

Inclusive Education: Need of the Day

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Abstract

Inclusive Education is a planned and systematic efforts and it involves giving need based support, counseling, evaluation, modifications in curriculum and remedial teaching. A small beginning has already been made but the goal will be achieved only when the word is spread across the country and there is pressure on the authorities concerned, to take notice and action. For the effectiveness and success of Inclusive education, it requires manageable classrooms so that challenged children receive teacher attention. Therefore, it is imperative that more qualified and trained teachers should be recruited to effectively implement inclusive education principles and practices. Inclusive education is the responsibility of everyone involved in a child's education-parents, teachers, community and government. The practical elements necessary for inclusive education are to get off the group- access for all. With the learning of "Plus Curriculum" to cope with the particular disability, these children can also complete with non disabled children. Thus the heart of inclusive education is the provision of equal opportunities for all the children. However, the traditional response has been to promote special schools for disabled children, the presumptions being that special needs children show down the rest of the class. People got used to the idea that special education. But special schools are dead -ends for special need children. They promote isolation, , alienation and social exclusion. Special schools are good medical interventions. Some argue that isolating students with special needs may lower their self esteem and may reduce their ability to deal with other people. Children won't learn unless they are happy and included; therefore teacher must be taught to practice inclusion and respect disabilities. Inclusive education is a human right, it is good education and it makes good social sense.

"Every child is welcomed and valued regardless of ability or disability"

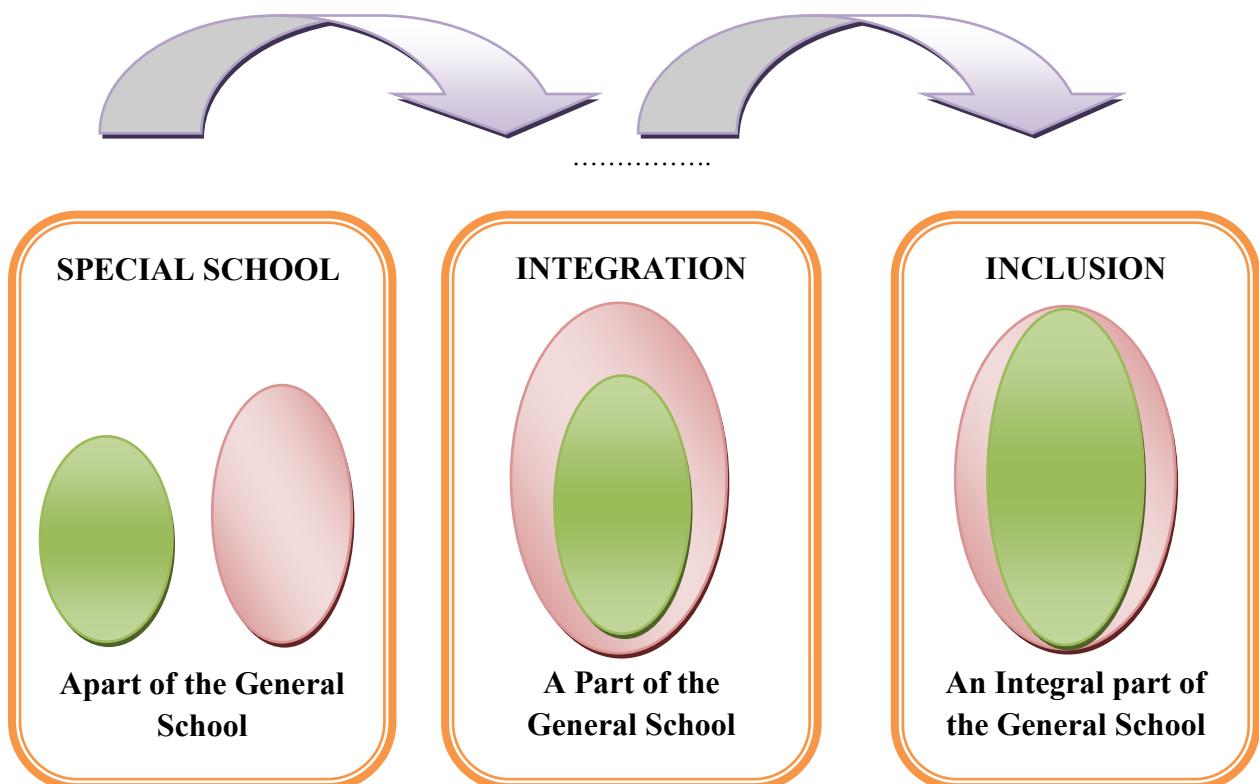
Introduction

For over a century, the prevalent model of offering education to children with special needs has been the special schools with major drawbacks- it is expensive and has only limited reach. Moreover segregation children based on disability is a violation of the human rights. Subsequently, the philosophy of integration emerged which advocated education of children with moderate disabilities in general schools along with others with adequate support. But children under integration are treated separately in schools and integration or mainstreaming is only partial. This led to the emergence of a new concept called "*Inclusive Education*" which argues that all children respective of the degree of the disability should be educated in the general schools with normal children. Integrated Education is about "*going to school*" where as Inclusive Education is about "*Participating in school*". Inclusive Education is more in true with the social model of disability which sees the system as the problem. The school and the education system as a whole are enabled to change in order to meet the individual needs of all learners.

Meaning and Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is not just another option in the special education programme rather it is a very different way of providing education to all students. It is an approach to education where students with special needs including disabilities are educated in neighborhood schools in age-appropriate regular classroom settings with non disabled peers, and are provided with supports and instruction that assures their participation with their peers, while also meeting their individual strengths and needs.

Inclusive education is defined as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and of reducing exclusion within education. Inclusive education is a commitment to seeing education as fundamental to development both of individuals and of societies. It implies all learners, young people- with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common pre school provisions, schools and community educational setting with an appropriate network of support services. Literally the meaning of *Inclusion* is "to include the diversified entities. As far education is concerned, Inclusion refers to the placement and education to the children with disabilities in regular education classrooms, with children of the same age who do not have disabilities. Overall inclusive education is the provision of services to students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for both children and teachers. It is a system in which all children from a given community learn together in a same local school including children with learning difficulties, special needs or disabilities. It involves all children learning together with the peers in the same environment and enables all to participate together in the society from the very beginning.



Definitions of Inclusive Education

Sometimes the concept of inclusive education is considered as same as with the concept of integrated and mainstreaming. But the concept of inclusive Education is a different concept from the concept of integrated and mainstreaming. Now we will be clear about the same by providing definitions given by eminent scholars and psychologists.

“Mainstreaming refers to the temporal, instructional and social integration of eligible exceptional children with normal peers based on an ongoing, individually determined, educational planning and programming process and requires clarification of responsibilities among regular and special education, administrative instructional and supportive personnel.”

Kauffman

“The term mainstreaming is used to mean an integration of regular and exceptional children in a school setting where all children share the same resources and opportunities for learning and full time basis.”

Beng

“At the level of Education the integration of a disabled child into a regular classroom situation means a concurrent education with a class of non disabled children. In such a set up there are greater opportunities for the handicapped child to mix with his non disabled counterparts in games, sports and other activities. The aim of integrated education is to assimilate a disabled child into a group of non disabled and providing opportunities to make his/her as independent as possible.”

Rehman Hiffr

“Mainstreaming is the education of mildly handicapped children in the regular classroom. It is based on the philosophy of “equal opportunity” implemented through individual planning to promote appropriate learning achievement and social normalization”

Stephan and Blackhurt

“Inclusive Education is a set of values, principles and practices that seeks more effective and meaningful education for all students, regardless of whether they have exceptionality labels or not.”

Michael F. Giangreco

“Inclusive school or set up may be defined as a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met.”

Stainback and Stainback

“Inclusive Education is the implementation of policy and process that allows all children to participate in all programmes. Policy means that disabled children should be accepted without any restrictions in all the educational programmes meant for other children. The process of inclusion denotes the ways in the system makes itself welcoming to all. Inclusive Education is nothing but making the programme for disabled children as an integral part of the general educational system rather than a system within general education.”

M. Manivannan

“Inclusive Education implies bringing together of the educational needs of the normal children and the educational requirements of the children with special needs, so as to evolve a common curriculum with a view to provide education to all in regular schools itself. It is a flexible and individualized support system for children and young people with special educational needs. It provides an integral component of the overall education system and is provided in regular schools committed in an appropriate education for all.”

Uppal and Dey

"Inclusive Education aims to provide a favorable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation for all, thus bringing children with special needs well within the preview of mainstream education. It recognizes the diverse needs of the students and ensures equality education to all through appropriate curricula, teaching strategies, support services and partnership with a community and parents. In simple words, it means that all children with or without disabilities learn together."

Advani and Chadha

"Inclusive Education describes the restructuring of special education to permit all or most students to be integrated in mainstream classes through reorganization and instruction innovations (e.g., cooperative learning, collaborative consultation and team teaching)"

Ware (1995)

On the account of the above definitions and discussions about the concept of inclusive education, we may conclude that it is a democratic ideology which advocates that all children should be included in the regular education system. The movement for "Education for all" acts as a gateway towards inclusive education. It is based on the democratic ideology that all students can learn and they have right to be educated alongside their same age group peers to the maximum extent possible, a zero reject policy exists so that typically no students is excluded from the general education class and other integrated environment. Overall inclusive Education is an attitude of focusing on every child the help he/she needs to learn.

Principles and Characteristics of Inclusive Education

Recognizing Education for all children as a fundamental right, to ensure the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in all available mainstream educational setting, by providing them with a learning environment that is available, accessible, affordable and appropriate to help develop their learning and abilities as inclusive education means a philosophy of education that promotes the education of all pupils in regular schools. The principles of this philosophy are based on the following assumptions.

- i. All children have right to learn and play together.
- ii. Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disabilities.
- iii. There are no legitimate reasons to separate children during the duration of their schooling. They belong together rather than need to be protected from one another
- iv. It is an effort to provide equal education opportunity to the disabled and to prepare them for independent living like other member of society.
- v. It is an education setting in which disabled and non-disabled children receive education in the same regular classroom.
- vi. It is an attempt to provide home based learning for persons with severe, multiple and intellectual disabilities.
- vii. It promotes an understanding of the paradigm shift from charity to development through a massive awareness, motivation and sensitization campaign.
- viii. It provides a mechanism for responding to the learning and other needs of all learners as soon as they are suspected or identified.
- ix. It utilizes resources in and around the school.
- x. The model provides the opportunity for teachers to learn from one another and to work collaboratively.
- xi. It provides an opportunity for assessing the short and long term needs of teachers and the possibilities for school based training, workshop and seminars.

- xii. In inclusive education, strengths and abilities of all children are developed rather than highlighting limitations.
- xiii. Inclusive education makes the curriculum flexible and appropriate to accommodate the diversity of school children including those with disabilities in both cognitive and non cognitive areas.
- xiv. It involves parents, community at all stages of education.
- xv. It is a cooperative and collaborative approach for providing education to the children with disability.
- xvi. It is an approach to attain the goals of universalisation of elementary education by providing equality of educational opportunity.
- xvii. It facilitates access of girls with disabilities and disabled students from rural and remote areas to government hostel.
- xviii. It promotes individualized educational programme for those who require an individualized pace of learning.
- xix. Children in inclusive setting have more durable networks of friends than children in segregated setting.
- xx. It aims in developing a system by which abstract concept are effectively communicated to children varying learning style, including those using signs language, Braille etc.

Need and Reason for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is the responsibility of everyone involved in a child's education-parents, teachers, community and government. The practical elements necessary for inclusive education are to get off the group- access for all. With the learning of "Plus Curriculum" to cope with the particular disability, these children can also complete with non disabled children. Thus the heart of inclusive education is the provision of equal opportunities for all the children. However, the traditional response has been to promote special schools for disabled children, the presumptions being that special needs children show down the rest of the class. People got used to the idea that special education. But special schools are dead -ends for special need children. They promote isolation, , alienation and social exclusion. Special schools are good medical interventions. Some argue that isolating students with special needs may lower their self esteem and may reduce their ability to deal with other people. Children won't learn unless they are happy and included; therefore teacher must be taught to practice inclusion and respect disabilities. Inclusive education is a human right, it is good education and it makes good social sense. The need of inclusive education is remarkable for the below point of views (*Centre for studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE), Bristol, United Kingdom*) :-

For the Human Rights point of view

- All the children have the right to learn together.
- Children should not be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability or learning difficulty.
- Disabled adults, describing themselves as special school survivors, are demanding an end to segregation.
- There is no legitimate reason to separate children for their education; children belong together with advantages and benefits for everyone. They do not need to be protected from each other.

For the Good Education point of view

- Research shows children do better, academically and socially in integrated setting.
- There is no teaching or care in a segregated school, which can not take place in an ordinary school.

- Given commitment and support, inclusive education is more efficient use of educational resources.

For the Good Social Sense point of view

- Segregation teaches children to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.
- All children need an education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life in the mainstream.
- Only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and build friendship, respect and understanding.

Aims and objectives of Inclusive Education

Research has shown that inclusive education results in improved social development and academic outcomes for all learners. It leads to the development of social skills and better social interactions because learners are expected to real environment in which they have to interact with other learners each one having unique characteristics, interests and abilities. The non disabled peers adopt positive attitudes and actions towards learners with disabilities as a result of studying together in an inclusive classroom. Thus, inclusive education lays the foundation to an inclusion society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity.

- Recognizing Education for all children as a fundamental right.
- To ensure the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in all available mainstream educational setting.
- By providing them with a learning environment that is available, accessible, affordable and appropriate to help develop their learning and abilities.
- To ensure that no child is denied admission in mainstream education.
- To ensure that every child has would have the right to access an Anganwadi and school and no child would turn back on the ground of disability.
- To ensure that mainstream and specialist training institutions serving persons with disabilities in the Government and non government sector, facilitate the growth of a cadre of teachers trained to work within the principles of inclusion.
- To facilitate access of girls with disabilities and disabled students from rural and remote areas to government hostels.
- To provide for home based learning for person with severe, multiple and intellectual disability.
- To promote distance education for those who require an individualized pace of learning.
- To emphasize job training and job oriented vocational training.
- To promote an understanding of the paradigm shift from charity to development through a massive awareness, motivation and sensitization campaign.
- To flourish Gifted and talented handicapped children, proper opportunity should be given to them as they are the assets of the society.

Target Group of Inclusive Education

- Infants and children with special needs in the age group 0-6 years
- Children with special needs in the age group of 6-14 years
- Young persons with disabilities in the age group 14- 16 years who are part of the educational stream.

Disability would refer to sensory, physically and intellectually impairments, communication, emotional and behavioral disorders, mental health difficulties and multiple disabilities. It would cover the disabilities as defined under the persons with disability act(1995) and the National Trust Act (1999).

- Blindness.
- Low vision.
- Leprosy cured.
- Hearing impaired.
- Locomotors disability.
- Mental retardation
- Mental illness.
- Autism.
- Cerebral palsy
- Multiple disabilities.

In the 0-6 years, this may also cover all children indicating development delay, low birth weight termed at risk and medical problems that may be lead to disabling condition.

The 6-14 years group may also be referred to as children with special needs (CWSN) as under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan programme which guideline may be taken as a reference point.

Models of Inclusive Education

Many people contributed ideas, suggestions, insights and constructive criticism during the preparation of models of Inclusive Education. The voice for inclusive education was raised by the humanists as well as the educationists. It is now considered to be the supplementary to the successful social system. Now the subject of inclusive education has been widely debated in academic, social and psychological discussions. The term inclusive model represents the procedure for inclusive education. Some models are necessary to ensure the success of proper inclusion. They are as under:-

(i) Strategies Intervention Model:- this model was developed at the University of Kensas centre for research on learning. This model is based on the principles that the entire student should develop their potential independently. It serves in the transition of the student with disabilities into the general education environment. This transition is a directional process in which combined assistance of general and special education teacher is required. There are three steps which is followed by this model as described under:-

Step:01- in the first step while responding to the expectations and demands, the pupils are made properly learn the steps and strategies for getting, storing and expressing the things having particular aims. This also enables a student to copy the content matter and prepare a ground to meet the special needs.

Step: 02- The second step is enhancing the teaching routine in general education classrooms. It is done on the basis of aids i.e the teaching aids which are related to the previous knowledge of the students.

Step: 03- The third stage to the strategy intervention is designed to teach the special social skills and motivational techniques. Here a wide environment is created for the purpose of developing shared behavior which signifies commonness in behavior of all. It helps easy involvement in team meeting and conferences.

(ii) Team Teaching Model:- This is also an important model in which a group of teachers working together, plan, conduct and evaluate the learning activities for the group of students. But in general it is a means of organizing staffs into groups to enhance teaching. Teams generally comprise staff members who may represent different areas of subject. Team

teaching can lead to better student performance in terms of greater independence and assuming responsibility for learning. In this model, the special education teacher and the regular classroom teacher work together and teach the students in one classroom. For making the teaching impressive and speculative, the teachers have to work in team and considered the others equal. A team teaching model has many advantages by which the goal of teaching the children with special educational needs can be easily reached. In this model the disabled students attain the self esteem and self reliance. For effective learning, an effective planning and systematic approach is required. After systematic planning, then implementation begins with a well defined support of the team. The team work for this model are as follows:-

- (i) The teacher must show their inclination and desirability to making a joint venture. The work should be divided in all team members and for reaching the goal of the job all types of gap in communication should be meted.
- (ii) Inclusion needs a great deal inclusion of various types of elements. They may differ to each other. But the necessary things are that all these elements should lay focus on teaching. It includes all types of issues i.e the issues of character building and in and outside learning issues. It requires support, conducive leadership etc.

In this way, Team Teaching Model has many advantages by which the goal of teaching the children with special educational needs can be easily reached. It is beneficial for all the students, teachers, special education teacher, and general education teacher.

- (iii) **Full Inclusion Model:-** In Inclusive Education the mode of full inclusion has a great significant value. When the teacher enters into the classroom for instructional purpose, he uses all the materials, relevant method in his teaching for making his teaching interesting and effective. In this model there are strategies to help children with individualized education plan (IEP) but there are so many barriers comes in achieving the goal. In this model, the general education teacher is fully responsible for the child. In the full inclusion setting, the students with special needs are always educated alongside students without special needs, as the first and desired option while maintaining appropriate supports and services. Some educators say this might be more effective for the students with special needs. At the extreme, full inclusion is the integration of all students, even those that require the most substantial educational and behavioral supports and services to be successful in regular classes and the elimination of special segregated classes. Advocates say that even if typical students are harmed academically by the full inclusion of certain special needs students, that the non inclusion of these students would still be morally unacceptable, as advocates believe that the harm to typical students' education is always less important than the social harm caused by making people with disabilities less visible in society. Overall the model of Full Inclusion is very beneficial for the disabled as well as non disabled students. It also enriches the knowledge of the regular classroom teacher with exceptionality and all about it.
- (iv) **Circle of Inclusion Model:-** this model is primarily used in education of very young children. It includes the elements to assist in a transition of a student to another educational environment. This model has been adopted in various setting. In this model frequent meetings are held to check and evaluate the progress and needs of the students. In this model, the teachers, parents, community members, psychological practitioners all they took part in that meeting. It provides greater opportunities to all the disabled children to develop their social, emotional, interpersonal skills. The students are encouraged to work together. Normal students become actively involved with the disabled children. This is the principles of this model is that the students can learn best when they are self directed with the help of guideline. In this model active participation of the students is required.

As inclusionary schools are important tools to build an inclusive and democratic society, we should not focus on students rather we have to focus on the classroom as a whole. There are some inclusive model and best practices which will help us in creating an inclusive classroom environment. Inclusive Education is not only limits to inclusion of disabled students with non disabled students and provide them instruction or education. It is a wider sense that we have to care them properly and out positive

attitude and attention should pay for them, and then the objectives of inclusive education will be full filled.

(v) Classroom Environment Inclusive Model:- In Classroom Environment Inclusive Model the following points are considered:-

1. Focus on classroom.
2. Collaborative consultation.
3. Classroom and instructional needs.
4. Strategies for teacher
5. Responsible and flexible classroom

Best practices for Inclusive Education

There are some practices which should be made for the effectiveness of inclusive education system:-

- Focus on instruction for diversity.
- Differentiated and multi level instruction.
- Schools based support team
- The support teacher model.
- Commitment to self development.
- Creative and sustained problem solving.

Necessary Resources determine the success of Inclusive Education

Although once hailed as a way to increase achievement while decreasing costs, full inclusive does not save money, reduce students' needs or improve academic outcomes: in most cases, it merely moves the special education professionals out of their own classrooms and into a corner of the general classroom. To avoid harm to the academic education of students with disabilities, the following services and resources is required including:-

- Adequate supports and services for the students.
- Well designed individualized education programme.
- Professional development for all teachers involved general and special educators alike.
- Time for teachers to plan, meet, create and evaluate the students together.
- Reduced class size based on the severity of the student needs.
- Professional skill development in the areas of cooperative learning, peer tutoring, adoptive curriculum.
- Collaboration between parents, teachers and administrators.
- Sufficient funding so that schools will be able to develop programmes for students based on student need instead of the availability of funding.

Necessary Factors determine the success of Inclusive Education

The following factors are determined the effectiveness and success of Inclusive Education:-

- Family-school partnership.

- Collaboration between general and special teachers.
- Well constructed plans that identify specific accommodations, modifications, and goals for each students.
- Coordinated planning and communication between “general” and “special needs” staff.
- Integrated service delivery.
- On going training and staff development.

Teaching Techniques in Inclusive Education

In the inclusive classroom, educators are faced with the challenge of accommodating diversity in learning styles. This therefore implies flexibility in teaching style s to meet the needs of all learners. Teacher can use a number of techniques to help build classroom communities:-

- Designing games to build community.
- Involving students in solving problems.
- Creating songs and books that teach community.
- Openly dealing with individual differences.
- Assigning classroom jobs that build community.
- Teaching students to look for ways to help each other.
- Utilizing physical therapy equipment such as standing frames, so that students who typically use wheelchairs can stand when the other students are standing and more actively participate in activities.
- Assigning a buddy to accompany a student with special needs at all times. (for example in the cafeteria, on the play ground, on the bus and so on)
- Involving special needs students in all aspects of school life (for example homeroom, specials such as art and gym, lunch, recess, assemblies and electives)
- Reading a book to help the student describe his or her special need.
- Positively modeling is important for the students in the classroom. Positive modeling is the teacher showing a good example towards both special needs and peers without need; this will help the students to get along more.

Benefits of Inclusive Education

It is ensure that every child with special needs, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of disability, is provided education in an appropriate environment. Inclusive Education is one of the policy stands on the principles of that no child is left out of the education system. It has the following benefits:-

- (i) In Inclusive setting, the students with disabilities get opportunities to sit in same classroom alongside with the children without disabilities, as it develops a social interaction among them.
- (ii) Social competence and communication skills of children with diverse abilities are improved in inclusive setting.
- (iii) It helps the teacher to develop practical competencies to perform the action for creating a learning environment.
- (iv) It helps in developing reflective competencies which will help the teacher to reflect on how language, disability, race, gender, geographical locations and other differences impact on learning and appropriate adaptation to teaching strategies.

- (v) In inclusive education setting, it is a great opportunities for the disabled children to improve the skills of acquisition and academic gains.
- (vi) Friendly atmosphere in between children with disabilities and children without disabilities.
- (vii) Children with disabilities who are included in their regular schools tend to become adults who spend more time in leisure activities outside of the home, spend more time in leisure activities with adults without disabilities and spend more time in community work setting than do their counterparts in segregated setting.
- (viii) It provides a mechanism for responding to the learning and other needs of all learners as soon as they are suspected or identified.
- (ix) Cooperative and collaborative partnership of regular and special teacher.
- (x) It follows the principles of right to education and education for all.
- (xi) Children without disabilities can benefit from increased funds in the classroom.
- (xii) Children without disabilities can learn to value and respect children with diverse abilities in inclusive classroom.
- (xiii) In inclusive education, there is provision of additional staff. The children without disabilities can benefit from this additional staff.
- (xiv) It facilitates education of girls with disabilities and disabled students from rural and remote areas to government hostels.
- (xv) It provide home based learning for persons with severe, multiple and intellectual disabilities.

Conclusion

Inclusive Education is one of the processes of bringing handicapped children of whatever conditions into the general classroom for their education. Inclusive schools are the places where every one belongs, is accepted supports and is supported by his/her peers and other member of the school community in the course of having his/her educational needs met. Inclusion is the ultimate aim of integrated and mainstreaming. It is the process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing in participation in learning. The more we can say that it is a process of educating the handicapped child alongside the students without handicapped. It is a philosophy of education that promotes the education of all pupils in regular schools. Thomas (1997) has defined inclusive as "the acceptance of all pupils in the mainstream system, taught with a common framework and identified as the responsibility of all the teachers". Now the following diagram may be explain exactly about Special, Integrated and Inclusive Education. Inclusive Education is a planned and systematic efforts and it involves giving need based support, counseling, evaluation, modifications in curriculum and remedial teaching. A small beginning has already been made but the goal will be achieved only when the word is spread across the country and there is pressure on the authorities concerned, to take notice and action. For the effectiveness and success of Inclusive education, it requires manageable classrooms so that challenged children receive teacher attention. Therefore, it is imperative that more qualified and trained teachers should be recruited to effectively implement inclusive education principles and practices.

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