

Barriers to Inclusive Education for Children with Intellectual Disabilities

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Abstract

Education is basic and fundamental right. It is also an effecting strategy to prevent human rights abuses. Therefore, quality education is a need of an hour. But for persons with disabilities to achieve quality education is still hard nut to crack. The objective of this paper is to find various barriers to inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities. For this study purpose, the investigator has reviewed and analyzed various literatures.

Keywords:

Barriers;
Inclusive Education;
Intellectual Disabilities.

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1. Introduction

"People with disabilities are vulnerable because of the many barriers we face: attitudinal, physical, and financial. Addressing these barriers is within our reach and we have a moral duty to do so..... But most important, addressing these barriers will unlock the potential of so many people with so much to contribute to the world. Governments everywhere can no longer overlook the hundreds of millions of people with disabilities who are denied access to health, rehabilitation, support, education, and employment—and never get the chance to shine." - Stephen Hawking

More than one (1) billion people in the world are living with some form of disabilities and of whom nearly two hundred (200) million experiencing considerable difficulties in functioning (World Report on Disability). In other words, we can say that around fifteen (15%) per cent of the total global population are

living with some form of disabilities. And around 80 per cent of them live in developing countries (WHO and World Bank, 2011). The prevalence rate is so high that in recent years' disability will be greater concern for the world. Approximately around five percent (5%) of all children worldwide (95 million children) live with disabilities and from them 0.7% (13 million) with severe disabilities (WHO and World Bank, 2011).

Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. This means that all children - no matter who they are - can learn together in the same school. This entails reaching out to all learners and removing all barriers that could limit participation and achievement. Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together. Children with disabilities remain one of the most excluded groups from education. (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana 2002.) 'barriers to learning' refer to any factors, either internal or external to the learner, that cause a hindrance to that person's ability to benefit from schooling. Researchers have found that implementation of inclusive education from policy to practice is often met by many barriers in countries where studies have been conducted (Donald et al. 2002:4).

2. Need of the study

Education is fundamental human right and also a responsibility. The Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) exhorts "every individual and every organ of society" to "strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms." Education contribute to the building of free and peaceful societies. Education is also an effecting strategy to prevent human rights abuses. Therefore, quality education is a need of an hour. Yet there are many historic attempts made towards achieving quality basic education to all however, many still continue to be denied this right because of various barriers. Therefore, there is an exceeding need to study barriers so that we could focus on overcoming strategies for truly implementation of Inclusive Education. For this purpose, the investigator has reviewed and analyzed various literatures.

3. Barriers of inclusive education

Attitudinal Barrier: Old Societal norms, orthodox thinking and old attitudes are hard to die in a society. Stigmatization and discrimination denies people with disabilities their dignity and potential. These are one of the greatest obstacles to achieving equality of opportunity and social integration (Wapling & Downie, 20012, p. 21; UNICEF, 2013. p.11). Negative attitudes create a disabling environment across all domains. (WHO & World Bank, 2011, pp. 193, 262). Stigma and shame can be higher in low and middle class income countries than in high-income contexts (Mont, 2014, p. 24). Misconceptions, stereotypes and folklore linking disability to punishment of past sins, misfortune or witchcraft. (Groce & Kett, 2014, p. 5; Rimmerman, 2013' Burns et al., 2014, pp. 43-44).

Environmental or Physical Barrier: Economically deprived schools, poorly cared for building can restrict accessibility. These building are specially found in rural areas of developing countries. Many schools in rural areas don't have the facilities to properly accommodate students with special needs. This happens because of financial problems in developing countries. Doors, passageways, stairs and ramps and recreation areas can create a barrier for special needs students in full and equal participation. (WHO & World Bank, p. 263; Bruijn et al., 2012, pp. 22-223).

Social Barrier: Society is in which people are born, grow, learn, live and work and social barrier is where all these social determinants contribute to decreased functioning among people with disabilities. Such as, students with special needs gets less enrollment rate than general students, persons with disabilities are far less likely to be employed, people with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty compared to people without disabilities, children with special needs are almost four (4) times more likely to experience violence than general children.

Curriculum Barrier: Not accommodating curriculum according to special needs is a curriculum barrier. Sometimes, rigid curriculum which does not allow differentiated instructions, experimentations, vast teaching methods can become barrier to inclusion.

Language and Communication: This barrier occurs in countries which have more than one language. Many students are expected to learn new language other than mother tongue. Due to unfamiliarity of new language this obviously occurs a significant barrier to successful learning.

Untrained Teachers as a Barrier: Huge demand and less supply of special trainers in inclusive schools are making other untrained and improfessionals to look after special needs students in inclusive settings which is again a barrier. Because of this they are unenthusiastic and unwillingly working with special needs children. In developing countries teachers are often given extra workload and duties related to non curriculum such as, collection of demographic data, election duties etc.

Socio-Economic Factors as a Barrier: Developing countries have areas that are traditionally poor and higher unemployment rates, which not only slows economic growth of a country but also create a barrier poor educational facilities. Parents with lower economic conditions does not able to provide basic necessities to their wards. Poor health services, violence and other social factors create barrriers in teaching and learning environment.

Internalized Barrier: Sometimes internalized barriers can severely affect the participation and functioning of people with disabilities in society (Brujijn et. al. 2012, p 16). Denial from opportunities, bullying and low expectations for children with disabilities hamper most in their personality building. Their low confidence makes them less participate in societal interactions, which in turn can results exclusion. (WHO & World Bank, 2011, p. 6).

Funding as a Barrier: Third world countries referred to the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America have financial problems. Their Gross Development Product is lower than other developed countries. Therefore, these countries approve less budget in educational sector. Schools in these often has lack of facilities, qualified teachers and other staff members, educational materials and other necessary amenities.

Technological Barrier: Technological barriers occurs when a device or technological platform is not accessible. Tecnology can enhances the user experience, but it can also create unintentional barriers for some. It is sometimes called Informational and Communicational barrier. Some examples we can compute here is, sites without screen reading softwares, Learning Management Syestems or course websites without large and small fonts.

Transportation barriers:Transportation is very important part of our life. Transportation barriers are due to lack of of adequate transportation that degrade with the person's ability to be independent and to function in society on a daily purpose. Some of the examples we can see for persons with disabilities are inaccessible transport facilities (not having low floor buses, lack of disability friendly seats etc.), lack of public transports to distances or locations.

Lack of participation or sensitization: The lack of consultation and involvement of people with disabilities is a barrier to their inclusion in the society. (WHO & World Bank, 2011, p. 263)

Inaccurate concerns over cost: Lots of stakeholders does not able to perveive the cost over inclusion. Inadequate funding and its allocations for implementing policies and plans can prevent the inclusion of persons with disabilities. (WHO & World Bank, 2011, p.262).

Inadequate data and statistics:Lack of uncomparable data and statistics gives lack of evidence on programmes that worked for persons with disabilities.

4. Conclusion

The world is looking forward to inclusive education as a basic right for every individual but then there are lots of barriers without removing those we can't even move further. Prime objective of this paper was to focus on identifying barriers to inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities. In current senerio there are lots of stakeholders coming forward to invent time and money for the services of disabilities. State also have adopted right strategies and plan of actions. Human resource capacity also improving for effective education and training. Public awareness and understanding about the disability also increasing. Many state have improved availability and quality of data on disability through census. Slowly and steadily we are moving forward to remove all the barriers.

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