

Disability in Developing Countries

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Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is based on Social Model of Disability, which says that constraints are social, cultural, and economic barriers that are not inherently part of living with disability. Inclusion is a solution-oriented approach. It aims to tailor the learning experience according to the needs of all students. Inclusive education means meeting the learning needs of students, irrespective of their (dis) abilities. Inclusive education requires that teacher should be trained to teach all students, have positive attitude towards inclusion, and have sufficient school support to impart quality education to all students. They should be able to attend to the individual learning needs of all students, so that they are able to learn, to achieve, and participate in the school community.

Inclusive education gained traction in 1990s with World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), which asked for global effort to provide equal opportunities of education to people with disabilities (Ahmmed et al 2014). Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994, emphasized education for all children, irrespective of their abilities and disabilities. It ensured that 'education for all does really mean *all*' (Ainscow and Miles 2008:16). Dakar Framework for Action on EFA followed the Salamanca Declaration, 2000, which ensured that EFA principles become part of governments' and International development agencies' policies (Ahmmed et al 2014).

Inclusive education addresses the issue of educating persons with disability (PWD). Inclusive education is beneficial for PWD because it gives a sense of belonging; they are accepted and supported by peers and by larger school community. Students educated in inclusive schools do better academically and socially. They learn to face challenges of living in community. They make friends, go to social events, learn to cope with negative social attitude, and stigma. These students are more likely to get employed, earn decent salaries, get married, and lead an independent life. Comparative longitudinal studies have shown

that students with disabilities who went to inclusive schools performed better in language, mathematics, and other cognitive tasks than students who went to special schools (Sharma 2014). Inclusive education is also beneficial for the students with no disabilities. A review of 27 studies demonstrated that inclusive education had positive or neutral effect, but no negative effect (Sharma 2014). Learning in an inclusive learning environment develops positive attitude and friendship with students with disabilities. Problem solving and social skills are developed in all students. In the developing countries inclusive education is the only way to teach all children with disability. Inclusive education does incur some initial cost, but in the long run the cost decreases and becomes cheaper than to run segregated schools.

However, there are challenges to introduce inclusive education. First, the stigma and social attitude towards disability is the biggest barrier. Many parents do not like their children to study in the inclusive schools. They have this misconception that students with disabilities will hinder the progress of their child because they need constant attention and teacher will not be able to give proper attention to their child. Second, inclusion does not work without proper school support, which is a critical factor affecting teachers' attitude and teachers' efficacy. Teachers are more likely to demonstrate positive attitude if they are provided required learning equipment and other classroom requirements. Third, many teachers in the developing world are not trained to teach inclusive classes. Unless these teachers have proper training in teaching to children with different disability types, inclusive education will remain ineffective. Fourth, inclusive education is not a priority issue for most of the developing countries. Poverty related initiatives suck up most of the resources. Inclusive education needs to be the top priority to achieve universal education and eradication of poverty.

The problem of Delhi slum children's education can be solved through inclusive education. There is only one primary school in the area, which will be strengthened in teachers training, resources, support, and positive attitudes to impart inclusive learning. Following steps will be needed:

1. Making all school materials free for all students
2. Provision of all learning equipment that help school impart inclusive education
3. To give training to teachers in inclusive learning techniques
4. To ensure 100 percent attendance at the school including 5 percent with disabilities
5. Run an intensive community campaign to raise awareness about inclusive education and try to change people's attitudes towards disability by engaging with people and community leaders
6. Engage with policy makers to provide more resources for the community

Disabled Peoples' Organizations

Disabled Peoples' Organizations (DPOs) are run and managed by disabled people themselves by a majority (51%) at the board or membership level. Such organizations are working in more than 100 countries around the World (Henry 2012). DPOs are voluntary, not-for-profit organizations, whose primary function is to promote and safeguard the rights of People With Disability (PWD). These organizations work at local or International levels. DPOs are independent of government influence, though they may rely on government funding. DPOs can consist of members with same type of disability (uni-disability), or cross disability (multi-disability). Some DPOs represent a network of different DPOs.

DPOs play important role in inclusive development. Article 33 (3) of United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD) recognizes DPOs importance, and calls on member States to involve DPOs in the monitoring process (UNCRPD 2014). In this way DPOs hold their respective governments accountable in disability rights and inclusive development. DPOs also provide vital information to local and International donor agencies, helping these agencies in planning, designing, and implementation of their programs. DPOs' play following roles (Vo Yen 2014):

- a) Believing in “A voice of our own”, PWD represent themselves through DPOs and believe that they best know what the disabled peoples’ beliefs and aspirations are.
- b) DPOs were created realizing that there are many barriers for PWD. DPOs identify and analyze these barriers and bring forth the grassroots needs of the PWD. They know how to meet those needs.
- c) DPOs present the PWD’s case before the decision-makers; act as vehicle to convey the needs of PWD to policy-makers. It helps government and International agencies to prioritize their policies and initiatives according to the wishes and needs of PWD.
- d) The role of DPOs in monitoring and evaluation of programs specific to PWD or inclusive development is very important. UNCRPD binds member States to involve DPOs in the monitoring process, because DPOs best know PWD’s needs and how these needs can be met.
- e) DPOs develop disabled peoples’ skills in organization, management, proposal writing, leadership, negotiating, data gathering/analysis, and budgeting. Overtime, representatives of these organizations learn how to present their case before the decision makers to convince them of their needs and aspirations. Skill development is done through on-job learning, workshops/seminars.
- f) DPOs are the best way to promote mutual support and solidarity among the PWD, creating a sense of belonging and common purpose. It helps identify common problems. Meetings, workshops, and social events instill a sense of solidarity and boost the confidence of PWD.
- g) DPOs initiate self-help projects for PWD to help them integrate in the society. These projects focus on independent living, employment, accessible housing, attendant care, advocacy, counseling, and information on services.
- h) DPOs provide opportunities for PWD to create networks of different organizations at national and International levels to share ideas and information.
- i) General public and decision makers are sensitized to the PWD’s issues through DPO’s activities such as lobbying, monitoring, seminars, workshops, conferences, newsletters, and social events.

Challenges to DPOs' performance:

- a) Many DPOs lack institutional and organizational capacity, such as strategic planning, budgeting, accounting, personnel management, project development, leadership, advocacy, policy analysis, research, and negotiating. This results in failure to communicate effectively, stoppage of funds, and failure to achieve agreed outcomes.
- b) DPOs have limited funding from the government, often not even enough to pay salaries. That is why most people working in these organizations are volunteers. DPOs cannot hire professionals' services.
- c) Most of the DPOs are based in cities with limited or no outreach to PWD in the rural areas, whose concerns can be totally different. In this case majority view is not represented in decision-making process.
- d) DPOs management is mostly controlled by elites within PWD, who are educated and wealthy. They have significant influence over decision-making process within DPOs. This results in under-representation of women, youth, and rural population of PWD.
- e) Most of the DPOs are single impairment organizations, which results in competition for resources and legitimacy. There is usually no pan-impairment organization to present a unified stand.

Strategy to overcome these challenges:

- a) Dedicated funding for DPOs' capacity building to enable them to meaningfully engage with policy-makers and International partners.
- b) Substantial increase in budget allocations for disability related development initiatives.
- c) Enhancement of DPOs' capacity to reach out to PWD in rural areas and broaden DPOs' support base.
- d) Discourage elitism and introduce democratic norms in DPOs organizational structures enabling all members to participate in decision-making.

- e) Bring unity among DPOs and form pan-impairment organization to present unified stand of all PWD.

Policy-makers/government:

- a) Engage DPOs in monitoring in accordance with UNCRPD article 33.
- b) Strengthen statistical offices to generate meaningful and verifiable data about disability.
- c) Engage with DPOs in all stages of project cycle.
- d) Training for public officials in disability issues.
- e) Increase DPOs funding.

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