (special labs, smart classes, audio-video materials, concrete materials, and models etc.), resources, curriculum materials, and support staff in classrooms must be accessible when required.
- Schools should favour appropriate student- teacher ratio (class- size) and teachers should not be involved in non- academic work. They should have time in their schedule and freedom for individualized planning of curriculum for children with diverse abilities.

Concluding Remarks

The movement of inclusive education to include Children with Special Needs in classrooms is based on the human rights agenda. Inclusion

begins with the belief that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and democratic society. One of the elements of inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at a risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. (Ainscow, 2004) Again, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (2000) advocated inclusive schools for all learners while it also recommended definitive action at the level of curriculum makers, teachers, writers of teaching-learning materials, and evaluation experts for the success of this strategy (NCERT, 2000).

The present study reiterates that teachers' beliefs and perceptions act as a pivotal force in strengthening the efforts for worthwhile inclusion of CSN. It may be stated that majority of the elementary school teachers have heard of it and they have willingness to make their classrooms fully inclusive. However, it will materialize only when they have proper support structures and knowledge of emerging trends, issues and pedagogical innovations.

To conclude, it can be asserted that including Children with Special Needs in general education classrooms is a common practice in schools today. For inclusion to be successful and practical, there are components of collaboration and support services that are currently missing. When all administrators, teachers, and staff have access to appropriate support, it would be an easier transition to having a student fully included in the general education classroom. A balanced approach of resource support, recognition of teachers' voices in policy frameworks and continuous professional training would make the case for inclusion stronger.

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Inclusive Education and Children with Special Needs: A Study of Rupantar Programme

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Abstract

Inclusive education has been hailed as an approach and practice that could ensure effective education for all. The government of India has taken tremendous efforts towards inclusive education. Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS) has been playing its role through different programs; including the most recent Rupantar. The present paper explores Rupantar in the context of inclusive education and children with special needs (CWSN). The study focuses on how Rupantar is taking a desired shape and direction, and setting its processes, on the basis of the experiential learning. This study has been conducted on the basis of the programme documents, and data collected from the project team leaders, other key staff, and the beneficiaries with the methods of interview, questionnaires and feedback forms.

Two of Rupantar's projects- Zero Investment Innovations for Education Initiative (ZIEI) and Comprehensive Mental Health Education Programme (CMHEP) - have been contributing to inclusive education and CWSN. While ZIEI is an open platform for the teachers to contribute to overall impact areas in general, CMHEP works particularly on inclusive and impactful education and care of the CWSN. CMHEP has been designed on the basis of the experience and insights drawn from the pilot study, conducted in the district of Ghaziabad of Uttar Pradesh. After sharing of the new curriculum and lessons by the end of the year, Rupantar would have indirectly benefitted about 11 lakh schools, 49 lakh teachers, and 14 crore students of the entire country.

Key words: Inclusive education, mental health, children with special needs (CWSN), CMHEP

Introduction

The world over, inclusive education is hailed as an approach with full of promises to ensure effective education for all. The present paper explores Sri Aurobindo Society's Rupantar programme in the context of inclusive education and the children with special needs (CWSN). It especially focuses on the experience and lessons from, and the initial outcomes of, the pilot project of its Comprehensive Mental Health Education Programme. This research report has been prepared on the basis of the programme documents, and data collected from the project team leaders and other key staff, and the beneficiaries with the methods of interview, questionnaires and feedback forms.

Review of Literature

Inclusive education requires that all students study in and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in regular, age-appropriate classes, and are facilitated in learning, contribution and participation in each and every aspect of the school. It is about how classrooms, and other school activities are designed and conducted as a result of which all students are able to participate and learn together

(What is Inclusive Education? n.d.). Studies show that when children with disabilities have attended classes alongside the students without disabilities, good things have happened. Studying together has contributed to positive academic and other outcomes for all those the children who have been involved. However, only placing all categories of children together does not lead to positive outcomes. Inclusive education happens when there is continuity and combinations of advocacy, action plan, commitment and support. (Inclusive Education, n.d.). Inclusive education is an ongoing process of building the capacity of the entire education system in order to reach out to each and every learner. It denotes that all children from all categories, without any consideration of children's strengths or weaknesses are part of the mainstream education (Singh, J. 2016).

While the Jometien World Conference, in 1990, set the goals for 'Education for All', the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education appreciated the role of regular schools with orientation for inclusive education as the most effective methods to combat discrimination, create welcoming

communities, build inclusive communities and achieve education for all (UNESCO, 1994).

The World Education Forum (UNESCO, 2000) also restated the principle of inclusive education. This solicited governments to give the maximum priority to adoption of the principle of inclusive education as a policy matter.

As per the official estimates of the Government of India the number of people with disabilities in the country is 26 million, or roughly 2.1% of the total population, which is 22.4% decadal increase (Census of India, 2011). Children in India constitute 35.29% of all people with some disability or other. 1.67% of the children of the country belonging to 0-19 age group have a disability. According to other estimates, there are about 12 million children in India with disabilities. Only about 1% of these children have access to school. (Children With Disabilities, n.d.). A UN report on India reflects a shockingly huge number of children with disabilities. Out of 2.9 million of these children, 990,000 children of the age group of 6 to 14 years, which is 34%, were out of school. (In India, high percentage of kids, Jan 21, 2015)

For practicing inclusive education, India has taken remarkable efforts including the Right to Education Act, 2009 which enables children to exercise the right to school. The Government of India is implementing the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as the main programme for universalising elementary education for all children from 6-14 years of age and this covers children with special needs (CWSN). (Inclusion of Students with Learning Disability, n.d.). While the key objective of RTE- SSA is Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), the goal of UEE, has further been facilitated by the Constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, making free and compulsory elementary education a Fundamental Right. This Amendment has given a new thrust to the education of Children With Special Needs (CWSN), as without their inclusion, the objective of UEE cannot be achieved.....The major push of SSA is on inclusive education or mainstreaming of CWSN into the formal schools, in the neighbourhood. (Inclusive Education in RTE- n.d.)

Despite the central government's emphasis on improvement in education delivery through legislative changes, the quality of teaching-learning in the classrooms remains a challenge. Even if the minority of children with some disability or other gets admission in regular schools, they are often not found in the same

classroom where normal boys and girls sit and study. This is because of thinking that the children with disabilities should be separated and differently treated. If the environment is made accessible and the institution is accommodative, a huge number of children would be able to attend regular schools. (Examples of Inclusive Education India. n.d.). Another challenge to inclusive education in India is larger size of classes. Das, Kuyini and Desai (2013) examined the level of skills of school teachers in Delhi, especially on how they teach their students with disabilities with an environment of inclusive education. They found out that about 70% of the teachers were without any required training or experience. Moreover, 87% of the teachers had no access to support services.

While a low level of awareness among teachers in India on inclusive education, educational institutions are reluctant to have both special and normal children studying together in the same classroom. Because of the fact that CWSN are segregated from regular schools and social activities of non-CWSN, a majority of CWSN in India are not receiving any formal education. (Balasubramanian, A. October 24, 2016).

Every child has needs while some children have special needs requiring special efforts for their care and welfare. Only empathetic and appropriate action can identify the different abilities of children with special needs (CWSN) and integrate them into the mainstream. This would help in translating the potential of the CWSN into visible benefits, progress, and achievements including the advantage for other children and society.

Rupantar Programme and Inclusive Education

As a pioneer in inclusive education, Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS) launched an ambitious education transformation programme in 2015. Called Rupantar, this programme envisions a change in the education scenario of all the government schools of the country and the world. By harnessing the power of the people and existing resources, Rupantar aims to create an ecosystem of education stakeholders, working in synergy to meet the objectives of state and national strategic programs. Rupantar ultimately strives to establish an education system that is based on deeper human values and empower children to be life-long learners and fulfilled happy beings. Its approach is to utilize the potential of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in order to develop scalable, sustainable solutions for refining the existing processes rather than creating new systems.

The goal of Rupantar is to create and strengthen a teacher-centred transformative ecosystem of the education sector stakeholders, working in synergy to achieve the objectives of the state and centre run education programs in overall India. Moving towards the goal, Rupantar has been establishing a cohesive, effective and inclusive education ecosystem of stakeholders, to contribute to the expected impact areas of government programs, including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Swachhh Bharat Swasth Bharat, and Digital India.

While Rupantar strives to improve the quality of education, each of its projects strategically targets the highest impact areas within a state education system— i.e. teacher empowerment, vision and insight development among decision makers, leadership skills for education administrators, management skills for principals, students' empowerment, and participation of parents and communities. Presently, there are more than ten projects under Rupantar including Zero Investment Innovations for Education Initiatives (ZIIIEI) and Comprehensive Mental Health Education Project (CMHEP).

Zero Investment Innovations for Education Initiatives (ZIIIEI)

With encouragement and support of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, and funding support by the HDFC Bank, ZIIIEI is intended to inspire grassroots educational innovations in high impact areas as recognized by the government. One of the efforts is to enable the teachers to think and act on innovative ways for bringing about inclusive schools, teachers and teaching. To facilitate this, SAS has been conducting training of teacher trainers, and teacher training programmes with modules such as inclusive education, integral education and empathy; with an expectation that teachers show their learning through their values, behavior and good practices.

ZIIIEI was first launched in Uttar Pradesh in October 2015, covering all the 75 districts in the state through the following activities:

- Motivational professional development training to 24,000 teachers of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA);
- Grassroots innovation training to 5.5 lakh basic and secondary education teachers and 1 lakh head-teachers;
- Leadership by Consciousness Training to 10,000 education officers;
- More than 3 lakh ideas were collected out of which 30 top innovations were selected for adoption
- Wide-scale implementation of grassroots innovations is in progress in 75,000 schools.
- 150 schools have been identified for development into Rupantar Role Model Schools (RRMS) on innovation, empathy, inclusive education and school leadership. These schools will then be enabled to facilitate emergence of their local schools to adopt the best practices of RRMSs.

From April 2017, the program is being scaled up in 10 other states and the Union Territory of Puducherry with a plan to extend it to all over India by end of the year 2022. ZIIIEI intends to train about 24, 00,000 teachers during the project year. Today, ZIIIEI is one of the world's largest drives to implement grassroots innovations in education.

While this is an exciting journey, with huge appreciation and invitations from the government and corporate for partnership; SAS plans to conduct a study on this initiative in October, 2017. SAS is hopeful of finding out good progress, among other indicators, on inclusive education, especially in terms of enrolment and retention of the CWSN, besides suggesting better ways to scale up impact.

Comprehensive Mental Health Education Project (CMHEP)

Comprehensive Mental Health Education (CMHE) is one other project under Rupantar. It has been especially designed to comprehensively enhance the wellbeing of the children with special needs (CWSN) with the help of sensitized teachers. The main objective of CMHEP is to contribute to training of teachers, inclusive education, care and mainstreaming of children with special needs (CWSN), and development of data and capturing of grassroots evidence to influence policy decisions in favour of social justice and equity, especially in the context of the CWSN.

CMHE helps in attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the SDG 4 to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. It is an innovative project designed to address mental health challenges among the students of primary and secondary schools through training and handholding support to teachers and education officers. In particular, the project works to reduce the capacity gaps in the teachers and

education officers by identifying the children with mental health issues and needs, facilitate adoption of inclusive approach, besides enhancing regular attendance, effective learning and continued education of such children.

The CMHEP has four components which are: sensitization, screening, diagnosis and remedial classes. In order to make the project practical, and field-based, a pilot project was conducted.

Pilot Project in Ghaziabad District

Initially CMHEP was launched in five blocks of the district of Ghaziabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh, in August 2016. Being a pilot project, it was especially intended to gather experience, evidence lessons and insights to deepen and expand the initiative. The project was implemented in three phases which are sensitization, assessment and remedial measures.

Implementation of the Project

The beginning of the project needed some time taking efforts to contact and convince the officials about the project and the necessary support for space and other infrastructural facilities. However, at Kavi Nagar, it took about 3 months for the officials to make the training hall ready which was full of text books for distribution to schools. Some teachers could not be trained because of their additional responsibilities.

The activities conducted under the project are as follow:

- Training program conducted for BEOs, ABRCs and District Coordinators.
- Workshops for teachers for training and sensitization on integral education, inclusive schools, mainstreaming of CWSN , and new teaching strategies
- Preliminary identification and diagnosis of CWSN.
- Sensitisation of parents and siblings of identified students by Psychologists.
- Regular visits and remedial classes by Special Educators' to handhold teachers for management and teaching of CWSN (started in January, 2017, till June 2017).

The SAS team had in-depth discussions with the state and district government officials in Uttar Pradesh. It was shared that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan program provides up to Rs. 3,000 per child per year for the inclusion of the children with disability. However, practically no amount is spent for support of the CWSN with neurodevelopmental disorders, as the entire fund

is used to arrange for school uniform, resource teachers, stationary, and aids and appliances for the children with physical disability. The officials expressed that the lack of support for children with neurodevelopmental disorders in the state exists at three levels:

- Lack of adequate training of in-service teachers on inclusive education
- Overall insensitivity towards inclusive education for neurodevelopment disorders
- Lack of comprehensiveness in central government schemes and implementation

During the sensitization exercise, support to teachers was provided in terms of teaching learning materials, special educators, and psychologists wherever required. More than 90 per cent participants rated the CMHE project as Excellent, and many expressed their indebtedness to SAS, describing it as eye opener and an opportunity that helped in rediscovering their corners of kindness.

One of the factors contributing to the success of this important exercise was the role of the government officials. Dr. Simmi Mahajan, Head of CMHEP, felt “The government was fully supportive of the project. The role of the senior officers of the education department deserves to be highly appreciated as this ensured communication with and cooperation from the officials at the lower level. Both the project participants and implementers were happy as it catered to the need of the hour”.

Outcomes of the Project

The pilot project could successfully lead to early identification of children with neurodevelopmental disorders. The sensitization and training events contributed to handling of children with such disorders in sensitive ways and to setting up an inclusive environment.

The immediate effect of the project, along with the knowledge, skills and confidence, the project has earned, would clearly contribute to the expect impact envisioned by SAS.

The pilot stage of the project covered the government schools in four blocks of Ghaziabad, registering 1446 teachers and bringing in case studies of 306 students suffering from neurodevelopmental disorders. The total NDDs were found to be 314 as some students were reported having multiple issues.

There were 270 teachers who submitted the case studies; this shows that 19% of the teachers trained submitted the case studies as an outcome of the training reflecting their learning. While

these cases were submitted at the end of the training, they also brought new cases during assessment. This shows their continuing interest and action, and the fact that they have actually submitted more than 306 cases which the succeeding paragraphs would reveal. This also reflects the possibility that there could be many more students who might be CWSN, but not yet identified.

Continuous and intensive efforts and a sustainable partnership with schools and teachers could tap these untapped students.

As mentioned above, the teachers who had submitted 306 cases during the training brought in 51 new cases during assessment, totaling 357 cases to their credit. These 51 cases constitute the exclusive outcomes of assessment sessions.

Table 1 Outcome of Training in terms of submission of case studies			
Block	No of teachers registered	No of teachers who submitted cases	No of cases submitted during training
Loni	554	59	62
Razapur	378	57	59
Bhojpur	304	64	84
Kavinagar	210	90	101
Total	1446	270	306

Table 2 New cases as an outcome of assessment			
Block	No of new cases submitted during assessment	No of old cases previously submitted during training	Total children
Loni	15	62	77
Razapur	9	59	68
Bhojpur	27	84	111
Kavinagar	NA	101	101
Total	51	306	357

The key outcomes of the pilot project have been enlisted as below:

- Training program conducted for 30 BEOs, ABRCs and District Coordinators.
- Workshops for 1446 teachers from 397 schools for training and sensitization on inclusive schools, mainstreaming of CWSN , and new teaching strategies
- 253 cases submitted out of whom 227 cases confirmed as CWSN, found be correct on assessment by clinical psychologists
- 80% cases are of borderline or mild to moderate intellectual disability, requiring urgent action
- 80% children with neurodevelopment disorders have a family history of cannabis, alcohol, and other substance abuse/addictions.
- A database of the CWSN developed
- Teacher training success rate at 90% on the parameter of the ability to identify the CWSNs

- Initiated and improved connect between the school and teachers on the one hand, and parents and community on the other hand.
- 95% teachers said that the training was worth doing, and should be done on a regular basis.
- It is estimated that at least 1 per cent of child population in Uttar Pradesh (i.e. nearly 3 lakh) is suffering from some kind of neurodevelopment disorder.
- While the project executives worked to inspire the teachers, they in turn got inspiration from the positive remarks of the teachers some of who described the events as ‘life changing’. They felt that the program appealed to their heart and humanity, and sensitized them to rediscover their corners of kindness.
- SAS in a position to develop and implement a highly replicable, sustainable, and sustainable program with clear and detailed operational guidelines on planning and management, as well as tracking and monitoring.

Lessons from the Pilot:

The key lessons derived from the pilot are as follows:

1. It is important to bring an overall mindset change in the society towards CWSN, especially those with mental health issues, by providing specific directions to the community and other stakeholders for practicing 'empathy' and 'sensitivity' towards these children.
2. Teachers and schools are willingness to be a part of the effort, and willing to make the vision of inclusive classrooms a reality.
3. Cooperation from higher level ensured support and participation from the lower levels.
4. BEOs were involved from the beginning; this helped in getting the logistic support to create a minimum learning environment.
5. The strength of the project implementation was the quality of training, clear communication, discipline, compliance with the rule of punctuality and engaging with project participants helped in solving the challenges of attendance and attention.
6. Besides teachers' participation, and support from the senior officials of the education department, the other factors that helped in doing the activities included audio-visual tools, dedicated team, follow-up, monitoring, and trust in the team.
7. There is a strong felt-need to sensitize and actively engage with the education officers and teachers at a larger scale.
8. in future implementation ; it is necessary to (1) incorporate more energizers and ice-breakers in the training to help the participants open up; (2) conduct training project for senior officials ;(3) share the findings, achievements and project learnings.
9. Teachers are bricks of educational eco-system. It is important to include them in effort that changes life, especially in the interventions at formative years. Teachers have been working in adverse situations. We should make them feel easy, listen to them, understand and appreciate their issues and challenges.
10. It is imperative to follow up and ensure that the internal communication of the education department reaches all the teachers, well in advance, to attend the trainings.
11. Need to develop a comprehensive database in order to help the government in developing an inclusive policy in the best interest of the CWSN.

12. At the same time it is equally important to work with and support the policymakers and government, and seek cooperation while updating them with the ground truth, changing grassroots scenario, and silent emergencies.

13. For donors and foundations, it is an opportunity for investment. The right investment on the quality of equality would lead to reduction of regressive tendencies and contribute to reconstruction of society for peace, progress, and inclusion. A visible change would give visibility to change makers.

Prospects for Future:

The above experience, insights and accomplishments emboldened SAS for a grand mission by expanding its activities. SAS envisioned the following for the future:

Expand the present project to the state level in UP ; with six (6) districts in 2017, adding 30 more districts in 2018, and covering the remaining 39 districts in 2019

The national level expansion plan could take up (phase I) the capital cities of 10 Hindi speaking states of north India in 2017, and gradually cover the entire states ; (phase II) adopt additional 10 state capitals in 2018 , and gradually cover the entire states; , and (III) adopt remaining state capitals and , and gradually cover the entire states;

Plan to maintain and increase the quality of project implementation: (1) The project to grow gradually and organically as an integral part of bigger programmes and vision, (2). Digitize the project by putting all documents in the web portal so that anyone can access it for transparency, check and balance. (3) There would be regular review and monitoring, learning and development, knowledge management, and other quality assurance mechanisms.

From Lesson to Action: Development of the National Level Project

In light of the lessons, knowledge, skill, confidence from the pilot project at Ghaziabad, , and the needs that continue to pose challenges in classroom learning, SAS has designed a multi-state project as a fitting answer to the challenges of children with special needs.

This is one of the greatest outcomes of the pilot project as SAS has the encouragement and readiness to implement the Comprehensive Mental Health Education (CMHE) Project in 43 districts of 5 states (Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh) and 1 Union Territory of Puducherry.

Specific Objectives of the modified CMHE Project—

Within the broad goal framework of Rupantar, following are the specific objectives of the CMHE initiative for the period between July 2017 and June 2020.

1. Strengthen CWSN oriented inclusive education ecosystem that reduces their dropout rate by identifying and addressing their needs working in 43 identified districts of 6 states/ union territory of India.
2. Bring about a significant mindset change in the educators and parents towards CWSN, so that the CWSN are treated as capable, worthy and equal to the other students in the project area.
3. Position Uttar Pradesh (UP) as a model state of inclusive education, despite the huge numbers of students it manages compared to the other states. CHME project has been implemented in UP since 2016, hence it has been proposed as the model state.
4. Draw lessons through monitoring, evaluation and research, and integrate institutionalization for sustainability in all the objectives during the entire project period.
5. Manage operations of the project on defined periodical basis (e.g. monthly, quarterly, and yearly) for timely and within-cost completion of the planned activities.

Component wise activities have been listed as follows:

A. Strengthening CWSN oriented inclusive education system

- Step 1: Four day-workshop for teachers' sensitization, CWSN identification & classroom strategies
- Step 2: Confirmation of diagnosis by psychiatrist/psychologists.
- Step 3: Intervention and sensitization workshop for parents

B. Bring about significant mindset change towards CWSN

- Training of Education Officers.
- Sensitization of the parents by trained teachers to make them aware about the children's mental health issues, and how to address the same.

C. Position UP as a model state of inclusive education

- Documentation of the success stories.

- Engaging government officials, teachers in success story documentation.
- Engagement with and publications by media of the success stories.
- Documentary video preparation and circulation.

D. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

- Quarterly monitoring and reporting
- Baseline study
- Mid-term evaluation
- End-line study

E. Project operations management

- Recruitment and management of the staff
- Financial management and reporting
- Project administration activities

Implementation strategy

CMHE is one-of-its kind of project that first sensitises education officers and teachers about hidden disabilities, mainly learning disorders, and the need to prevent such children from dropping out. Then it trains the teachers to identify such children in their classrooms. The clinical psychologists counsel the identified children and educate parents and siblings of these children, and teachers are provided handholding support by the special educators for six months with tools and techniques to support the children in inclusive classrooms. Relevant literature and teaching-learning materials are also provided to the teachers to support them in working with CWSN.

Involvement of School Management Committee (SMC) members is ensured wherever feasible for community awareness about mental health issues and lasting positive impact. Monitoring and evaluation process is set up to ensure the process documentation, measure implementation progress as well as draw lessons that may be replicated in other districts and states. Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is done to record and analyse data and trends (e.g. reasons for low attendance, lessons on improvements, suggestions by parents etc.).

Disabilities would cover the Neuro-developmental disorder categories, including the ones listed in the Rights of Persons With Disabilities bill (RPWD) introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 2014— (1) Learning disability, (2) Autism spectrum disorder, (3) Intellectual impairment and delayed developmental disorder, (4) Attention Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder

(ADHD), (5) Slow learner, and (6) Multiple disability.

Implementation Progress

Jharkhand: SAS has already started working on CMHE delivery in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand. It was started on 19 June 2017 and all the 19 blocks of Ranchi would be covered by 31 December 2017. The project has been designed to complete the training in 120 batches, with 50 teachers per batch, so that about 6000 teachers could be capacitated. Trainings have started in two blocks of Kanke and Sadar. While trainings have been completed for three batches, the same for six batches is in progress. By 15 July 2017, when this report is being sent for publication; 33 teachers have submitted case studies of 42 children screened as CWSN.

Uttar Pradesh: SAS is also ready to implement the project in UP. The project locations in the first phase include six districts which are Bagpat, Bulandshahar, Gautambudhnagar, Ghaziabad, Hapur and Meerut. There is a vision to establish UP as a role model state for making inclusive education a reality, despite the huge numbers of students it manages compared to the other states in the country. With the support from the MHRD and the grand success of ZIIEI in Uttar Pradesh, the CMHE initiative has a unique opportunity to transform learning of CWSN in their classrooms, and increase their enrolment, attendance, retention and other educational outcomes.

Expected Results after Implementation in All Six States

Outcomes and impact expected out of the project are as the following:

- More than 41,511 CWSN in 82,277 schools experiencing inclusive education.
- Improvement in the attendance of the identified CWSN.
- Increased chances of enrolment of the CWSN in higher school standards/grades.
- Energies of CWSN channeled in the right direction (e.g. from chances of suicide and crime to shining in classroom performance and increased positive behaviour).
- Positive change in the attitude of the parents and guardians towards CWSN.

Conclusion

Rupantar is a transformational program for the Indian and global education system, raising it to the relevant, effective, efficient, and impactful levels. CMHE is one of the key projects that

targets high impact area of teacher training, particularly inclusiveness of the CWSN. CMHE can significantly contribute to creating a pool of empowered teachers and school environment conducive to inclusiveness of the CWSN. At the same time, CMHE contributes positively towards enabling the education officers, special educators and communities (including parents and guardians) to address the challenges faced by the CWSN. Ultimately the project contributes positively to the lives of CWSN having different types of mental disorders, to enjoy their lives fully and realise their hidden potential to contribute to society.

The present project, therefore, is a significant step towards transformation of the ways the education sector stakeholders practice inclusiveness in general and towards CWSN in particular. The CWSN – including girls and boys from all communities including the minorities and other deprived sections – will improve their motivation to attend schools, engage effectively with other students, learn appropriately within the classrooms, and grow towards the right career prospects in future.

By the end of the project year, CMHEP aims at directly benefitting approximately 1, 38,370 teachers and about 41,511 CWSN. Indirect beneficiaries would include about 11 lakh schools, 49 lakh teachers, and 14 crore students of the entire country once the new curriculum and lessons from this project gets shared at the national level.

As Sambhrant Sharma, Director of Education and Vision Implementation, puts it, “CMHE is a call for action from the teachers. Once the CMHE project demonstrates positive impact; inclusive education within the schools will result in continued benefits for the generations to come, including for the normal children. Overall, it is set to create a legacy in education sector within India and globally”.

With a vision, passion, and dedication, and energetic action under Rupantar; it is hoped that gearing the teachers up through training and long-term handholding, the dependence on special educators will be reduced. Also, by engaging education officers, collating authentic statistical data, and revealing the social factors exacerbating mental disabilities in children, CMHE promises to be in a position to create an impact at the policy level. It is also hoped that the programme team will continue to learn to strengthen Rupantar with the goal of mindset change in society leading to inclusion of the excluded. Needless to say; this can be better

achieved through the continuity of collaboration from a platform of inclusive partnership.
of the civil society, government and business

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Parental Involvement in Educating the Linguistically Disadvantaged Children: Major Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

The different ways in which young children learn a second language are influenced by various factors, including culture, particularly the status of one's culture, language, and community within the larger social setting. It is critical to distinguish among children who are members of a minority ethno-linguistic group (minority language children) against a majority ethno-linguistic group (majority language children). Equally important is to differentiate among those within each group who are learning bilingually from infancy versus those who have learned a single mother tongue and are learning a second or additional language later in childhood. The focus of this paper is on young minority language children who learn a mother tongue that is different from the dominant or majority language in their broader social world. Indigenous children who, in many cases, are not learning the mother tongue of their ancestors as L1 are also given attention. In discussions of mother tongue education, indigenous children and other groups who have learned the language of the dominant culture rather than learning their 'heritage mother tongue' at home are a unique population. The heritage mother tongue that these children have may or may not be spoken by anyone in their family or community. But their family may wish them to learn the language through preschool or primary school programmes. A number of special challenges and needs are posed by these special circumstances which involve language recovery. To promote heritage mother tongue-based bilingual education in the world, some of the most promising early childhood and primary school programmes have been designed.

Keywords: *minority and majority language children, indigenous children, heritage mother tongue, language recovery, mother tongue-based bilingual education.*

Introduction

The focus of sociological attention has long been the educational disadvantage suffered by children from working class families. Traditionally, the focus was on promoting educational reforms such as the universal provision of free and compulsory education as the reasons for this disadvantage have been taken as being fairly obvious. The problem to be solved was the wastage of working class talent, rather than social class differentials in educational attainment per se (Lindsay, 1926). According to the evidence available, absolute differences in rates of educational participation between the classes have been reduced by educational reforms (Jonsson and Mills, 1993a; Jonsson and Mills, 1993b; Hellevik, 1997). However, despite these reforms, it seems that the association between social class and educational attainment has remained intact (Halsey et al., 1980; Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993). The failure of educational reforms to eradicate the link between social class and educational attainment has led sociologists to focus on the question of why this association exists.

A natural consequence of the failure of educational reforms to dramatically alter the association between social class and educational outcomes is the emergence of "culturalist" approaches. It may be fruitful to look to cultural rather than (or perhaps, as well as) economic differences between the classes to explain class inequalities in educational attainment if the lifting of economic barriers to educational participation did not eradicate social class differences in educational outcomes.

One cultural difference that has been invoked to explain the social class differential in educational attainment is that of language. Bernstein focuses on class differences in language to explain working class educational under-achievement. According to him, middle class people have access to an "elaborated" code whereas working class people have access to only a "restricted" language code. In the restricted code "The meanings are likely to be concrete, descriptive or narrative rather than analytical or abstract" (Bernstein, 1973, p. 128). The school is based on the elaborated code, he claims, in that it

transmits “de-contextualised” and “universalistic” meanings. Thus, due to the gap between their code, and the code of the school, the working class students are placed at a disadvantage.

The observation that the middle-class child often enjoys cultural as well as economic advantages is not new. An acceptance of “cultural reproduction” theory need not lead us into this insight as such. The resources associated with the home have been divided into “material” and “cultural” categories by Floud et. al. (Floud et al., 1956). Parents’ aspirations and preferences for the child’s education, parents’ knowledge of the selection procedures of the grammar schools, parents’ visits to the child’s school, library membership and newspapers and magazines comprise their measure of cultural resources. According to Bourdieu, the children of the “dominant class” enter the educational system already well prepared to succeed within it and hence they are crucially advantaged over the children of subordinate classes. A clear continuity exists between the culture of the home and that of the school in the case of these children. Neither the content of what they are taught (syllabus) nor the manner in which they are taught (pedagogy) are likely to appear strange to them as these children will share a common mode of speech, style of social interaction and aesthetic orientation with their teachers.

On the other hand, the school will represent an alien and indeed a hostile environment – a cultural and social world, set apart from that of their families and communities, for children from other class backgrounds, and especially for those of working class or peasant origins, and one in which they are likely to feel out of place. Thus, while children from less advantaged class backgrounds will find difficulties, and probably increasing difficulties, of adjustment, due to an interplay between the influences of home and school, the children of the dominant class will progressively benefit from the education system. The disadvantaged children then, other than in a few special cases, either because they are excluded by inadequate performance or because they in effect exclude themselves, fail to reach the higher levels of the educational system.

What do students need to know if they are to be constructed as effective learners? This question provides the stimulus where the question is rephrased to: “What do students need to know in order to operate in a manner which is acceptable in the classroom?” A question like this needs to be extended to incorporate questions about the consequences of participation in the classroom as

it is not without political implications. It is widely recognised that success in school is not random, but rather falls into quite distinct patterns whereby students from certain social groups are more likely to be successful than others. The focus here lies in the examination of why students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to succeed in school than their middle-class peers. As noted by Lemke (1990), the argument could draw on the classroom interaction patterns in which students must be conversant to be able to participate effectively. This knowledge can be transferred later to academic success.

Research on Parental Involvement

Valdés (1996) described the research on parent involvement as research:

‘on parents and their ability to “support” their children’s education... In general, this research takes the perspective that at-risk children do poorly in school because of their parents’ beliefs and behaviors. Non-mainstream parents either do not have the “right” attitudes toward the value of education; or they do not prepare their children well for school or they are not sufficiently involved in their children’s education’ (p. 17).

Descriptions of parental involvement include a wide variety of parental behaviours, including participation in school activities, communicating with teachers, and school-related rules imposed by parents at home (Fan and Chen, 1999); parents’ communication about school, checking homework, expectations for academic success, encouragement about reading, participation in school functions, parenting style and other components (Jeynes, 2005); parents visiting the school, attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering, participating in school events, at-home discussions of educational topics, assistance with homework and time management (Lee and Bowen, 2006); helping with homework and projects at home, knowing what the child was learning in school and helping the child in other areas (Drummond and Stipek, 2004). Other types of parental involvement identified in the literature include teaching children the alphabet and reading to them before they enter school, attendance at school events, complying with teachers’ requests to work with students at home (Lareau, 1987); and parental expectations for their children’s educational achievement (Fan and Chen, 1999).

Joyce Epstein and her colleagues (Sanders, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, and Van Voorhis, 2002)

identified six types of parental involvement: a) parenting, which includes supporting, nurturing, and child rearing; b) communicating, which includes relating, reviewing and overseeing; c) volunteering, which includes supervising and fostering; d) learning at home, which includes managing, recognising, and rewarding; e) decision making, which includes contributing, considering, and judging; and f) collaborating with the community, which includes sharing and giving.

This model was intended to increase the “sociocultural congruency” between home and school as described by Delgado-Gaitán (1991). Parents became better advocates for their children as they learned about the expectations of the school. However, there was no mechanism to recognise, value, or incorporate the parents’ social capital or “funds of knowledge” to empower parents and families to participate and support their children’s success in school. Funds of knowledge referred to the “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being” (Moll, et al. 1992) and which may contrast sharply with the knowledge and skills valued in the classroom. Children’s interests or cultural knowledge were not recognised by teachers or incorporated into academic learning, and a social relationship of reciprocity was not developed between families and schools.

Parental involvement refers to a myriad of behaviours and attitudes which support the agenda of the school. Schools may assume that parents are taking an active role in their child’s education but there is often a cultural gap for minority parents who are unfamiliar with the educational system and who lack the resources to gain knowledge and then successfully navigate the system. In addition, there is a consistent lack of a mechanism for incorporating parents’ input into the partnership. Instead, the partnership is engineered by the school to promote the school’s agenda, and no reciprocity is developed between families and schools. The cultural perspectives of students and families are largely ignored, and middle-class mainstream perspectives continue to be highly valued in the schools. Instead of continuing to push their own agenda, schools need to incorporate parent input into the partnership and build on the strengths of the community.

Reay described how middle-class parents, who had experienced success at school, were more self-confident and much more skilled in asserting

their opinions where there were “disagreements or tension between home and school, displaying certainty, self-assurance and an ability to counter opposing viewpoints, all aspects of cultural capital” (p. 77). In contrast, the working-class mothers were doubtful and anxious in their interactions with school staff, and their approach was apologetic and tentative. Working class mothers and middle-class mothers also viewed their roles differently. Middle-class mothers saw themselves in a supportive role, and working-class mothers saw their role as compensatory. The middle-class mothers had more options due to their greater affluence, knowledge of the educational system and self-confidence. Middle-class mothers had a greater sense of efficacy in home-school interactions and felt empowered to intervene in their children’s education. On the other hand, working-class often felt incompetent, uncertain, and without a sense of entitlement to advocate effectively for their children which most often resulted in educational failures. Working-class mothers questioned their own stance and were much more timid and hesitant to express legitimate concerns than middle-class mothers.

Bazron, Osher and Fleishman (2005) referred to negative results from cultural disconnects, and the lack of a mechanism for schools to respond to the cultural needs of the students. Their suggestion was to “Help parents gain the skills necessary to negotiate the education system and knowledge of the norms of behaviour that govern schools” (Briscoe, Smith, and McClain, 2003). When parents do not know how to negotiate the system, they might be less likely to try to do so on behalf of their child, or feel they lack the knowledge to support their child’s success in school (p. 83).

In a similar vein, Schechter and Bayley (2002) described fundamental assumptions of schools regarding parent involvement and the disconnect that occurred when parents not only lacked the necessary knowledge to support a child’s academic activities, but also lacked the resources that would allow them to acquire this knowledge. Although the relationship between parent involvement and student achievement may have been influenced by the types of activities parents engaged in within the school and at home, the cultural resources they could activate and transmit to their children had a more significant effect. When these cultural resources were aligned with the cultural and linguistic repertoires on which school learning was built, students were more successful. When parents understood and were able to negotiate the school system, they also

became more effective advocates for their children and their learning.

Schools reach to parents by using “bridging strategies”. Parents and students will benefit when the bridges provide a venue for two-way communication. Schools must be responsive to the strengths and the needs of the communities they serve, just as parents should be asked to be responsive to the needs of schools. Delgado-Gaitán (1991) described how people from different social classes relate differently to schools, with middle class families and schools resulting in the closest match. Ethnically diverse families, often isolated from school culture, may not possess the cultural resources necessary to successfully “play the school hand” and participate in their child’s education and/or advocate for their child.

Conventional school activities institutionalised to involve parents in limited ways tended to relegate all the power to the institution and usually ignored the needs of groups, particularly those with a different language who were unfamiliar with the school’s expectations (Delgado Gaitán, 1991, p. 43). Lamont and Lareau (1988) described how children from the dominant class come to school with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully “negotiate their educational experience” while students from other groups had to acquire these middle and upper-middle “social, linguistic, and cultural competencies” once they are in school (p. 155).

Similarly, Edwards and Warin (1999) described the relationship between home-school as “colonisation of the home by the school,” and not collaboration. They also warned that “even the best intentioned colonials are eventually rejected” (p. 337). Middle-class children and families possessed the resources including language and behavioural norms that for the most part, were the same as those possessed by teachers, and therefore met their cultural expectations, resulting in higher degrees of success.

Zentella (2005) described the work of Heath, and noted that teachers were more successful in imparting literacy skills to their students when they understood that there were many ways in which parents could teach their children and modified classroom culture to accommodate students. In spite of this, however, “local schools and nationwide public service announcements continually urge parents to adopt the schools’ literate behaviours, as if that would guarantee success” (p. 20). According to Lareau and Horvat (1999) the social setting of mainstream public schools is mainstream culture. Other cultures are

not valued in this setting, which puts parents of other ethnicities at a disadvantage.

Parental Influences on Mother Tongue Acquisition and Maintenance

The strongest influence on children’s first language acquisition in the early years is by parents and other primary caregivers. Children’s development of language skills, language socialisation, perceptions of the value of L1, and maintenance of L1 are influenced by these ‘first teachers’ attitudes, goals, and behaviours related to their child’s initial language development influence. Among the first investigators to characterise parents’ language attitudes as ‘instrumental’ and ‘integrative’ were Gardner and Lambert (1972). The focus of *instrumental language attitude* is on pragmatic, utilitarian goals, such as whether one or another language will contribute to personal success, security, or status. On the other hand, an *integrative language attitude* emphasises on social considerations, such as the desire to be accepted into the cultural group that uses a language or to elaborate an identity associated with the language.

According to Baker (1992) parents’ stated attitudes about their child’s language acquisition do not necessarily match their language behaviour with the child as relationships between attitudes and behaviours are always complex. Whereas most minority language parents are eager to see their children succeed in school and the broader society, at the same time, they also want their children to learn L1 and to be proud of their cultural heritage. Hence, it seems that parents with these dual language goals, rather than focusing on their expressed desire for mother tongue learning, tend to act more on promoting second language learning as suggested by the few empirical studies that have been reported. This behaviour results in the weakening of L1 in favour of L2 which in turn affects children’s dual language behaviours when they sense that the home language is less important. Thus, just as children are learning their first words, *subtractive bilingualism* can begin at a very early age. Possible differences between parents’ expressed desires and their actual language behaviours with their infants and young children need to be considered by the advocates of mother tongue acquisition in the early years.

Four types of parental language and culture orientation that have been identified by Kemppainen, Ferrin, Ward, and Hite (2004) are mother tongue-centric, bicultural, multicultural, and majority language-centric. They describe a correlation between these positions and parents’

choice of language school for their children. As a matter of fact, in many situations, parents have no choice about the language of instruction. De Houwer's (1999) conceptualisation of 'impact belief' is helpful in these situations which is described as the extent to which parents believe they have direct control over their children's language use. To provide particular language experiences and environments for their children, and to reward particular language behaviours, active efforts are made by parents with strong impact beliefs. A passive approach to their children's early language experiences is taken by parents with weak impact beliefs, seeing the wider environment as determining whether children acquire one or another language.

The manner in which the speed and quality of children's acquisition of L2 is affected by minority language parents' attitudes towards the majority language was described by Li (1999). According to her, three conditions that may affect young children's majority language learning when one or both parents speak a minority language are: continued use and development in L1 (extensive *family talk* covering more than household topics); supportive parental attitudes towards both languages; and active parental commitment and involvement in the child's linguistic progress (daily conversations, explanations, family talk and joint activities).

The important contributions of parents' home language behaviour in supporting preschool children's first language development was underscored by Lao's (2004) study of English-Chinese bilingual pre-schoolers. She firmly believes that mother tongue development cannot be achieved without a strong commitment from parents. According to her, the provision of meaningful print-rich home environments, guidance from adults with high levels of literacy, partnerships with schools, and support for parents who need to improve their own oral and written skills in L1 are necessary to enable them to facilitate their children's home language and literacy skills.

Language learning is also affected by factors internal to the child. Responses to opportunities or demands to learn more than one language by children depend on their temperament and other personality variables (Krashen, 1981; Strong, 1983; Wong-Fillmore, 1983), including motivation, learning styles, intellectual capacity, sensory abilities (for example, hearing and vision) (Genesee and Hamayan, 1980). Not much research has been conducted on the outcomes of

alternative models for language in education due to the effects of these individual differences.

Thus, to support mother tongue bi/multilingualism in the very early years, several considerations have to be kept in mind when designing policies and programmes. For advocates of mother tongue preservation and early education, perceived value of different language learning outcomes for their young children is a very important consideration for parents. For advocates of the primacy of mother tongue acquisition in the early years, possible differences between parents' actual language behaviours with their infants and young children and what they say they want are important. The quality and speed of language acquisition may significantly influence children's individual differences in learning styles, capacities, interests and motivation.

Knowledge of Home - School Relationships

An important aspect of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students is knowledge of home and school relationships. Educators need to include parents and caregivers in their students' literacy development. They also need to examine any preconceived notions they may have regarding home literacy. For example, Auerbach's (1995) review of ethnographic studies of family literacy reveals that educators often hold untrue assumptions about family literacy situations. In actuality, Auerbach (1995) has found multiple studies offering "counterevidence" that "refutes the notion that poor, minority, and immigrant families do not value or support literacy development" (p. 15). She adds that "those families most marginalized frequently see literacy and schooling as the key to mobility, to changing their status and preventing their children from suffering as they have" (p. 15). Finally, Auerbach cites Urza's (1986) research among Southeast Asian children, which indicated that the school rather than the home is the greater influence on student attitudes and abilities in literacy.

Research by Au (1980), Delgado-Gaitan (1987), Heath (1983), Jordan (1985), Moll and Diaz (1987), Noll (1998), and Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) documents the variety of language uses and literacy events in the homes, families, and communities of culturally and linguistically diverse children. This research suggests that all children come from homes where language and literacy are important parts of the daily lives of children. For example, Latino immigrant families traditionally are very interested in their children's education (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994).

Soto (1997) and Jimenez, Moll, Rodriguez-Brown, and Barrera (1999) characterize Latino parents as very trusting of schools to educate and work in the best interest of their children. Like most parents, however, they want to be respected. Similarly, African-American, Asian-American, and Native American parents have been characterized as desiring a quality education for their children as well as respect for their culture and values.

Conversely, however, some families do not trust schools and teachers. Such lack of trust often is born in part out of their personal experiences. Parents may feel unwelcomed by school officials, intimidated by school rules and regulations, or ashamed of their language, cultural, or class differences; they also may have misunderstandings about the school system. Educators must develop opportunities to reach out to such parents, welcome them into the school, and engage them in their children's education. Parent involvement in and encouragement of children's home reading is particularly important in fostering children's literacy development. Koskinen et al. (1999) suggest how the use of a school-home books programme and audio-taped books can support students' home reading.

By collaborating with parents and families, schools can help increase the literacy development of children. For example, Morrow and Young's (1997) research focused on improving the literacy achievement (reading and writing) and interest of inner-city children through family literacy participation. The participants were largely African-American and Latino inner-city families and children who participated in a year-long family literacy programme. As part of the research, the researchers interviewed the teachers, parents, and children to learn their beliefs about literacy. Not surprisingly, parents had goals similar to the teachers: "They [parents] valued achievement for their children and wanted to know how to help them succeed" (p. 737). The researchers found that when developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive literacy activities were used in schools and homes, when parents were included and involved in the planning, when homework was assigned that required parental involvement, and when monthly meetings with parents, teachers, and children were held, the literacy achievement of participants increased. Morrow and Young (1997) observed, "It seems as if this collaboration of home and school doing similar processes could have been the reason for

its [the programme's] success" (p. 741). The authors added, "Teachers admitted that they had not realized how important such a program was in bringing parents, students, and teachers together in working toward the literacy development of children" (p. 741).

Knowledge of Multicultural Materials and Literacy Methods

Multicultural knowledge base comprises of "a broad spectrum of multicultural texts and methods for using these materials in culturally sensitive ways that will dissolve stereotypes rather than perpetuate them," note Abt-Perkins and Rosen (2000, p. 254). It includes both multicultural literature and methods for imparting literacy. The use of multicultural children's literature is one of the most powerful ways for schools to honour students' culture and foster cross-cultural understanding. Teachers also can use multicultural literature depicting children's worlds as a means to bridge home and school cultures. The work of Spears-Bunton (1992) and Willis and Johnson (2000) emphasise the use of multicultural literature to improve students' self-esteem, involvement and engagement, and academic performance in literacy. In each of these studies, the level of involvement and engagement of African-American students increased when culturally relevant literature and instruction were used in high school English classrooms. In addition, the power relations in the class shifted as African-American students, once reticent to respond, became vocal leaders of discussion.

Multicultural literature often is used to broaden students' understanding of culture as well as cross-cultural, intra-cultural, and multicultural differences and similarities. Marshall (1998) encourages teachers of young children to use multicultural literature to talk about human differences, to talk through human differences, and to talk about topics that relate to issues of diversity. Walker-Dalhousie (1992) used a variety of fiction and non-fiction with two fifth-grade classrooms to extend understanding of multiple cultures. In addition, Spears-Bunton (2000) has used literature to stretch students' awareness of the African diaspora. Perry and Fraser (1993) assert that teachers play a central role in the construction of a "new American culture" and as such, they need to allow "the lives, histories, and cultures of the historically oppressed to critically influence the reconceptualization of knowledge that is represented in the curriculum and classroom" (p. 19).

Wonderful multicultural books are available at all levels. Educators can use criteria for evaluating multicultural materials to help them select the most appropriate books for their students. The literacy curriculum also can be the venue to help students understand the relationship of culture and power. Delpit (1995c) discusses five aspects of power in the classroom. She argues that teachers should explicitly teach children "the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, de-contextualized sub-skills, but rather within the context of wonderful communicative endeavors" (p. 45).

Leland, Harste, Ociepka, Lewison, and Vasquez (1999) consider multicultural literature as part of a "new kind of 'critical literacy curriculum' which focuses on building students' awareness of how systems of meaning and power affect people and the lives they lead" (p. 70). The authors note that their idea of 'critical literacy' is framed by Luke and Freebody's (1997) conceptualization and use of the term. Books in this category, the authors add, "invite conversations about fairness and justice; they encourage children to ask why some groups of people are positioned as 'others' " (p. 70). Along these lines, the authors argue, "readers need to be able to interrogate the assumptions that are embedded in text as well as the assumptions which they, as culturally indoctrinated beings, bring to the text" (p. 71). Specifically, the authors suggest asking students: "Whose story is this?", "Who benefits from this story" and "What voices are not being heard?" (p. 71). The authors have used such books with teachers and children in elementary schools to better understand how both groups interact and react to the texts. In their view, these books "honor diversity and invite students and teachers alike to explore a new kind of literacy curriculum- one built upon the premise that a model of difference is a model of learning for individuals in society" (p. 72).

Teachers working with students in culturally and linguistically diverse classroom will realise that there is not one, singular best way to teach all students; instead, a variety of instructional strategies should be incorporated. Because of cultural differences, not all students are comfortable asking questions or volunteering information. Teachers can develop alternative strategies for soliciting information from students while teaching them that asking and volunteering are acceptable behaviours in the classroom. Students' cultural differences may

also influence motivational devices used by the teacher. For example, competitive games may not have the desired effect on students' motivation; in some cultures, seeking individual achievement may be embarrassing rather than rewarding.

Strickland (1998) identifies several characteristics of relevant literacy instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students. She emphasises the variability that exists across students' home communities, the construction of meaning from different perspectives, the acknowledgment of context in literacy learning, the use of language for real communication, the use of relevant literacy materials, and a focus on high-level thinking and problem solving. Similarly, Craviotto and Heras (1999) identify six characteristics of culturally relevant classrooms. These strategies include using families as resources, reading multicultural literature, regarding students as active learners, emphasising classroom dialogue, providing opportunities for exploration, and using multiple languages in the classroom. The authors conclude that these strategies can enhance students' literacy learning.

These knowledge bases - self-knowledge, cultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge, culturally informed pedagogic knowledge, knowledge of methods and materials, and knowledge of home-school relationships are extremely important in helping educators address the literacy needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. They help teachers develop a collaborative and culturally sensitive learning environment that encourages meaningful, engaged learning for all students in their classrooms. School administrators and classroom teachers need to acquire these knowledge bases through teacher-education programmes or staff development opportunities. The knowledge bases will support teachers' efforts to nurture the literacy skills of their students and promote high academic achievement.

If educators keep in mind the key elements for effective teaching of ethnic- and language minority students, they will have a strong impact on the academic achievement of their students. Taking the time to develop appropriate knowledge bases, having high expectations for all students, providing a welcoming environment, and working with family members and the community will provide teachers with the tools and understandings they need to help their diverse students be successful learners.

Conclusion

Several pitfalls may occur when schools and educators try to address the literacy needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. One pitfall is the inability of educators to know enough about every culture. No singular body of knowledge, book, method, training programme, or course will teach all there is to know, and educators may not have time or opportunities to continue their multicultural learning. Rosaldo (1989), however, warns that a short-term investment will lead to a limited understanding of the role of culture in educators' lives and in the lives of students. He adds that a limited understanding may also lead to a "false comfort" (p. 8). Instead, multicultural learning for teachers should be a continuous process, requiring a long-term commitment. Building cultural knowledge and sensibilities is a life-long proposition. The most prudent approach is for educators to develop or acquire a respectful and sensitive attitude and an open mind.

A second pitfall is that many schools do not provide relevant professional development to their teachers. According to Lewis et al. (1999), only 31 percent of teachers in public schools during 1998 participated in professional development programmes that addressed the needs of students with limited English proficiency or students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Such professional development was more likely to occur in schools with greater minority enrolment. Lewis et al. (1999) state, "Teachers from schools with more than 50 percent minority enrolment were much more likely than those who taught in schools with 5 percent or less minority enrolment to participate in professional development programmes on this topic (51 versus 14 percent)." In addition, the authors note that teacher participation in professional development addressing the needs of limited English proficient and culturally diverse students also varied by region: 51 percent of teachers in the West, 33 percent of teachers in the South, and 22 percent for each of the Midwest and the Northeast. More schools

need to provide such professional development to their teachers.

A third pitfall is that some educators are reluctant to acknowledge their inherent prejudices against children who are culturally, racially, or linguistically different from themselves. Delpit (1995a) reveals that many educators, in an attempt to sound unbiased and free of prejudice, loudly proclaim, "I only see children" (p. 177). She argues that this simplistic notion of race masks more deep-seated issues. Her response, in the form of a question, is: "What message does this statement send? That there is something wrong with being black or brown, that it should not be noticed? I would like to suggest if one does not see colour, then one does not really see children. Children made 'invisible' in this manner become hard-pressed to see themselves worthy of notice" (p. 177).

A fourth pitfall is a tendency of schools to address diversity only on the surface level. Barrera (1992) and Willis (1995) have argued that the use of literacy approaches that appear to support the language and literacy of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds must be coupled with teacher knowledge and commitment. If not, the result is an approach that focuses on celebrating holidays and festivals, glorifying heroes or exceptional people, and adding culturally sensitive and appropriate literature. Such additive approaches assume the inclusion of multicultural materials is all that is needed to address diversity at the school. Although it is important to have materials that support the culture and ways of knowing that children bring with them to school, multicultural materials and activities alone are insufficient for social change. In order to address issues of cultural and linguistic difference, substantive changes must be made to the curriculum and instruction. Also, literacy must be understood as a socio-constructed process - one that builds upon students' prior knowledge to make meaning. As Nieto (1999) argues, often in the zeal to address issues of diversity, the goal of academic achievement is forgotten.

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Importance of Psychological Well-being at School

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Abstract

The significance of early years of child's life has consistently been an area of concern for professionals working in the field of child development, mental health and education. The longest part of a person's academic life is spent in school, an institution that transforms a naive child into an informed adolescent. Since, about fifteen years of one's life are absorbed in his/her schooling, the environmental factors of the school as well as processes become extremely important. A positive curriculum, directed towards holistic development of the child, can be a boon for the child, whereas, curriculum transacted just for the sake of completing the syllabus, and evaluating the children merely through examination grades could yield mind-boggling results. In this context, 'inclusion' in schools becomes vitally important. When a child is able to interact with other children with different abilities, the acceptance for people with special needs in the society comes naturally. The school becomes responsible for what children feel about themselves, and how they regard the others around. Recently, there has emerged a need of developing individuals who become better thinkers rather than rote-learners, better leaders rather than followers, and better creators rather than fillers. It therefore becomes very crucial to ensure that appropriate, and not approximate levels of health and well-being are maintained in schools, so that a strong foundation is laid for the life ahead.

Key Words: Health, Curriculum, Pedagogy, School, Teachers.

We are guilty of many errors and many faults, but our worst crime is abandoning the children, neglecting the foundation of life. Many of the things we need, can wait. The children CANNOT. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made and his senses are being developed to him we cannot answer "Tomorrow". His name is "Today" -

(Gabriela Mistral, 1948).

Introduction

The time we are in, is referred to as 21st century – a period of rapid growth and development, a period of possibilities and opportunities. The above mentioned words by Gabriel Mistral are about 70 years old. A lot of development has happened in these years, but these words still hold their worth. The programs designed for children have to focus on the importance of 'today' in their developmental as well as temporal sense. It is the childhood, which thus becomes extremely important as a period of investment for future.

Brain development is most rapid in the early years of life. When the quality of stimulation, support, and nurturance is deficient, child development is seriously affected. The effects of early disadvantage on children can be reduced. Early interventions for disadvantaged children lead to improvements in children's survival, health, growth, and cognitive and social development. Children who receive assistance in

their early years achieve more success at school. As adults they have higher employment and earnings, better health, and lower levels of welfare dependence and crime rates than those who don't have these early opportunities (UNICEF, 2013). The years that encompass middle childhood and adolescence are spent in schools. In the society today, there is a huge uproar in choosing high profile schools especially for the children of the upper middle and elite class. But this doesn't spare the lower middle or other SES groups of society from bearing the brunt of admissions. It reiterates the question as to what happens in such well-renowned schools that everyone talks about it? Does some magic happen in the lives of pupils due to the glorious building of the school, or is it the upper class English standards and attire of the teachers that promotes development of children. As academicians, we understand the ground reality. It doesn't take so much money, but a conscious effort by the functionaries of

school to make a difference in the lives of students. Some important factors of the 'school' that become responsible for affecting the psychological health and well-being of children shall be discussed in the following sections.

Curriculum

According to the history of education, the term 'curriculum' was originally related to the concept of a course of studies followed by a pupil in an educational institution. Today, the term 'curriculum' is mostly used to refer to the existing contract between society, state and educational professional with regard to the educational experiences that learners should undergo during a certain phase of their lives. Thus for majority of authors and experts, curriculum defines the 'why', 'what', 'when', 'where', 'how', and 'with whom' to learn. (Moyle, 1998). It seems to be an exhaustive definition of curriculum focussing on multiple aspects of it. The written document called 'syllabus' used in schools, completing which, seems to be all the work, is not at all to be confused with curriculum. Syllabus is just a small part of curriculum. The latter includes ideology and philosophy of the institution; teaching-learning process, and the pedagogy; and most importantly, the school's view of education and of children.

It therefore becomes quite relevant to decide how and what should be taught, or what is worth teaching? Now, as stakeholders in the field of education we have to decide which route do we need to take? Should we use learners' viewpoint in deciding what should be taught to them, although it eventually brings us amidst hundreds and thousands of learners and their interests whose viewpoints cannot practically be taken and adopted and we can only end up thinking on behalf of students and not actually think like them? The alternative option could be to find out the intrinsic value of knowledge and then pass it on to the students which can qualify itself as 'learnable' or rather, usable. (Kumar, 2009) If the curriculum includes the ideology of the school which is developmentally oriented and is inclusive, the same shall be transacted in the classroom, and such an ideology would have to manifest in the teaching and evaluation process.

Pedagogy

According to National Curriculum Framework, 2005, the child has to be treated as the active constructor of knowledge and should be refrained from information overload. The document also stresses that the teaching process

in the classroom should be innovative and creative such that it promotes thinking in the child, and the content of instruction should be related to the social reality of the child. It should be rooted in the soil where the child lives. Does it really happen? Are we in the process of believing that the child is the centre and a decision maker in the process of learning? It becomes very hard for us to believe that children are intelligent and active. As Bruner (1999) opines, 'Modern pedagogy is moving increasingly to the view that the child should be aware of his/her own thought processes, and that it is crucial for the pedagogical theorist and the teacher alike, to help him/her to become more meta-cognitive. Achieving skill and accumulating knowledge are not enough.' (Pp. 18). Bruner highlights the importance of meta-thinking, thinking about thoughts, and making the child aware of what is going on. The system that we have in place doesn't let that happen.

The child is so burdened with syllabus that understating her own thought processes becomes nearly impossible, as also teachers or school is unable to give any scope for such an activity. This becomes even more critical with older students, who enter into the 'stress and storm' (Hall, 1975) period of adolescence. Adolescence as a stage is, in itself demanding because of all the biological changes happening in adolescents. It is the time when their health is threatened by chemical abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and dietary problems; and if in such period we assume that conventional textbook course that conveys knowledge about normal and abnormal body functions is sufficient, then our assumption is probably incorrect. (Champagne and Mcquade, 1995)

Role of a teacher

There lies a huge impetus on the 'teacher'. She is the live player of the curriculum. Her role makes her an average teacher or a teacher with advanced skills. A teacher with basic skills would rather know what she is teaching but she is likely to explain the concepts of the textbook in a predesigned way. She would evaluate students on set patterns of evaluation using a particular teaching approach in class. Also, she is confined to perceive herself as the active speaker and children as listeners possessing little or no knowledge. Lastly, she is likely to focus on a few children in class who actively participate in the class while leaving the rest. If these are the traits of a teacher with basic skills, what a teacher with advanced skills would be like?

Well, she would know the level of understanding of her students, and how much they already know. She would use a teaching approach which is relevant for all. She would know how to make content of instruction more challenging for children with higher intelligence and how to make it easy and understandable for children of average intelligence or the ones with special educational needs. Not to forget, she would perceive children as active constructors of knowledge and would pay special attention to those who do not otherwise participate in the class and devise ways for their active participation.

So much has been just said about a 'good' teacher that it becomes so essential to understand how well she is trained to become a successful teacher. It reiterates that her training should follow the same principle and method and her trainer should possess all the qualities that we expect out of this trainee-teacher when she goes in the field. So what does the training do? Kumar (2008) answers it as, 'the basic implication is that training makes no difference. It remains a normal achievement, a diploma or degree, which makes you eligible for job but carries no substantial value. The skills learnt are rooted in a concept of teaching that has little relevance to the children of today or to the policy framework guiding education. On values and attitudes, the training process makes no impact, indeed, it is not intended to'. (pp. 40) The word seems to be of utmost importance, and provides us with a valuable suggestion. In order to promote the well-being of students in the class, we first have to promote the well-being of transactors of curriculum, the teachers, so that we can ensure that they practice what they have been taught.

Diversity and Inclusion

In the Indian context, cultural diversity and a long history of exclusion lend their own meaning to the term 'inclusion'... As the country grows and previously excluded groups amass into schools, an inherited colonial education system and the scale of the country make transition to inclusion an unwieldy, contested affair. (Joshi, 2008) It is imperative how we see inclusion as a solution to provide mental well-being to students. When a society is inclusive of all the differences, and an individual has to eventually grow in with the different people around her, why not make schools inclusive? These schools will make the child understand and appreciate different capabilities. Therefore, it is very essential to understand what do we mean by an 'inclusive' school. Schools that are inclusive

adopt the belief that wherever possible, all children should learn together regardless of differences; that all children learn and achieve their potential; and that the continuum of students' needs should be matched by a continuum of programs, support and services. All students regardless of their ability or disability benefit from schools adopting inclusive practices. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 document highlights the fact that the benefit is mutual when there are typical and atypical students in a classroom, both tend to learn from each other and are able to accept the differences that exist. The characteristics of an effective as well as inclusive school can be summarized in the following points:

- Such school is driven by a moral imperative to improve the learning outcomes of all students, regardless of their capacities and backgrounds.
- It adopts a whole school focus that is reflected in the school's vision, beliefs, policies and practices.
- It is deeply committed to the belief that all children can learn.
- The school focuses on students' learning needs rather than on learning disabilities.
- It provides learning programs and tasks that are targeted to students' learning styles, interests, and needs.
- Such school has a strong performance and development culture that supports all staff and volunteers to continuously improve their effectiveness to promote student learning. (Dept. of Education and training, 2003)

Conclusion

What we mean by education is a very critical concern. It should aim at developing natural abilities of the child and build his character; education is responsible for the development of personality and preparation for the adult life, wherein, it is able to create productive citizens who have a sense of unity and community amongst themselves. (Sharma, 2000) A large mass of people is dependent on schools for educating their children. In a country where there are first-generation learners, going to school for the first time, school becomes the only respite. Schools can play an important role in the mental health and well-being of their students and staff. Obtaining the skills needed for academic success can contribute to a better life quality of students.

A positive school environment can promote good mental health in students and staff; in turn, good mental health of students and staff can promote academic performance in students and reduce staff absenteeism. Bullying and feelings of not being accepted by peers and teachers contributes to poor mental health in students. (SHE, 2014) School is not just an institution of education; it is an integral agent of development. A school with its efficient environment and conducive processes can do wonders to the lives of students. Society doesn't thrive on competitions,

it grows on co-operation and brotherhood. If school has decided to prepare students to become respectful individuals of society, then the institution itself has to make a conscious effort towards thwarting any instances of evoking unhealthy competition in the minds of pupils. School is entrusted with the responsibility of making children more conscious/ cognizant of the needs of others, making them critical thinkers. Thus how it is done shall make the difference for the years ahead.

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Using Brain Based Learning Approach for Teaching Children with Intellectual Disability

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Abstract:

As psychology says, “Every individual is unique in his/her style.” Every individual is different from others in many aspects i.e. learning styles, capabilities, abilities, cognitive abilities, physical fitness, ways of thinking, and perception. Inspite of knowing these differences, we tend to use the same teaching strategies, teaching principles methods, formulas and other techniques for all. Brain-Based Learning considers these differences. Brain-Based education is learning in accordance with the way the brain is naturally designed to learn. It considers how the brain learns best. The brain does not learn as per the demands of the school’s rigid or flexible schedule, formals provided by research, and other techniques. Brain learns best in its own way. Brain-based education is best understood in three words: engagement, strategies and principles. Brain-Based Learning is the engagement of strategies based on the principles derived from an understanding of the brain.

In this concept paper, the researcher will explain the usefulness of Brain-Based education or Learning for Children with Intellectual Disability (CwID). Brain-Based Learning has strategies, approaches, principles to implement in education for Children with Intellectual Disability.

Key words: BrainBased Learning (BBL), and Children with Intellectual Disability (CwID).

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) had defined the terms ‘**Impairment**’, ‘**Disability**’ and ‘**Handicap**’ in 1980 through the publication of the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH), which is a manual of classification relating to the consequences of diseases. The ICIDH proposes the concepts and definitions of Impairment, Disability and Handicap, and discusses the relation between these dimensions. It is based on a linear model (Figure 1) implying progression from disease, impairment and disability to handicap.

According to the ICIDH, **Impairment** is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or

perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being, generally taken to be at the level of the individual. Disability denotes the consequences of impairment in terms of functional performance and activity by the individual. A person who has an optic nerve or retinal damage would have limitations in performing those tasks that require the use of eyesight.

The ICIDH defines **Handicap** as a disadvantage for an individual, resulting from an impairment or disability, which limits or prevents fulfilment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex and social cultural factors) for that individual. There are so many acts which define the different types of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicap.

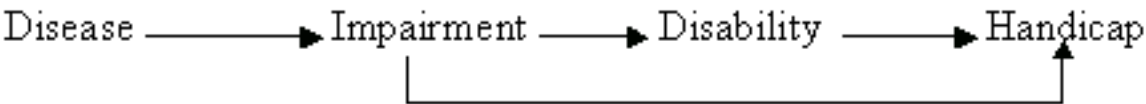


Figure 1: ICIDH Model (WHO 1980)

functions, generally taken to be at organ level. It is any damage to tissues due to some disease or trauma. A person who has poor or no vision due to damage to retina or optic nerve may be said to have a visual impairment.

Disability has been defined as any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from an impairment) to

Latest one is Right of Persons with Disabilities 2012, which defines ‘**specified disability**’ as (i) autism spectrum disorder; (ii) blindness; (iii) cerebral palsy; (iv) chronic neurological conditions; (v) deaf blindness; (vi) haemophilia; (vii) hearing impairment; (viii) intellectual disability; (ix) leprosy cured; (x) locomotor

disability; (xi) low vision; (xii) mental illness; (xiii) muscular dystrophy; (xiv) multiple sclerosis; (xv) specific learning disability; (xvi) speech and language disability; (xvii) thalassemia and (xviii) multiple disabilities. RPwD 2012 includes 18 disabilities. The focus of this paper is Intellectual Disability.

Intellectual disability is a disability characterised by significant limitations, both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) 2009.)

This definition focuses on two main aspects of Intellectual Disability, which are:

Intellectual functioning, also called intelligence—refers to general mental capacity, which includes learning, reasoning, problem solving, and so on. One criterion to measure intellectual functioning is an IQ test. Generally, an IQ test score of around 70-75 indicates a limitation in intellectual functioning. Standardised tests can also determine limitations in **adaptive behaviour**, which comprises three skill types: **Conceptual skills**— Language and literacy, money, time, and number concepts, and self-direction; **Social skills**— Interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, wariness, social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules/obey laws and to avoid being victimized; **Practical skills**— Activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone.

Background

All learning is connected to the brain in some way, then what is meant by a Brain-Based Learning? Brain-based education is best understood through three words: engagement, strategies and principles. Brain-Based Learning is the engagement of strategies based on principles derived from an understanding of the brain. This type of education is learning in accordance with the way the brain is naturally designed to learn. It considers how the brain learns best. The brain does not learn on demands by a school's rigid or flexible schedule, formal provided by research, and other techniques; brain learns best in its own way.

Brain-based learning is in accordance with the way the brain is naturally designed to learn. It is a way of thinking about learning. A "Formula"

for it would be in direct opposition to the principles of brain-based learning. Every day learners are developing new skills and knowledge based on a brain compatible model of instruction, but Brain-Based Learning is an instruction model that integrates some simple discoveries about what facilitates accelerated learning, enrichment and reorganization of our cognitive system.

Definition: It's the purposeful **engagement** of effective **strategies** derived from **principles** of neuroscience.

Brain-Based learning is a comprehensive approach to instruction based on how current research in neuroscience suggests our brain learns naturally. This theory is based on what we currently know about the actual structure and function of the human brain at varying stages of development. This type of education provides a biologically driven framework for teaching and learning, and helps explain recurring learning behaviours. It is a meta-concept that includes an eclectic mix of techniques. Currently, these techniques stress allowing teachers to connect learning to students' real-life experiences. This form of learning also encompasses such educational concepts as:

- mastery learning
- learning styles
- multiple intelligences
- cooperative learning
- practical simulations
- experiential learning
- problem-based learning
- movement education

Brain-Based Learning Approaches Or Principles:

1. The brain is a parallel processor: The brain performs many tasks simultaneously, including thinking and feeling. Children with intellectual disability are not able to perform two or more cognitive tasks simultaneously because of their cognitive limitations, so we have to train them accordingly. Special education teachers should provide a single task at a time so that the child can perform better on that task.

2. Learning engages the entire physiology: The brain and the body are engaged in learning. Children with Intellectual disability have some physical problems because of which they are not able to concentrate on a task. Therefore, we have to check the physical fitness of the child before commencement of any activity or task. Children with intellectual disabilities have some associated conditions also like, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down syndrome, Epilepsy, Cerebral Palsy and others. These conditions are diversion of mind for children with intellectual Disabilities. Before the teaching-learning

process, we have to implement all possible corrections or treatments for children with intellectual disabilities.

3. The search for meaning is innate: “The brain’s/mind’s search for meaning is very personal. The greater the extent to which what we learn is tied to personal, meaningful experiences, the greater and deeper our learning will be” (Caine and Caine 1994, 96). Children with intellectual disability have cognitive limitations because of which they are not able to tie learning with personal experiences, not able to transfer or use the learned skills in different situations. A Special Education Teacher has to teach every skill in real situation and wherever it is not possible they can use simulations for teaching. Every individual has their own point of view that we might not be able to understand.

4. The search for meaning occurs through patterning: “The brain is designed to perceive and generate patterns, and it resists having meaningless patterns imposed on it” (Caine and Caine 1994, 88).

5. Emotions are critical to patterning: Our emotions are brain-based; they play an important role in making decisions. In the groundbreaking *The Emotional Brain*, Joseph LeDoux (1996) clearly explains how the emotional neural passageways (which originate in our amygdala) influence the neural passageways needed for academic and scholarly work. Daniel Goleman popularized it in 1995 in title of his book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can Matter more than IQ*. When IQ is low, then there is low development of SQ, DQ and EQ.

6. The brain processes parts and wholes simultaneously: The left and the right hemisphere have different functions, but they are designed to work together.

7. Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception: People hold general perceptions of the environment and pay selective attention to various parts of it.

8. Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes: There is interplay between our conscious and our unconscious. “One primary task of educators is to help students take charge of their conscious and unconscious processing” (Caine and Caine 1994, 157).

9. We have at least two different types of memory: spatial (autobiographical) and rote learning (taxon memory). The taxon or rote memory systems consist of “facts and skills that are stored by practice and rehearsal” (Caine and

Caine 1994, 169). Spatial, or autobiographical, memory “builds relationships among facts, events, and experiences” (Caine and Caine 1994, 170).

10. Learning is developmental: Children, and their brains, benefit from enriched home and school environments.

11. Learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat: Students optimally benefit when their assignments are challenging and the classroom environment feels safe and supportive. Daniel Goleman (1994) expands upon the importance of eliminating threat from the classroom in the influential *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Each brain is uniquely organized. When teaching, we need to consider how each student learns most effectively; each student has his or her own unique set of brain strengths and weaknesses.

The three instructional techniques associated with brain-based learning are:

1. Orchestrated immersion: creating learning environments that fully immerse students in an educational experience.
2. Relaxed alertness: trying to eliminate fear in learners, while maintaining a highly challenging environment.
3. Active processing: allowing the learner to consolidate and internalize information by actively processing it.

These principles help us to understand Brain-Based Learning.

Conclusion

Special educators must be not just dispensers of information, rather they must be active enhancers of memory by using brain-based education and other such techniques. Educators should be aware of research in effective instructional methods if they are to successfully implement the strategies to enhance student learning. In a nutshell, it is a new paradigm which establishes connections between brain function and educational practice. The core of brain-based learning rests in nurturing the development of neural network connections that foster learning. This field emerged and at least twenty years ago and came to be known as “brain-based” education. It is an approach that “connects the dots”.

Brain-based education says, “Everything we do uses our brain; let’s learn more about it and apply that knowledge.”

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Educational Resilience and Disability: Peer and School

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Abstract

Life is a 'jigsaw puzzle' with challenges, setbacks, hardships at some places and happiness, smiles, peace at other places, fitted together in different form and different facets on the board of time. Some people scum to the problems and some successfully manage to get out of the difficult situations in life. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity. The position of the researches in the field of resilience in past few decades was mainly confined to the areas of clinical psychology, work with children and young adults. The previous researches focused on the 'bounce back' of the children from the adversity they faced mainly in relation to the abuse, maltreatment and trauma. Understanding the resilience model involving a risk factor and protective factor; this concept is being used to understand the negotiation of disability in a young student in the late phase of adolescence. Disability and impairment in any form is considered to the risk factor. This research study tries to investigate the lived experiences of an only disabled child in the school (private).

Keywords: Educational resilience, Disability, Peer and School.

Introduction

To commemorate International day of Person with Disability, Department of Empowerment of Person with Disabilities (DEPWD), Government of India, launched “*Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan*” (in Hindi) or Accessible India Campaign in the year 2015. This campaign aims to achieve universal accessibilities for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). This provided a new hope to PwDs to gain access, equal opportunity, being a part of life and society. As per the World Health Organization “ Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions, impairment is a problem in body function of structure; an activity limitation is difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.”(WHO). According to Mondol & Mete (2013) “disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.” Taking into the cultural and context of Indian society, the disability is not considered as a natural problem but ‘disability is a curse to the person and the family’. In order to break the myth and empower the disable person, India came up with (some modification) -“**The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016**”. The act defined Disability as “ Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.”(GOI, 2016). There are various criteria and legal

support with which Person with Disability (PwD) can demand for better sanctions and development of the future. But beside all the legal benefit given to the PwD, they are not treated equally in the society. I take here the issue of the educational system and the differentiation in that arena. The Government of India provide with the concept of establishment of Inclusive education, with the thought that this will help in the proper development of the child and psychologically boost up the morale.

“Inclusion is a philosophy ... bringing children with special needs well within the purview of mainstream education ... recognizes the diverse needs of the students and ensures quality education to all through appropriate curricula, teaching strategies, support services and partnerships with the community.” (District Primary Education Programme, 2000, p. 5)

It has been seen that in the urban as well as in rural areas the information and awareness regarding the awareness of disability issues and little resources (financial , etc.,)and discrimination of the children on the ground of disability make their survival vulnerable. Mostly in society they suffer the humiliations in school since they are not been accepted by the peers. Yet there are episodes of bullying, verbal abuse , negations, non involvement among peers hamper the morale students. Some students scum to the their existing circumstances where as some students do not. Also there are many students who achieved success in their life and they started negotiating their life at the school. Here, I

would like introduce, that, those who individuals are successful despite adversity are called resilient. Now arises a question : What is resilience? And how it works in educational context?

Concept of Resilience

Resilience is broad concept. Use of resilience is basically in the field of Psychology and Material sciences. Here, in this research I would like to elaborate on 'resilience' which is from the area of Psychology as how it is defined and researched on. If we explore the historical background of the resilience research, there are basically three clear strands which are visible as how this is been conceptualized. The first strand is drawn from studies on individual differences in recovering from trauma (Werner and Smith (1977). The second strand is derived from the experiences of individuals from high risk groups who obtain better outcomes than were expected from them (Rutter,1979), and the third strand flows from the ability of individuals to adapt despite stressful experiences that they faced (Garmezy, Masten & Tellegan, 1984). So, resilience researchers such as Rutter (1999) defines resilience as "relative resistance to psychosocial risk experiences"(p. 119). Whereas other pioneer such as Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker (2000) in the field defined 'resilience' as "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity". Richardson (2002) described resilience as "the process of coping with adversity, change, or opportunity in a manner that results in the identification, fortification, and enrichment of resilient qualities or protective factors" (p. 308). A key requirement of resilience is the presence of both risks and promotive factors that either help bring about a positive outcome or reduce or avoid a negative outcome.

According to Garmezy (1991) and Rutter (1979), resilience research originally was related most often to mental health outcomes rather than to educational outcomes. Therefore in the previous researches the focus of resilience research was on individual rather than environment. Here by environment I mean a family, school, institution community. The resilience researchers were more focused on the individual rather than on the effect of the surroundings. When it was investigated, it was found that environment accounts for a really great deal in positive coping when the individual are exposed to trauma, adverse conditions or war like situations. Therefore a more ecological know how is

required of resilience as the person – environment inter-reactions. According to the Bronfenbrenner(1979) the interaction between different part of the mesosystem predicts a good positive outcome. For resilience to occur in an individual requires two important components. First is the Risk factor(which includes trauma, adversity in form of loss of parents, disability, war etc.) and protective factor(those factors which help the child to get out of the risk factor. (parental care, siblings, teachers, friends etc.). In this research I had mainly focused my sole attention on the educational resilience.

Educational Resilience

In order to bring greater understanding to the terminology commonly used in literature and specify the particular domains of resilience, researchers have been increasingly using terms such as, "educational resilience" (Wang et al., 1994). Wang et al. (1994, p. 46) define educational resilience as the —"highlighted likelihood of success in school and in other life accomplishments, despite environmental adversities, brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences".

A very limited amount of research has been done in relation to the educational resilience in disable person in India. As such I found that there is dearth of specific research in Indian context where lived experience of the person suffering with disability is being explored in relation to educational context. The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the experiences of the disabled student in order to identify what makes him 'bounce back' and do very well in academics despite adversity. Therefore I tried to 'dug upon' the untouched area of disability research which can also add to the resilience scholarship area. Till date the educational resilience was studied in the young children and young adults suffering single or multiple adversity in the non Indian context. This study tries to fill the gap in the area of resilience research, specifically educational resilience in Indian context.

The research question which directs this research are as follows:

- How child with disability negotiate the life in the school?
- What are problem that he face had been empowering to him?
- How the peer and school contribute in his studies in the school?

These research questions form the foundation of the research since it provides instances of 'inclusive education' in a private school and the educational resilience of the student who despite disability is trying best for his educational success.

For the purpose of the present research I take on the definition of educational resilience as higher possibility of school success with good grades in class X, in the presence of the multiple risk factors in which disability is the important one. Also, students demonstrate educational resilience due to their personal characteristics to deal with the adverse situation and 'come back' and attend the school on regular basis. In the educational resilience research, protective factor is also part of its umbrella term 'Resilience'. So, in educational resilience also the presence of risk factor and protective factor is essential, as these two are the essential the concept of resilience.

Methodology

The present research involves the case study method to grapple the negotiation of the Prakash (pseudo name), who managed to survive a school life and accommodate with his surroundings. I would like to submit that the case study method had been most appropriate in this study since the case under the study finds difficulty in writing. The research intends to research the educational resilience, therefore in the academic sense the presence of risk factor(s) and protective factor(s) are essential for this concept. This descriptive in-depth research provides a very different kind of analysis of risk and resilience in relation to the educational, which can be seen as an effort to fillup the gap in existing literature and provide insight that "How" the private school settings 'respond' to the issues of disability where the resources are negligent to cater the survival of disable student according to the 'some standard' norm of the government in relation to the disable person. This study holds a special platform for its uniqueness as the child in the study faced multiple risk factors which 'pulls' him on the verge of dropout from the school. Before the start of the study, I was able to identify different risk factors which make the survival chances a real tough job. The risk factors are:

- Physical Disability
- Economically Weaker Section
- Resident of Slum in the early year of development (from birth till 2001)

Therefore method of data collection were intensive interviews with the peer, class teacher,

and student in the class of class XI, non participant observation in classroom. Site of the study was a private school with the population of students coming from mostly low income families. This private school is near the slum catering the enrolment of 95% of the slum children. The children coming to this school are second to third generation learner who believes in the school and its philosophy. The school has two separate buildings where the old building caters the boys section and the new building caters the girls section. The main office, science labs and computer section is this side of the school. The period of observation was four months (both in and out of the class).

Discussion and Analysis

Introduction of the Child: Prakash

He is a young adolescent studying in class XI (Commerce). He suffered with severe muscular disability in his lower part of the body and hands by birth. He is unable to speak properly and takes time to reply back. From very young age he didn't had stability in his hands and lower part of the body. He uses walking frame for the support while walking. He is even unable to do basic chores properly e.g. Carrying bags on shoulder, hold pen in hand. He wants to complete his schooling till class XII. He opted for commerce as he finds himself unfit to stand and work in the science lab. He recently suffered with an accident where he fell from a height and broke his skull bone but after getting discharged he made his way to the school.

Interviews with Peer

All his classmates are studying with him since nursery. They are very particular with his basic needs between the class, e.g. going to computer classes, going to washroom, taking him from the two wheeler. His close friends Ram and Shyam (pseudo names) are very supportive. They told he was unable to go to toilet and wash himself even, so they from, class I are doing these things in the school for him. If Ram is absent, then Shyam takes on the activity of the Prakash and vice-versa by Ram if Shyam is absent. Together they all have lunch and enjoy in the class. Ram said " *Hum sab jagah leke jatei hain...wo hamara dost hai... hame koi faraq nahi padta ki wo eesa hai...hai to hai... par hum sab uske sath hain*" (I take him everywhere...he is our friend...I don't mind he is like that...he is like this...but we all are with him.) Shyam replied that once Prakash's parents (when in primary school) tried to shift the school to the nearby area of their residence but the students bullied him

very badly, so he left and came back to this school.

Interview of Teacher

The teacher recollected her experiences in relation to Prakash. As he was only PwD in the school. His condition was very poor in terms of sitting in the class. Teacher told “*kabhi kabhi hum khud hi uska kam kar dete the...jese toilet le ja ke saf kr dena...khana khilana...*”(sometime i used to do his work like taking and cleaning his toilet...making him eat).Teacher told that Prakash had undergone three surgeries and after that he is able to walk with the help of walker and hold the pencil properly. Teacher say that “*uska dimag theek hai bas hath or peer mein pareshani hai*”. Teacher told that how much difficult to teach him writing. She also added that his family was very poor and could not afford the fees of the child, so he got fee waiver for few years. She also told that “*uski ma ne Prakash ko dusre school me admission dilwa diya...par wahan bacchon ne bahut pareshan kiya...so wo wapas aa gaya*”(Her mother got him admission in the nearby school...but the students bullied him badly...so he was again re-admitted in the school). Teacher also informed that school had no such facilities for disabled students but they had tried to make relaxation wherever it is possible. (relaxation in regular attendance, entry in school till 8:30 am...so on)

Discussion

I would like to submit that in different ways but repeatedly the school landscape was empathetically woven as a complex tapestry of subtle and explicitly helpful to the child that it had become difficult to identify that which person was behind the love and care which was given to Prakash. The role of teacher was much motivating, as apart from her regular duties as a teacher to teach students, paid attention Prakash and his problems in the classroom (at the lower classes). She gave mother like protection to the disabled child. Teachers are concerned in an important way with the total development of human beings – physical, intellectual, social,

moral and spiritual (NCTE, 2009). This goes in corroboration of Benard (1997) proposes the concept of “—turnaround teachers”. Turnaround teachers not only model the resilient behaviours which they desire from the students but also model three protective factors that buffer risk and enable positive development by meeting students’ basic needs for safety, love and belonging, respect, power, and accomplishment and learning (Benard, 1991). The three factors include caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities to participate and contribute. School environments and specific teachers that are supportive and provide a positive place for the students to learn are immensely important to academic success was some of the friend. Friendship is also necessary for proper development. The case and the response from the student was different. School environments and specific teachers that are supportive and provide a positive place for the students to learn are immensely important to academic success. Thus, the ‘meso-system’ of the Bronfenbrenner (1979) lies the zone of help from peer and school, which clearly shows the importance of the Peer and School’s implication in the educational resilience of the disabled child.

Conclusion

Educational resilience in the case into consideration was basically hidden in the role of the peers and school as a very important protective factor which ensure the continuation of the school despite there were many chances were there to get dropout. This had clearly shown that the students in the school are highly influenced by the motto of “Love All...Serve All” The school (the site of study) believes in the philosophy that human values are important for the proper development of the human being. The core human values which are the basis of the school philosophy are: *sathya, dharma, shanti, prem* and *seva*. Therefore the motto “Love All...Serve All” holds great significance in the school staff and all the students studying in the school.

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The Existential 'I' and Inclusion

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Abstract

The idea of inclusion finds a lot of appeal in the educational and clinical practice, and rightly so, since it attempts to address the inequalities and aims at empowerment of every individual. Expressions of being included and empowered, of the existential 'I', find space in the autobiographies and narratives of disabled. However, if inclusion is not only about addressing the needs of the disabled, then one must think of the various experiences of being included. One must articulate the feelings of being cared for and not just about instances of exclusion. Further, there is also a need to reflect on oneself as 'the one' who is included with 'others'. This paper reflects on different aspects of inclusion from an existential perspective.

Keywords: *Existentialism, authenticity, autonomy, inclusion, self-other relationships*

An idea that becomes prominent in a particular context may also, at the same time, transcend that space and time. Existentialism, as is known today, had its origin in the nineteenth and twentieth century. However, existential questions were addressed even before that. Existentialism found its roots as a perspective, rather, as a way of life, in the first half of the twentieth century and has had a prominent effect upon writings in the various other perspectives as well, e.g. humanist, psychoanalytic, post-modern. Existentialism emerged within the context of World Wars, but, even though it emerged in a gloomy context, it is not just a pessimist product of a certain historic situation. It also leads to an optimism that is a result of deep reflection and contemplation of human predicament. This movement from a sense of helplessness and alienation to the power of will and agency is what Existentialism aims at.

The intrigue which unites existentialists is their enthusiasm for human freedom and demand for a social and political flexibility to provide space for the expression of the individual 'I'. Emerging from the Latin word '*existere*' which means 'to stand out, to emerge', the existentialists are concerned with human existence – what it means to exist and how should one exist. To answer the latter question, existentialists propose the idea of an authentic life, which even though is understood variously, is essentially concerned with being true to oneself and one's beliefs about what is right and wrong. To take responsibility

for one's actions while realizing the power that one has within oneself and to realize that one is free to give meaning to one's own existence. The existentialists emphasize one's freedom and choice that provides meaning to human existence. Even if this meaning is temporary and subjective, it is all that one has. An existential individual will be committed to this meaning. There is nothing absolute in the society, no eternal life, or afterlife, but only the meaning one creates for oneself.

An existential being is self-conscious, free, and an autonomous individual. She/he is conscious of their freedom, which may lead them to feelings of independence as well as loneliness. It is often said that we are self-conscious beings, and this is exactly what an existential being is - one who is self-conscious. The eternal questions of life like 'who I am?', 'What I actually want to be?' come to an individual sooner or later, depending on the particular situation an individual is in. As individuals, things matter to us and we also 'care about' our lives, and wonder about the purposes and meanings that we create for ourselves. Sometimes, when pre-existing meanings are challenged by individual experience, the individual search for meaning begins, despite there being no certainty of finding meaning in life. The post-war ethos created a sense of meaninglessness which became the background for the existential movement. The existentialists claim that meaning is created for oneself by the individual

¹ The author feels indebted to the editorial board of the journal for their help in significantly revising and improving the language and ideational expression of the paper

who is imbued with freedom. This brings anxiety with itself. Escaping the responsibility of creating meaning, or conforming to available meanings, both are regarded by the existentialists as inauthentic.

The agency and freedom, which one realises as an existentialist, comes from the confidence in oneself that gets reflected in giving direction to one's life and picking oneself after every fall, 'I' makes my reality. Even when the self is situated with others, the power, freedom and sense of being autonomous that one feels, is not something that one can experience within the confines of other social and political perspective on inclusion. It seems that the self-other dichotomy becomes stark: 'I helping myself' and 'others helping me'. The self-other relationships that underlie helping relationships are construed variously and they not only have implications for the social situation but also the self-conception of oneself. One wonders about the kind of impact that a feeling of being helped has on one's self-esteem as the helping relationships often promote prejudices, biases, and dependence. The experience of the 'other' is the experience of another free subject and the inter-subjectivity between the self and the other.

However, in what form would a 'woman' be a project of 'man', a 'poor' of the 'rich', a 'Jew' of the anti-semitic, and a 'disabled' of the non-disabled? The measurements, assessments, and evaluation of one's being that are implicit in such projects, can neither be controlled nor denied by oneself, lest, one completely denies to be a part of any such project. As *Simone de Beauvoir* explicates in detail in her book, *The Second Sex*, the verifiable and institutional place of females is characterized as the "second" sex, since social standards are characterized in male terms. Consequently, in a Sartrean understanding, the social truth, the "we"- the political subject- is constantly challenged.

Anyone who is different from us is conceptualised as the other. However, what makes all the difference is, how this other is understood. For instance, there are various terms that are used to refer to a person with special need, e.g. specially-abled, handicapped, persons with disability, and persons with a specific challenge. To some extent, the underlying assumption does make some sense but only in the academic discourse. The experience of being disabled has only a little to do with the academia and its vocabulary. In the common parlance, disability alludes to a deficiency in a person. It

alludes to a judgement that something is not being done and cannot be done in a specific way.

However, for an existentialist, the being is not defined by the body, which is not even a facticity any more since there are ways to modify that as well. Thus, for an existentialist, disability can also be more of a social and political construct that needs to be unpacked and deconstructed so as to explicate the fundamental assumptions and presumptions. Thus, hindrances are not objective and ahistorical but rather moulded by the changing presumptions about what profitable human bodies and brains ought to resemble. A cross-cultural study of the history of disability would attest to the changing idea and attitude towards the disabled according to the social and political context.

It needs to be realised by the masses that the generalization about persons with disabilities, such as, they are powerless, uninformed, can't learn, are befuddled, have no confidence, have a low personal satisfaction, are poor, unemployed, need to be with their own kind, are in consistent torment, frequently dribble, have no social graces, a social weight, need philanthropy and welfare, are asexual, and broken, are not much different in spirit than generalizations about the African Americans or the Asians based on colour and against women based on sex.

An existentialist person with disability would not view herself as someone with deficiency that needs to be remedied; a lack that needs to be filled; or as someone who is incomplete. The context that debilitates the fulfilment of oneself does not impact only the disabled but it is the human condition. Every single person is impaired and is trying to deal with obstacles to make life meaningful. There is a difference in being disabled and dis-facilitated. It seems that to understand the real experience of disability more phenomenological studies are required.

An existential life would be a life in which one outperforms, overcomes, accepts and transcends one's own handicaps. It is not to be a constant reminder of one's lack but a constant benchmark to cross. This subjective feeling and belief of not being limited to one's disability or lack, along with the desire to transcend the limit is at the root of the forward moving capability of an existentialist. The hopes and ambitions of a person with disability from the perspective of existentialism would be that one is permitted to be handicapped, as long as one constantly endeavours to overcome and rise above it, instead of rationalising and searching for excuses. Incapacity is just ever part of facticity

of human life. An existentialist would also take note of the impact of others on her own feelings about herself and thus, the prejudices, biases, and presumptions about anyone become problematic. Such a position would not ask, for example, why a considerable measure of open structures isn't available.

Finally, such a position may be critiqued by the socio-political thinkers by saying that it does not reflect the ideas of social justice and negates the attempts to empower and support by the State. However, to this an existentialist would reply that the being of a person cannot be limited to the idea of a citizen or a member of the society. Rather, if the person takes responsibility for herself and her decisions, then it is the responsibility of the state or the society to create an enabling context for everyone as per their needs. The existential emphasis is on the development of the whole being rather than just the capacity to cognize, rationalise, and behave in any particular way. An existentialist would find any socio-political identity limiting this idea of being. This sentiment is reflected in the words of Rabindranath Tagore, where he calls for a world that "has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls", "where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection", and "where the mind is without fear and the head is held high". In the similar vein and in the popular parlance, the lyrics of the movie *Rockstar* also express the same feeling "*O eco-friendly, nature ke rakshak, main bhi hoon nature; kyun deewaron se Kate mujhe bante mujhe*". O Eco Friendly, O protector of nature, I am nature too... then why do you divide me with

your customs and social norms. This objection to norms comes from the feeling of being limited, restricted, and sometimes even defined by others and not by oneself. This power that the crowd asserts on the individual is what the existentialist is vary of.

What is needed, thus, in a democratic state, is the acceptance of the alternatives, of the lifestyles and individuality of the minority, the freedom as per human rights and acceptance of responsibility by the State towards each and every individual and not just of the 'productive'. The rights-based approach may be more suited to bring the idea of social justice and equality to the fore. It can also take care of the expression of one's own individuality and personality. Instead of a culture based on the feelings of pity and sympathy, what we need is a culture based on trust, with opportunities for the development and realisation of potential to all those who choose to do so.

In this direction, we, as a society need to reject philanthropy and grant-in-aid as an alternative to the refusal of the State to take responsibility. We need to accept that each and every person has some challenge in her life and that everyone deserves a chance to realise one's potential; and, if a State cannot provide such opportunities then that is because of the lack of foresight on the part of the government. A chain is as strong as its weakest link, and so is a nation; as strong as its inhabitants. The feeling of nationalism ought not to be born out of the fact that you are born in a particular geographical area, but by the attachment that you have with the community, society, and its people.

Learning, Authenticity and Childhood

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Abstract

Children are authentic and remind us of the drive to know by and for ourselves, which is indicated by characteristics such as their curiosity and desire to explore. If, through the educational process they are encouraged to exercise such authentic knowing, then can there be any better aim of education? The first section discusses the relation between education and authentic knowing.

The way we perceive and conceive children affects our practices in upbringing and teaching them. The next section comes forth with a challenging conception of 'Childhood' that is characterised with aspects that augment authenticity. The child can be conceived as an active decisive agent in the teaching-learning process as well as in negotiating the significant roles that the adults can play. Research in neuroscience affirms the innate nature of mind as authentic.

If children are authentic, it becomes imperative for education to facilitate the child with an environment that encourages curiosity and the urge to explore rather than restrict. The third section is an attempt to look for what in education constricts the scope for authenticity and how teaching and parenting can encourage authenticity. Finally, I share some ways from my teaching experience in both school and college that seem effective in this regard.

Keywords: *authenticity, knowing, children as knowers, curiosity*

Introduction

As a teacher-educator, whenever I offer the new entrants of teacher education programmes, who are already graduates and post graduates, to ask what they really want/care to know, they feel lost. They respond mostly with blank expressions followed by a mix of amused observations about themselves. Whenever I pose the same question to children from primary classes, they mostly have many wonderful queries, that often make me wonder what made such a query emerge in that child. I often think of this immense, yet mostly lost, marvellous human capacity to be original and authentic in what they want to know for themselves, not due to any pressure/problem.

This difference in responses of young children and our educated youth makes me question a few things about upbringing and institutionalised

education – what is it about education that makes learners know and do a lot, yet lose interest in knowing? Why are they merely acquiring knowledge and is this what we mean by 'learning' or 'knowing'? Perhaps, knowing is about competencies that equip them for employment, so they learn the required and expected skills, and, perhaps turn heedless to understand anything around them or about themselves. Does this knowledge and education, then, enable us to live well? Or, is our well being limited to our earning power and thereby economic development at larger scale, perhaps becoming skilled for global market? Can well being or human flourishing be a consequence of learning without any love for it? If we learn without any love or deep interest, can it make us happy at work or in life? If we are making children grow up to be easily governable and marketable humans, not really knowers, what

kind of well being, society, and growth in knowledge can we anticipate? Do we not seek self-governed and self-directed humans? Can they be so without wanting to know, questioning, finding and knowing things for themselves? These questions forces us to reflect on the kind of educated persons do we imagine our children to become.

Education and Authenticity

Based on the teaching experience with children and students in higher education, it seems that institutionalised education does not allow, enhance and sustain this urge to know, explore, inquire, understand. Instead, it makes them acquire or just access some compiled knowledge that may make them useful and productive, not really knowers rather than picking up on children's intrinsic motivation, which, perhaps, gets diminished through schooling. This may be the effect of education being linked to 'work'. We value education as an instrument for economic independence and growth, almost bypassing the authenticity in knowing and doing.

With such an understanding, a related and pertinent issue to understand is, 'what makes a teacher effective?' Is good teaching about the command on subject knowledge, along with mastery in pedagogy, or teachers' love for learning, or understanding of students at their levels and vision for development of students, or in the ability to live up to the official criteria of what counts as successful teaching? The quality concerns in education are also dealt with accordingly- structurally, with benchmarks, and criteria on which observations are possible, missing the qualitative aspects in the experience of learning.

When we don't care to know for ourselves, such knowledge can't work in our life, even if it serves for a living; we don't inquire, and our researches become superficial. We simply, half-heartedly know and do whatever officially counts in getting us grades and degrees, achievements for positions, and recognition. The learning is as per requirements or expectations from outside, not from our whole selves.

Considering the issue of quantity and quality, quality is perhaps possible when our subjective wholesome engagement is there in what we do, not having to prove and get stamps of approval and ranks from outside agencies, which quantitatively change our lives and whatever we do.

An authentic learner can be characterised by his effort to know things first hand, that is, by oneself and for oneself. It implies activating and using all of one's attention and abilities. The motivation to know and choice in knowing are his/her own, the queries are pursued with passion, the knowledge has personal significance, relevance, and worth, therefore the queries as well as understandings are his and he lives his knowledge. In that sense, the authenticity is never without active wholesome engagement, meaningful learning, and living with integrity. Such knowledge is not away from one, rather it is internalised, therefore transformative, not merely performative. It lends meaning and direction to one's life, there is confidence in what one knows, and that enables man to take one's decisions, trust oneself, and be responsible.

Therefore, when learning is not authentic, our knowledge remains inert, useless, a burden, as acquired, accessed, and told, which may make us knowledgeable, but such knowledge may not help us in taking significant decisions about development. Thereby, the knower and knowledge remain separated. We may never feel sure or convinced enough to base our life-decisions on such knowledge. A lot of stress and insecurity seeps in this way and we feel lost and can't trust others or what we are made to know. Since we lack clarity and courage to standby such acquired knowledge, we feel compelled to follow others, hoping that they may be right, being easily influenced, pushed. This makes hegemony, domination, governability easier.

An authentic knower decides, chooses and acts through every moment being true to self, without having to prove or change these to fit the established norms. In this sense, it is a journey from deep intention, as if we write our script of

life through everyday living. Being an authentic knower is to be secure and confident in self, stable and clear as to what, why and how one wants to understand. The four aspects of authenticity, if they can be called so, interplay with each other (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007, p. 79)-

a) awareness-self view, understanding self requires watching oneself, tracking ones feelings, and being reflective, (thereby they know what they really want to know and why is it worth) which requires

b) evaluating oneself - as far as possible, impartial, unbiased, sincere observation and appraisal of ones actions, thoughts, decisions, processes, which definitely affects

c) behaviour- actions that are neither compulsive nor impulsive, but are expression and extension of oneself, implying integrity, consistency, sincerity, which in turn have an impact on

d) relational orientation- living as socially responsible beings, not in isolation, working on themselves in close relationships, openly express themselves and listen too. Accept differences and individuality and find ways to live without domination and power play. (ibid)

If we all can become authentic this way, the world would seem a saner, healthier, trustworthy place. The people would be individualistic, accepting differences, democratic and unpretentious. It undeniably stands as a great vision for life, for the well being of all, and a sound aim of education.

In case children are born authentic and naturally grow up as authentic, educating them to be authentic and autonomous as one of the highest aims of all learning in liberal perspective would be conceivable. We need to see how children are, what in home and family works towards developing their authenticity and whether and how all institutional education promotes or denies it. The basic concern is to encourage authenticity which enables a child in many ways. Is it natural in childhood, as my experiences with children over years tell?

Childhood and Authenticity

Looking for what makes children authentic; we find that they naturally engage in free exploratory activities with things, people, and phenomena. For example, one such activity- play opens scope for authentic knowledge and relationships. This exploratory activity becomes an important process in the child's ability to explore herself in setting out for what interests her, what one loves to experience, try and explore further, which help in encouraging authenticity.

A study by Murray clearly indicates that children as explorers actually initiate their own study even in play, while getting away from the assigned tasks with the feeling of having to do something that makes their learning concrete. The exploration which comes out in the form of curiosity formulates an important aspect which needs to be built upon for the development of self- esteem, self -awareness, and self-governance, and thereby, authenticity.

For children everything they encounter is new, exploration and curiosity are natural and I think each can precede the other. Curiosity may not be in form of a query or question. They may try to experience it, play with, that is, explore, which makes their senses, observations, perceptions, and manual manipulations increasingly active and refined. The query can turn into a methodical inquiry also. The inquisitiveness may arise as a question, which is completely their own, not what they are expected to ask or know. Childhood is considered a period of being, when children make sense of their world as they actively interact with it (Corsaro, 1997). Childhood is characterised by curiosity, play, explorations which naturally express their wanting to know from and for themselves, not guided, directed, as expected.

One relatively new conception of childhood, called, Agentic Child, is and given by Reggio Emilia. This conception is away from seeing child as miniature adult, or the noble child, the evil child, the out of control child, the adult-in-training, the child as victim; rather, it challenges

the notion of the innocent, helpless child, as a child is viewed to engage in social activity, participating in her education and lives (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998) and co-constructs childhood with adults (Corsaro, 1997). And “the adults are not snowballing the children, rather, they interact with these children as co-learners who negotiate” (Woodrow, 1999).

For the agentic child, curriculum is co-constructed through adult-child collaboration, where both children and adults strive to enhance their understandings of issues important to them (Woodrow, 1999). The agentic child is viewed as a capable actor who doesn't leave himself completely at the disposal of adults. We are considering a conception of that child who takes a lot of responsibility for what, how, and why she likes to learn and do. The child co-constructs the nature and degree of role the adults will play (ibid). The active agency of the child in determining what she will pursue and also the relational orientations with others indicates becoming authentic.

The agency of the child is further brought forward by the capability in children for ‘goal oriented behaviour’ as quoted in various neuroscientific researches. Alison Gopnik writes: “Children aren't just defective adults, primitive grown-ups gradually attaining our perfection and complexity.” Instead, different children have very different, though as complex and capable minds, brains, and forms of consciousness as in adults, but “designed to serve different evolutionary functions” (Gopnik, 2009, 9). This new respect for the capacities of children partly rests on findings in neuroscience whereby “babies' brains are actually more highly connected than adult brains; more neural pathways are available to babies than adults.” (11) Perhaps this partially explains why children have wide range of interests, and broad, wholesome understandings which they may not be able to articulate.

Teaching for Authenticity

Hundreds of books and articles by experts in child development and authentic learning have

pointed to dangerous and inappropriate practices in public education. Some of the most mandated educational policies are shockingly inconsistent with the evidence provided by research as to how children learn. The lack of the evidence about the success of mandated programmes proves that at no given age the standardisation of acquisition of knowledge should exist given the variability of human mind.

Yet, the growing focus on industrial model where one-size-fits-all standardized education completely ignores research and moves even farther from natural and developmentally appropriate school cultures and practices. When a child has to undertake specified capsules of fragmented knowledge and perform competently over a set of tests, they come out not knowing whether and what they care to know, their drives and concerns in life are shaped and controlled. So, do the child and authenticity in childhood get overlooked when educational choices follow the competitive market or corporate trends? Educational aims, policies and practices succumb to the forceful larger discourse of development and survival, and child's development befits that frame more than what the above studies and human potential liberal education envisions. Education, when shaped by global pressures and competition, shapes humans as products that produce, global citizens or a-cultural beings, as commercial commodities that can compete globally and consume well for development. So we drill and push our children towards whatever sells in the global market.

Given such scenarios, concerns like the love for experience, curiosity and what children want to know, lose sight and scope. Struggle, pressure, timed activities is what children experience. The release is thrill and entertainment, because the love and genuine interest in learning is not catered to. The more the pressure, more the conformity and race for ratings and credits, closer the competition, and less would be the scope for authenticity.

With children and adults living in automated or ‘groping and coping’ mode, there is hardly any scope for the authentic, imaginative and creative

human potential. We just need authenticity and autonomy to break out from such human conditions. The path of cultivating authenticity comes through deliberately not conforming, risking disapproval, not succumbing to prevalent norms and pressures that seem so powerful and are applied as ratings, rejections and (dis)approvals in many forms in school policies and processes.

Considering the critical importance of authenticity, we need to look for ways to encourage it and enable authentic learning. That the significant adults can contribute towards children's capacity to eventually become autonomous is morally important, and widely accepted (Feinberg 1980). For this the adults who interact with children, both at home and school, have a significant responsibility in developing child's capacity to be responsible for how he is.

Since parents as significant adults play an important role by addressing what they value more in their children- being nice to others, successful, creative or original and authentic, parents need to think if they should structure child's time and life so that he is easily managed. Is that really caring for child's well being?

Anne-Marie Slaughter (2015) brings out few relevant inputs for parents. The central point made in the book is that "individuals who never invest deeply in others miss out on a huge part of themselves". In other words, she says, "Care does not just benefit those cared for, but is also a process of self-actualization or growth; it develops an entire dimension of ourselves as fully human." (Anderson, 2016). We can say that to be authentic, we as adults need to care to develop care in others, at least our children.

Only when children love to know, do they put their whole attention, thinking, being into something. Then the quality of engagement is intense, wholesome and so are the gains from such engagement. That is a way of being full, whole, and happy. In case, parents care deeply for their children, they should take the kind of decisions that enable and free both themselves

and their children, not deciding and fixing everything for children. Some of the parents share from their experience ... for sane parenting (Anderson, 2016):

"you can engineer the life you want your kids to have, but it may not be the life they want to have. You have to encourage them to pursue their passions. And you have to spend more time on them than you spend on anything else". (Anderson, 2016)

"the most impressive people are those who found what they love and do it with great passion and discipline, ground-breaking or not". (Anderson, 2016)

It is being said that the child has the capacity for authentic learning which adults can encourage or spoil. We need to notice how much a child learns in the first three or four years of life, without really having to teach, to recognize and appreciate the success of authentic learning. If adults wanted to broaden the learner's opportunities for active learning as the child grows up by expanding the learning environment, it can further support authentic learning. The interconnectedness of all knowledge and therefore the interdisciplinary nature is a fertile basis for research as well as better understanding for real life.

This explains the importance of the early childhood educators in the lives and education of young children. Perceiving children as agentic rather than powerless and incompetent may facilitate this transformation. Sorin highlights that "a number of policies and practices relating to young children are being reviewed and rewritten, seemingly use the construct of the agentic child" (Yelland & Kilderry, 2005).

It is the construction of knowledge rather than imparting knowledge that can allow scope for authentic questioning, search, and inquiry, to allow creation of any knower. It may be relevant to have a glimpse into how 'authentic learning' has been seen through ages. We will briefly consider how J J Rousseau, Maria Montessori and John Dewey considered learning, child and teaching.

Rousseau contended that it is not the children that are evil, but society. Rousseau also disagreed with the authority-driven "teacher as teller" mode of teaching. He believed that true teaching was based, not on authority and control, but on a loving bond between teacher and student, within which the two could explore matters of interest together. He trusted children to find things out for themselves and recommended that teachers "do everything by doing nothing."

Montessori supported Rousseau's "well-regulated freedom" in which adults meticulously structured and curated environments within which children had a great deal of choice and movement. She argued that self-regulation can only occur when learners have the opportunity to see how their choices play out in the real world. And like others, committed to educating the whole child, Montessori rejected the common use of external rewards and punishments in favour of the intrinsic rewards that come from authentic, natural learning. She believed that when children's developmental needs are met, they develop qualities what characterise authenticity, like love of work, spontaneous concentration, love of silence and of working alone, sublimation of the possessive instinct, power to act from real choice, independence and initiative, spontaneous self-discipline, and joy.

Dewey's concept of education stressed meaningful activity in learning and participation in classroom democracy. Unlike traditional authoritarian modes of teaching, which promoted rote learning, his idea of learning was with personal involvement by students and with curriculum that is relevant to students' lives. Therefore learning-by-doing and development of practical life skills are placed crucial to Dewey's idea of "progressive" education which implies progress in each learner and thus society.

The Lab School, founded by Dewey in 1896, with intent of testing learning theories, stresses the following characteristics of education as on website (<http://learninginmind.com/authentic-learning.php#ref-authentic-15>).

- The freedom to truly be an authentic individual;
- The opportunity to explore one's real interests; and
- "An environment that allows the unique self to flourish within the broader community".

The education offered by them has been quite popular also. Attending to features common to the three, we observe that child's freedom to explore and choose is common to each, even if guided. Teaching is guided by child's moves more than prescriptions and directions to and by teachers or authorities. This freedom to explore, experience and inquire for themselves improves initiative and motivation, and then rewards of learning are completely their own. The personal engagement in knowing comes naturally with wanting to know for oneself and therefore we find ways of knowing, evaluating for ourselves until one is convinced, therefore involves viewing critically and reflecting. The nature of query itself can shape the nature and method of search.

This kind of process of knowing disciplines and regulates us. An alertness, open-mindedness and keen sense of observation, analysis and judgement are thus integral with the process of knowing. Creating scope for authentic learning thus makes all externally enforced practices, like imposed curricula, dictating set questions, exercises and methods to do them, and structures to evaluate learning, in institutions redundant. We increasingly find that teaching time is less than time for all other procedures. Teachers do not have freedom to select what will be taught next day in government schools as of now. It is centrally dictated on-line. Authenticity is a far from conceivable notion in most institutions today.

The importance of early years of development is further highlighted in an understanding that people form their own personality during this early experiential phase by a teacher, Loris Malaguzzi and parents in the Reggio Emilia area in Italy after World War II.

This is approach that emerged out of progressive and cooperative early childhood education to suit each individual child, community and culture. It is based on the idea that children express their ideas in "a hundred languages" and should be facilitated in learning these symbolic languages (eg., painting, sculpting, music, drama) in everyday life, essentially, "Nothing without joy!". The program is based on "principles of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment. This environment is driven by the interests of the children through a self-guided curriculum".

There are no "Reggio Emilia Schools" other than the original. Unlike Montessori, they have no training program for teachers. Schools that use the Reggio Emilia principles are called "Reggio-inspired" schools. Still, the approach has found its way into a number of schools in the U.S.

Many of today's alternative learner-centred schools blend aspects of Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Dewey, Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, and other child-centred, inquiry-based educational philosophies consistent with natural human development (ibid).

The methods of authentic learning are limited only by imagination. But the approach of the Reggio Emilia offers Principles seems to form a fair basis. Basic to all these principles is a trusting, respectful, and nurturing relationship between adults and student learners without which any method or approach can fall flat. (ibid)

Reflecting on the meaning and complexity of authenticity and its doability, a blog article conveys that there are consequences of pursuing authenticity. Authenticity, being a conscious choice and not an automatic expression of care, often emanating from an internal "should" is quite contrary to the prevailing trends. Yet it highlights that experience of becoming more alive and grounded, more able to navigate relationships, because of being able to reach this integration. Therefore the writer suggests _ For a

vibrant life, try replacing niceness with truth spoken with love.

Sharing some of the fruits of these explorations, the writer proposes some not very difficult to ways nurture the authenticity child is born with :

- by not imposing body of knowledge, but encouraging construction for learning;
- offering freedom of choice in why, what, how each child prefers to explore; exposing to a wide range of experiences and activities;
- encouraging them to evaluate their own decisions and actions, rather than for approval or to avoid disapproval; free from fear, authority, having to prove and perform;
- living true to themselves, not adopt norms and practices without examining,
- offering platforms for debating, exchanging and sharing understandings
- with honest, open and loving relational orientation ...

This can be done by someone who values authenticity, and lives authentically.

Now in case we are convinced that children are authentic learners, and care enough to educate for authenticity, there are implications for all adults to address our lives and ways of being and living. The roles we play as parents, significant adults and importantly as teachers, the nature of teacher education- all need reorientation. We have to find ways to address how the structure, system, mechanisms, procedures, practices and processes in schools that don't find ways to encourage authenticity but exercise control and authority in many hidden ways.

Concluding Remarks

I see that so long as students' curiosity is alive, they have their own questions besides and beyond the prescribed and tested, they are trying to make sense of things, authenticity is alive and can develop. When they are not easily convinced, need to explore further, experience by themselves , try enough, pursue further even if not in classes because they want to settle it for

themselves, it is good sign for authenticity. Then they usually have insightful comments, queries, or original observations to supplement or critically view something and do not become anxious about how elders or system evaluates their growth.

If we allow easy time and free spaces within classrooms to think, reflect, pause, ask, share their view, experiences, authenticity can be cultivated. They develop an open mind, view things carefully, think and act responsibly. They listen to others with respect, trust the teacher, observe, think, feel express in increasingly refined ways. When we do not play authority or expert, we can engage with them in their inquiry, search together. When we don't teach them mainly to perform, we assign tasks that they are likely to engage with deeply.

Effective teaching is a lot about generating interest, arousing curiosity, love for learning,

encouraging questioning, daring and sharing experiences to facilitate figuring out how learning and knowing can be relevant. Very often this becomes their platform for living what they know and understand. Also it further enables them to take their direction and pursue knowing in their individualised ways but without fear of being judged and half-heartedness. This makes them learn with keen earnestness and enthusiasm, never as a burden they carry for certain extrinsic ends.

Increasing instructions, directions decreases scope for their thoughtfulness. A democratic environment where teacher and students decide the learning together works well for all to live it. Increasing control, surveillance and closely structured curricula, time frames and evaluation processes reduces possibilities for free and motivating wholesome learning necessary for encouraging authenticity.

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Reflective Papers

A Feminist Reflection on Disability

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Disability does not reduce the capacity to feel and love, rather it makes one even-more capable to feel love and be empathetic towards others. This should be seen as contribution to the society. But the society containing an economy, foundation, a framework to make us a slave of anything, enormous shopping centres, consumerism, and purported instruction to give more slaves to the general public, has overlooked one thing. That one thing is the 'Love,' which is the product of a big shady tree, the new rain drop on the twigs, fallen leaves on a profound street to the woods, a canine's guiltless eye. Love never requires anything that we have envisioned and thought to be the most vital piece of cherishing each other. Love requires sentiments; emotions that make us feel cherished. From a little touch, from a little grin, from a little look, from a little activity, we can feel it. It never required a dialect which is so short lived and delicate. This world would be a superior place without dialect. That which requires one's whole being and not all the limbs.

Feminist disability study intends to unsettle tired generalisations about individuals with incapacities. It tries to challenge our overwhelming suspicions about living with a handicap. It encourages us to comprehend the perplexing connection amongst bodies and self. It enlightens the social procedures of character arrangement. In a way, it also means to decentralise Disability. Women's liberation challenges the conviction that femaleness is a characteristic type of physical and mental insufficiency for established wildness. Feminist disability likewise addresses our presumptions that handicap is a defect, need or abundance. To do as such, it characterises disability comprehensively from a social instead of a restorative point of view. Disability is a social translation of human variety as opposed to inborn inadequacy, pathology to cure, or an undesirable characteristic to dispose of. In the end, it discovers handicap's criticalness in communications amongst bodies and their social surroundings. It comprehends handicap as an arrangement of prohibitions that derides human contrasts. It uncovers oppressive demeanours

and practices coordinated to those bodies. Feminist disability thinks that it is like race or sexual orientation. It is an arrangement of portrayal as an impact of power relations.

It appears to be difficult to discuss feminist disability without specifying Helen Keller. Positively her initially book, *The Story of My Life* (1903), is self-portrayal that appeals most promptly to one's mind and heart both. In addition, the vast majority of Keller's composition focused on a life lived alone, and amid her long vacation, she endeavoured each type of life composing: short stories, individual papers, a treatise on her religious conviction, and a distributed diary recording her day by day life amid a five-month time frame. It is her magnum opus that set the standard; *The Story of My Life* has the quintessential "triumph over misfortune" plot. It narrates her initial twenty-two years, from birth through her first year at Radcliffe College. Keller is making the careful effort to demonstrate that her achievements were made with the help of her educator and friend, Anne Sullivan. She speaks to Sullivan as her hero who initially freed her from haziness and afterwards championed her motivation against people and organisations that obstructed her instructive objectives.

Maybe perceiving that of hearing visual deficiency is a condition few seeing-hearing readers can envision or relate to, Keller moves the concentration of her personal history to make Sullivan its hero. Consolidated with the book's cheery tone and motivational message, this helped *The Story of My Life* appreciate practically all inclusive basic recognition and well-known achievement. One survey in *The New York Nation*, communicated questions about the book's credibility [End Page 322]

All her knowledge is hearsay knowledge, her very sensations are for the most part, vicarious and yet she writes of things beyond her power of perception with the assurance of one who has verified every word.¹

The critic at that point reprimanded Keller for her utilisation of sound-related and visual subtle elements in her written work, referring to various

cases from the content. The analyst had a point; Keller's writing is rich with references to light, shading, and sound. What's more, since Keller is at such agonies to offer her thanks and dedication to Anne Sullivan, it is anything but difficult to get the feeling that she had no genuine direct understanding.

In 1908 Keller distributed *The World I Live In*, incompletely as a response to this kind of feedback. In it she depicts the situation of an author with her specific incapacity:

The experience of the deaf-blind person, in a world of hearing seeing people, is like that of a sailor on an island where the inhabitants speak a language unknown to him, whose life is unlike that he has lived. He is one, they are many; there is no chance of compromise. He must learn to see with their eyes, to hear with their ears, to think their thoughts, to follow their ideals.

Keller is referring to that she is not by any stretch of the imagination guaranteeing to have a place with a different culture, as we would today utilize the term Deaf Culture to assign clients of American Sign Language as a phonetic gathering. The manual letter set Keller utilized was a type of deciphered English as opposed to a genuine gesture-based communication. So here she speaks to herself as having a place with a culture of one. Her point is that keeping in mind the end goal to have a place with seeing-hearing society - the Empire of the Normal- - she has a commitment and a privilege to utilise the words and phrases that any speaker of the dialect utilises, even those that accept the speaker or author can see and listen.

The crucial guideline of the comprehensive school is that all youngsters ought to learn together, wherever conceivable, paying little heed to any challenges or contracts they may have. Comprehensive schools must perceive and react to the assorted needs of their understudies, pleasing both distinctive styles and rates of learning and guaranteeing quality training to all through fitting educational modules, hierarchical courses of action, showing techniques, asset utilises and associations with their groups. There ought to be a continuum of help and strategies to coordinate the continuum of exceptional needs experienced in each school.

This practice can be described as a battle that takes diverse structures and is practiced at various levels by social performing artists with various goals and under various conditions and power relations. In general, nine basic issues have been recognised: (1) Decentralisation, (2)

Finance/ Resource Allocation, (3) Access and Participation, (4) Pre-benefit Teacher Training and In-Service Professional Development, (5) Universal Human Rights (6) School Restructuring and Whole-School Reform, (7) Identification and Placement, (8) Assessment, Accountability, Efficiency and Effectiveness, and (9) Building Capacity and Sustainability through NGO, Community, and Multi-Sector Participation. Each issue is broke down regarding its potential for encouraging or restraining Inclusive Education; e.g., the strategy shapes and the activities of chiefs who at last sanction arrangement identified with these issues decide their possibilities. Particular strategy suggestions are talked about that get from this investigation, and they ought to be helpful to teachers and arrangement producers.

A further layer of multifaceted nature includes the meaning of a specialised curriculum required. Order frameworks fluctuate, all things considered, from nation to nation, and even inside nations. A few nations have received a definition in light of the requirement for a specialised curriculum benefits, and don't check or mark understudies. The United Kingdom, for instance, in its Warnock report of 1978 characterised disability on this premise. Different nations apply a two-level definition in view of degree and sort of handicap.

Poland and the United States have more than 10 classes of disability. Most nations utilise the downright approach with a scope of 4-10 sorts of exceptional needs. In "conventional" social orders, four classifications/sorts of disability are generally perceived: the physical inability, visual impairment, deafness, and mental hindrance. Further, nations may likewise incorporate non-incapacitated people in a custom curriculum needs classes; e.g., displaced kids, skilled and capable kids (who may likewise have impedances), and those with different learning challenges and disservices that outcome in instructive underperformance (e.g., road and working kids, kids from travelling populaces, youngsters who have lost their folks through AIDS or common strife, kids from etymological, ethnic or social minorities)

It is critical to understand the qualification amongst impairment and disablement. Disabled People's International (1981) advances the accompanying qualification: "Impairment is the loss or limitation of physical, mental or sensory function on a long term or permanent basis. Disablement is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of

the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers.”

To delineate the significance of this refinement, a young girl with an impeded finger may be viewed as un-marriageable. Then again, a boy kid with serious numerous hindrances may be offered far-reaching benefits in school and mechanical correspondence helps that incredibly limit his utilitarian debilitation. Despite the fact that this young girl's disability is entirely negligible, the effect on life possibilities and openings is critical. The refinement amongst disability and disablement is additionally a critical one for Inclusive Education. It implies schools and educators must oblige to singular learners. An emphasis on singular understudies implies that understudies should either be "cured" or fit in on the off chance that they would prefer not to be denied access to "standard" instruction. Ballard, in *Inclusive Education: International Voices on Disability and Justice*, observed that: “There is general agreement from those who support and oppose Inclusive Education that there is nothing about special education that is not already part of practice in regular schools. Rather, special education is supported as a political strategy for ensuring that some students, those who fit predetermined categories, receive additional services and are not ignored or neglected” (p. 169).

The terms 'specialised curriculum' and understudies with 'a specialised curriculum needs' are generally utilised as a part of the writing. In any case, as Ballard brings up, "extraordinary" makes a superfluous refinement.

Lynch (2001) bolsters this point and cautions that the term SEN ought to be utilized with an alert. Lynch contends that the term may sustain the double gap amongst "common" and "exceptional" understudies and frameworks. Second, the mark may show a hindrance to the advancement of comprehensive practice, and it is not extremely accommodating in pinpointing the instructive challenges of the learner. Third, the mark tends to put the weight on the learner and an attention on singular shortages, as opposed to the qualities of the school and condition and accordingly pardon schools from change.

Inclusion should not be viewed as an add-on to a conventional school. It must be viewed as intrinsic to the mission, philosophy, values, practices and activities of the school...Full inclusion must be embedded deeply in the very foundation of the school, in its missions, its belief system, and its daily activities, rather than an appendage that is added on to a conventional school. Henry M. Levin (1997).

According to NCERI Institutional Definition of an Inclusive School, A diverse problem-solving organisation with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students. It employs and supports teachers and staff who are committed to working together to create and maintain a climate conducive to learning. The responsibility for all students is shared. An effective, inclusive school acknowledges that such a commitment requires administrative leadership, on-going technical assistance, and long-term.

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An Adolescent's Musings on Inclusion

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The idea of inclusion had never crossed my mind significantly enough to articulate my thoughts before the eve of the day my class 11th began. My classmates and I had selected our subjects based on which we were all sorted into different sections. I didn't know who all were going to be in my class and I was really apprehensive and scared. From what I had heard, everyone had already decided who they were going to sit with for the next two years. I, on the other hand, didn't even know about most of my classmates. I had nightmares that I would be alone and that I wouldn't be accepted as I will have no one to talk to for the next two years. As the hours ticked away, I contemplated missing my first day.

However, I mustered up every bit of my strength and went to school. Although it took a lot of courage to do so, I think it really taught me how to accept myself first, and then try to be accepted by someone else. I realised that if I weren't comfortable in my own skin and if I felt like an outsider in this classroom, I would always be an outsider. Nevertheless, on reaching school, I realised that there were actually a lot of my classmates who felt the same way: vulnerable, lost, full of hopes and anxieties, and desirous of being welcome and accepted. My friendship began with one person and got extended to a group, so much so that I would really like to hold on to them for a lifetime. I realised that I was so scared the previous night that I almost missed school, but then all I needed was a little help and a little assurance that I will not be alone and my first friend in that new class provided me just that. One helping hand and an accepting heart was all that I needed to be myself again.

But this little phase of insecurity got me thinking that if a girl, who was considered as cheerful and confident and who has been learning in a school about the value of making newcomers feel at home, could be so nervous about going into this new class, I cannot even begin to imagine what it would be like, for a person who has changed schools or for someone who has shifted to a new place. Further, what about the people who are just posted at some place they have never even heard of? Do they all really experience those exact same emotions as myself, though much more intensely? Does the support of one person

really matter that much? Is that all one need to feel at home, to feel accepted? Are we all able to find such rays of hope in moments of darkness?

Generally, people tend to form closed groups and discourage any intrusion into their groups out of insecurity or their attachments to their roles and position in the group. They are fearful that this outsider would disturb their relations, equilibrium, and balance. Not just in a class; perhaps, even as communities, societies, and nations, we act in a similar way. Countries are not willing to welcome foreigners because they fear that these outsiders may interfere with their comfort and they may threaten their livelihood by giving stiff competition. The affluent nations are not willing to share their resources with developing countries. So, they hinder transfer of technology and ensure that benefits of innovation do not reach poor nations. Thus, they develop an affinity towards their own. Be it their own groups, family, school, or whatever. And that becomes their comfort zone. That is one place where they feel safe and are not threatened by anything or anyone in any way at all. So, it's pretty obvious that they wouldn't like to change too much about it. Basically, why make the effort to let anyone else in and cause disruption when everything is good the way it is. And thus, when someone new comes into the picture, they face resistance and are not welcome wholeheartedly.

Nowadays, the government has come up with ways to include all sections of society, but I wonder how effective these ways are. Does reserving some seats in educational institutions and jobs for the deprived sections guarantee them dignity and respect? Does giving admissions to children of the poor in schools ensure that they are not harassed and bullied? One may believe that schools have uniforms so that the rich can't be distinguished from the poor, but those who want to discriminate do find other ways to do so, whether it be bag, shoes, geometry box, pens, or even a lunch box. We really hope that the teachers don't keep in mind their respective family incomes while they impart education to them. However, when even the children, nowadays, have developed a mind-set wherein they befriend people who match

their economic status, then what should others do? Should they learn to live with the fact that they are somehow less human, because they don't have a ton of money stacked in some bank?

I cannot even imagine how would someone feel at the age of five to know that the entire class was invited to someone's birthday party while she was the only one left behind. A person, who doesn't even know the alphabets yet, is made to wonder what is wrong with him. And how would a parent explain the reason of such an incident? Is it not shameful for not just the country, but the whole society, to belittle someone to a point where they start believing that they don't even have a right to dream big, let alone do anything to break free of this cycle. We have built walls so high that we are even afraid to marry outside our own caste and any boy or girl who tries to challenge the established norms is killed in the name of honour. Our matrimonial advertisements are still segregated on the basis of caste.

I feel that, it is time for the people to realise that we are all humans and we all have the right to

dream and to make earnest efforts to achieve them. We need to realise that the slightest change in our perspective can do wonders just as for someone who has learnt to sit alone in class, one tiny encouraging smile and a polite 'hello' would make some difference. It might encourage someone to love themselves and accept themselves for who they are and to finally stop trying to be someone they are not. We all need to be assured, time and again, that we are fine just the way we are. Probably, that can only be done when we accept the fact that we are all different and it is not a bad thing. We are all unique in our own ways and we are all made a little differently.

I believe, we should learn to accept and respect everyone for who they are. It is now imperative that we stop discriminating on the basis of sex, colour, caste, religion, or other such criteria. We are all special and we are all destined for greatness but we just need to be more welcoming, supportive, and caring towards others.

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माता पिता बनना ईश्वर की सबसे बड़ी नियामत है। माँ बनना एक सुकून भरी अनुभूति का परिचय देती है। माता पिता बच्चे के पहले शिक्षक होते हैं। घर और परिवार में रहकर ही बच्चा बहुत कुछ सीखता है। जो संस्कार बच्चे में आते हैं वह परिवार में रहकर निर्मित होते हैं। परिवार में रहकर सहयोग की भावना आती है। माँ के स्नेह और दुलार से भावनात्मक सम्बन्ध विकसित होते हैं। माँ का दिल इतना बड़ा होता है कि उसमें दुःख और खुशियाँ समा जाती हैं। जिस घर में माँ होती है उस घर को स्वर्ग कहते हैं। जब बच्चा घर में आता है तो माता पिता अपनी दुःख और परेशानियों को भूलकर उसकी सेवा में लग जाते हैं, जिससे उनको खुशी का अनुभव होता है। माता पिता से संतान को जो कुछ भी प्राप्त होता है, वह अमूल्य है, उसकी तुलना किसी भी वस्तु से नहीं कर सकते। माँ की ममता और स्नेह तथा पिता का अनुशासन किसी भी मनुष्य के व्यक्तित्व के निर्माण में सबसे प्रमुख भूमिका निभाते हैं।

किसी भी मनुष्य को उसके जन्म से लेकर उसे पैरों पर खड़ा करने में माता पिता की मुख्य भूमिका होती है। माता-पिता को किन-किन कठिनाईयों से गुजरना पड़ता है, इसका वास्तविक अनुमान सम्भवतः स्वयं माता - पिता बनने के उपरांत ही लगाया जा सकता है। जब बच्चा इस संसार में आया है तो माता - पिता पर उसके अच्छी परवरिश की पूरी जिम्मेदारी होती है। आज संसार में बच्चे का जो भी अस्तित्व है, उसका श्रेय माता - पिता को ही जाता है। इस दृष्टि से माता - पिता सदैव पूजनीय होते हैं। कितने कष्टों को सहकर माता बच्चे को जन्म देती है, उसके पश्चात् अपने स्नेह रूपी अमृत से सींच कर उसे बड़ा करती है। माता - पिता के स्नेह और दुलार से बालक को मानसिक बल प्राप्त होता है।

काफी साल पहले एक परिचित महिला मेरे सम्पर्क में आयीं। वह काफी परेशान थीं। उन्होंने बताया कि बच्ची को पढ़ाई में मुश्किल आ रही है। उन्होंने बताया कि उनकी बच्ची समय से पहले हो गई थी (Pre mature)। बच्ची के होने से पहले उनका B.P. ज्यादा हो गया था और डाइट कम होने की वजह से बच्ची का वजन बहुत कम था। उन्होंने बच्ची का नाम रिया बताया। जन्म के समय उसका वजन 1 किलो 300 ग्राम था। उसको 3 दिन तक Incubator में रखा था। इतनी कमजोर होने की वजह से feed भी नहीं ले पाती थी। रिया की नाक में पाइप लगा रखी थी, जिससे उसको feed देते थे। रिया के होने के बाद उसको डेढ़ महीने तक अस्पताल में रखा गया। जब रिया को घर लाया गया तो उसके साथ यह बड़ी मुश्किल थी कि feed लेती थी, उसके बाद उल्टी कर देती थी और

फिर खाली पेट होने की वजह से रोना शुरू कर देती थी। ऐसी परिस्थिति में इतने कमजोर बच्चे की परवरिश करना बहुत मुश्किल था। जब उसको घर लाए तो उससे पहले एक डॉक्टर ने 2 दिन तक कुर्सी पर बैठा कर रखा क्योंकि डॉक्टर का सोचना था कि सीधे बैठने से उल्टी की समस्या बंद हो जायगी। लेकिन उसका गलत ही परिणाम निकला जिससे उसके हाथ पैर टेढ़े हो गए थे। पर ईश्वर की कृपा से रिया की नानी को मालिश करनी बहुत अच्छी आती थी। वे घर पर रोज मालिश करने आती थीं। यह उनके परिश्रम का फल था कि रिया के हाथ पैर ठीक हो गए। ऐसे मुश्किल समय में रिया की मम्मी ने हिम्मत और हौसला नहीं छोड़ा। उन्होंने पूरी लगन से उसकी सेवा की और अच्छी परवरिश दी। वे रिया के होने पर खुद को मुक्कमल मानती है, अपने रब के बाद, अपनी बच्ची को मानती थी।

जब वह मेरे पास आयीं तो उनकी बच्ची तीसरी कक्षा में पढ़ती थी। यहाँ तक रिया किसी तरह से पास होती आई लेकिन जैसे-जैसे बड़ी क्लास हुई पढ़ाई में मुश्किलें बढ़ती गईं। मेरा शिक्षा विभाग में मनोविज्ञान से सम्बन्ध होने की वजह से उन्होंने सोचा शायद मैं कुछ उनकी मदद कर सकूँ। रिया की मम्मी को समझ में नहीं आता था कि रिया के साथ इतनी मेहनत करने के बावजूद भी उसकी performance बहुत अच्छी नहीं थी।

तब मैंने रिया की मम्मी को सलाह दी कि वह उसका I.Q. परिक्षण करा लें। इसके पश्चात् उन्होंने काफी प्रयत्न किए और डॉक्टर से सलाह लेकर I.Q. परिक्षण कराया। जिसमें पता लगा कि रिया को "Dyslexia" की समस्या है। तब मैंने बताया कि यह मुश्किल पढ़ाई से सम्बन्धित होती है। रिया बहुत फुर्तीली बच्ची थी। मैंने उन्हें बताया कि इसमें बच्चे को पढ़ने, लिखने, समझने, वर्ण विन्यास, वर्तनी, अक्षर विन्यास (Spelling) और हिसाब से सम्बन्धित समस्याएं होती हैं। इस सम्बन्ध में मैंने कुछ बातें बताईं जिसका ध्यान रखना बहुत जरूरी है, जो निम्नलिखित हैं :-

- बच्चों को शब्दों और वर्णमाला की अच्छी तरह से पहचान होनी चाहिए।
- Clay game, Magnetic Alphabet, Scrabble game, श्यामपट (Blackboard) का प्रयोग करना चाहिए और Florocent Colour - इसका प्रयोग करने से शब्द उभर कर आते हैं।

- लिखते समय पेपर सीधा रखना चाहिए | पेंसिल और पेन को अंगूठे, मध्यमा उंगली (Middle finger) के बीच में रखकर तर्जनी उंगली (Index finger) से जोर लगाना चाहिए।
- किसी भी विषय में उपविषय के बारे में पढ़ाते वक्त, उस विषय को बार - बार दोहराने से वह चीज़ बच्चे के दिमाग में बैठ जाती है।
- जिस विषय को याद कर रहे हो, उसे लिखकर याद करें।
- ऐसे बच्चों को कभी भी पूरा पाठ्यक्रम (Syllabus) नहीं कराना चाहिये। जो परीक्षा के हिसाब से मुख्य प्रश्न लगते हैं, उन्हीं पर फोकस करना चाहिए।
- पिछले सालों के पेपर लेकर, जो प्रश्न बार - बार दोहराए जा रहे हैं, उनकी एक सूची बना लें। परीक्षा को ध्यान में रखते हुए उन्हीं प्रश्नों को कराएं। इससे 50 % पाठ्यक्रम cover हो जाता है।
- ऐसे बच्चों को सही शब्दों को लिखने में मुश्किल आती है। ऐसे शब्दों की सूची बनाना, जिन शब्दों को लिखने में गलतियां करता है और बच्चे को सही शब्द सिखाना।
- सही वर्तनी सिखाने के लिए उसको श्यामपट या पेपर पर लिखें और बच्चे से कहें कि वह सही शब्द का उच्चारण करे और उसकी तुलना उस शब्द से करे जो उसने लिखा है। उच्चारण को दोहराने को कहें।
- बच्चे को यदि पढ़ने में मुश्किल आती है तो अध्यापक द्वारा पढ़ी हुई या स्वयं माता-पिता उस सही reading को CD अथवा फ़ोन में रिकॉर्ड करके बच्चे को सुनाएं और बताएं कि किस तरह से पढ़ना है।

रिया की मम्मी ने इन कुछ बातों का अनुसरण किया और इसके साथ ही मैंने उन्हें सलाह दी कि बच्चे के सन्दर्भ में अध्यापकों से बार-बार मिलना चाहिए। इससे अध्यापकों को यह लगा की रिया की माँ रिया के लिए बहुत ज्यादा परिश्रम कर रहीं हैं। इसका प्रभाव यह हुआ कि अध्यापकों ने भी रिया के प्रति रुचि दिखाना शुरू कर दिया। इस सन्दर्भ में मैं रिया की मम्मी के साथ कई बार स्कूल भी गई। आरम्भ में

अध्यापकों और प्रधानाचार्या इस बात को मानने को तैयार नहीं थे कि बच्ची को इसी स्कूल में रखा जाए। वह यही कहती थीं कि बच्ची पढ़ाई में कमजोर है इसलिए रिया को विशेष स्कूल (special school) में डाला जाए। लेकिन मेरे बहुत प्रयास करने के बाद, वह इस बात के लिए तैयार हो गए कि रिया को इसी स्कूल में ही रखा जाएगा।

ऐसे बच्चों के लिए लोग उम्मीद छोड़ देते हैं और उस बच्चे के ऊपर ध्यान नहीं देते हैं। वे समझते हैं कि बच्चा ही लापरवाह है। रिया की मम्मी ने रात-दिन एक करके उसको दसवीं तक पहुँचाया। बारहवीं की परीक्षा में रिया ने 75% प्राप्त किए और राजनैतिक विज्ञान (political science) में प्रथम स्थान लेकर 84 अंक लेकर पास हुई जिसके लिए उसको shield और प्रशस्तिपत्र (certificate) मिला। रिया की मम्मी ने उसकी पढ़ाई के लिए बहुत परिश्रम किया। रिया की खुशियों के पीछे उसकी माँ की अनगिनत खुशियों का परित्याग निहित था। रिया की मम्मी हमेशा उसके साथ लगी रहती थीं। रिया को इससे प्रोत्साहन मिला और आत्मविश्वास बढ़ा। जहाँ उसकी मम्मी ने बिल्कुल उम्मीद छोड़ थी, वह उसके लिए मेरी शुक्रगुजार थीं। रिया ने आगे की पढ़ाई जारी रखी और दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय में B.A. (Program) में प्रवेश लिया और कॉलेज में भी 56% से पास हुई। इस समय तक रिया का आत्मविश्वास काफी बढ़ चुका था। जहाँ एक समय था कि कक्षा में सबसे अलग और चुप बैठी रहती थी। इस समय उस बच्ची में मनोबल की कमी नहीं थी। इसके लिए रिया की मम्मी ने काफी मेहनत की जिसका फल उनके सामने आ गया। इसके साथ रिया की माँ ने कला और computer को भी बढ़ावा दिया। रिया बहुत अच्छा Art और Craft का काम करती है और वह इस क्षेत्र में परांगत है।

इस तरह अंत में मैं यह कह सकती हूँ कि जिन बच्चों को 'Dyslexia' की समस्या है, अगर सही वातावरण और भावनात्मक सहारा दिया जाए तो वह इस समस्या से उभर सकता है। इस सम्बन्ध में रिया की माँ की जितनी भी प्रशंसा की जाए वह कम है। इस सम्बन्ध में रिया की माँ ने सरहानीय कार्य किया। सच्चे मन से माँ का कर्तव्य निभाया है।

Book Review

Gender Diversity and Inclusion

Dr Mani Bhasin Kalra,

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Atkinson, C. J. (2017). *Can I Tell You About Gender Diversity? A guide for friends, family and professionals.* Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and Philadelphia, USA. (pp 64)

Looking for a book on Diversity I came across this very interesting, illustrated book in series, first published in 2017 and authored by CJAtkinson, '*Can I Tell You About Gender Diversity? A guide for friends, family and professionals.*' The book has been Illustrated by Olly Pike and published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London and Philadelphia, USA.

'Can I tell you about.....', is a short 64 page interesting journey about a 12 year old child transitioning to a different gender with the description/suggestion about the ways in which the family, friends and school, especially the teachers can render assistance. The book enables a reader to discover the voice and psychology the 12 year old. The child in the book seems to be talking and discussing about the feelings that may at times, one has during puberty, for example, 'I knew my whole life that there was something that wasn't right, and

I didn't want to be called a girl.' It discusses, 'how some people never have confusion about their gender from when they are born', and for a few who may have, how it is possible to transition medically if desired. The book has clear and concise descriptions about terms such as gender, transgender, gender dysphoria etc and also about what persons of different genders may experience and undergo. I think this is a much needed title and an essential read for all especially the teachers in schools as it very beautifully clears misconceptions and enables a reader to take a first step towards understanding

'gender' and also lures one to further research into the topic.

The chapters in the book comprise, gender identity, sexual orientation, transitioning, gender expression, gender dysphoria and euphoria, gender identity clinics, language, the Equality Act 2010 in UK, the School, Misgendering, How other people can help. The best part of the book comes when there is a section on 'Further guidance and Support Group', followed by a Glossary of terms and abbreviations, which indeed are very useful.

I am sure this book will be a very good read for parents and teachers, for them to be able to understand and also help children as it is explained in a very simple language. Young students interested to know about aspects may find the language of the book very comfortable and easy to comprehend.

Finally, I would like to say that since the author has located the writing in west and it reflects the same culture, there are aspects that readers in developing countries may not be able to relate to, for example, the concept of 'Gender Clinics', but at the same time it is enlightening to know how one can understand issues that are of concern to all today, more so it educates us about how we can help our children better. Overall, I would highly recommend this book for all teachers and especially teachers in the making and students of Gender/Women Studies in schools and Universities.

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