



Inclusive Education

Jaya Prasad Lamsal
Rita Tisdell

Abstract

This paper intends mainly to clarify the concept of inclusive education, its importance in Nepalese context and how we can implement inclusive education in Nepalese schools. This paper also highlights about the appropriate curricula, teaching. Strategies and evaluation system for implementing inclusive education in our country. The main focus of this paper is to give importance to inclusive education to materialize the universal slogan of 'Education for All':

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition

Inclusive means including or comprising. The general meaning of inclusive education is to include all the children into main stream education system by accommodating them in normal schools regardless their conditions, so that every one child could get education. UNESCO, Paris has defined inclusive education as following:

"Inclusive education is concerned with removing all barriers to learning and with participation of all learners vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation. It is a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all children. It

address the common goals of decreasing and overcoming all exclusion from the human right to education, at least at the elementary level, and enhancing access, participation and learning success in quality basic education for all."

Department of Education/His Majesty's Government, Nepal had organized seminar on inclusive education in March 2004. This seminar has defined inclusive education in Nepalese context which is as following:

"Inclusive education in Nepal must secure the right of all children to relevant education in their own community. It must promote an educational system that celebrate the rich cultural differences of the country upholding non discriminatory environment. Inclusive. Inclusive education acknowledge the demand and the necessity for community ownership of the school."

"Inclusive education believes that all children can learn given the appropriate environment and support. It is a strategy that identifies children who for any reason are excluded or who are at risk of dropping out from schooling in a particular context. These group should be identified at both national and local levels.

Moreover, inclusive education facilitates a process that meets the social, cultural and academic needs through a child centered approach."

Inclusive education is a strategy accepted internationally to provide education to all children. According to this strategy there is no need to establish separate school or to develop separate curricula to those children who have some learning difficulties. The children with learning difficulties also can learn sitting together with normal children if the teachers care their interest, talents and problems and facilitate them as their need.

1.2 International Recognition for Inclusive Education

The Child Right Convention, 1989, accepted education as one of the right of all children. 1990 a world conference was organized in Jomtin, Thailand in the name of 'Education for All' to ensure this right for all children regardless of individual differences. Inclusive education approach was adopted by the world conference on Special Needs Education organized in Salamanka, Spain in 1994 as the main strategy to meet the goal of 'Education for All'.

2. Guiding Principle of Inclusive Education

Every child in the world can learn. The pace of learning and learning method of each child may be different. So we can provide education to each child. All the school can accommodate to these

children who have learning difficulties and educate them by using sound pedagogy or child centered pedagogy which is beneficial to all children. We should use different teaching techniques as the need of the students but we should not establish separate schools as the different learning ability of the students. This is the main basis of inclusive education.

The framework for action of the Salamanca conference says:

"The guiding principle that informs this framework is that schools should accommodate all the children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children from remote and nomadic population, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups."

"Special needs education incorporates the proven principles of sound pedagogy from which all children may benefit. It assumes that human differences are normal and that learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process."

An inclusive education classroom can be likened to a garden of different kinds of flowers. Different flowers

with many colours, is flower been unique. The caretaker loves each flower, he recognizes each flower's beauty, he would never dream of trying to make them the same.

3. Importance of Inclusive Education in Nepal

Nepal is a multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual country. There is religious diversity also in this country. More than 92 languages speaking people of Hindu, Buddha, Islam, Christian etc. religions live in this country. There is no possibility to establish different schools on the basis of social diversity in our country. The school already established should accomodate all those children of different social background on the basis of inclusive education. In inclusive education approach all the children of different social background could get friendly environment in their near by schools. So inclusive education approach might be an appropriate strategy to enroll and retain the children of ethnic and linguistic minority groups in the schools in our country. Inclusive education approach respects the diversity of the society. So this approach can also be an effective instrument to promote unity in diversity and national integrity in our country.

The proportion of disable children to normal children in our country is high in comparison to developed countries. There is no adequate access of schooling to these disable children in our country. It is costly to establish separate schools for special education to all disable Nepalese children. Inclusive education is the easy access of schooling to the disable children of our country.

Girls and so called lower cast children in the rural and remote area of our country are still discriminated in education. They do not feel comfort school environment. So the number of these children is high to drop the school. Inclusive education is helpful to retain these children in the school and make them complete their level.

4. Curriculum in Inclusive Education

Curriculum refer planning of teaching learning. The main components of curriculum are learning objective or learning outcomes, methods of teaching learning or pedagogy and student evaluation. The learning outcomes should cover the divers need of the students in inclusive education. In the same way the pedagogy and student evaluation process should be encouraging to all students specially to the students of learning difficulties.

4.1 Learning outcomes

In inclusive education there may be the children from different culture,

religions, occupations etc in one class. In such a diverse situation students of early age should not be bound to study any particular culture, religion and occupation which is different to their family background. The learning outcomes or objective should represent the need and interest of all students. For an example some learning outcomes are given here which represent the need and interest of different students.

- Students can describe their parent's occupation
- Student can list the name of tools of their parents occupation
- Student can describe the specialties of their religion.
- Student can describe their main festivals.
- Student can participate in their cultural programme.

In the first learning outcome the child of a carpenter tells about what carpenter makes, how the furniture are made and how he can help to his parents etc. In the same way the child of a farmer describes the work of a farmer, agriculture product and his role in his home.

4.2 Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the most important aspect of inclusive education. The salamanka framework for action has recommended student centered pedagogy for inclusion. Student

centered pedagogy is beneficial as to all children. The student of learning difficulties also can learn by the use of student-centered pedagogy.

There are so many methods: question answer, discussion, story telling, role playing, demonstration, field visit, problem solving, project work etc. under student centered pedagogy. All these methods do not fit to every one student. Question answer, discussion and story telling are suitable to blind student. In the same way role playing demonstration field visit, project work are suitable to the students of hearing impair. Some students cannot learn by the use of one method, so the teacher should keep changing the teaching methods and style. In student centered pedagogy teacher should play facilitator role by giving different activities to the groups of different students. The teacher is responsible to care individual student because there may be different students who have different ability in one class in inclusive education.

In inclusive education there may be different language speaking student also in one class, so the teacher should speak the students language as much as he/she can. He/she should not be rigid in one language in the class. The student should be given opportunity to speak their own language.

4.3 Student Evaluation

Continuous assessment is the appropriate approach of student evaluation in inclusive education. Continuous assessment provides regular information of individual student progress. This information is quite helpful to shape the teaching learning activities.

There are different methods and techniques of continuous assessment. Observation is the major one. For observation student centered teaching is quite helpful. In student centre teaching student do different learning activities in the class and the teacher observes their participation and assess their progress. Verbal question answer, discussion written test, portfolio study, parents contact etc. are other techniques of continuous assessment. Teacher can use any techniques as the need of the students. Verbal question answer, discussion are appropriate to the blind student. Written test is appropriate to hearing impair and shy student.

Self assessment and pair assessment are also useful in inclusive education.

5. Recommendation

Though Nepal is a small country it is unique in its diversity. There are different languages, cultures and religion in this country. The number of disable children is also high in this country. In this situation inclusive education is the appropriate educational approach to fulfill the aim of Education for All in this country.

To implement the inclusive education properly following strategies should be practiced.

Teacher Preparation

To implement inclusive education effectively creative and dynamic teachers are necessary. Only these teachers can deliver the curriculum effectively in the class. So the qualification of primary school teachers should be upgraded and all the teachers should get comprehensive training on pedagogy.

By lingual Teaching

For effective teaching learning medium of instruction should be mother tongue. In inclusive education there may be different language speaking students in on class. So the medium of instruction should be bilingual in inclusive education.

Continuous Assessment System

To use the appropriate teaching learning activities as the need of the students continuous assessment system is helpful in inclusive education.

Activity Based Textbooks

For the effective implementation of inclusive education activity based textbooks are useful instead of information-based textbooks.

6. Conclusion

His Majesty's Government of Nepal is committed to fulfill the goal of Education for All. Inclusive education is an appropriate approach to attract out of school children in the schools. Flexible curriculum is necessary to implement inclusive education.

Flexible curriculum cares the individual needs and difficulties of the students. Student centered teaching activities as the need of different students is useful for effective teaching learning and student assessment. For the proper implementation of inclusive education teachers should be qualified and skillful.

Reference

- The Salamanka Statement and Framework for Action, UNESCO, Paris, 1994.
- Draft Report of the Seminar on Inclusive Education, DEO, 2004.
- Programme Guideline of CAS, CDC, 2000.
- Primary Education Curriculum, CDC, 1993.