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**AN ANALYSIS ON SPECIAL EDUCATION:
TEACHERS ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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An Analysis on Special Education: Teachers Role and Responsibilities

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Abstract – Education is one of the most effective tools which Children with Special Needs could achieve the social and economic empowerment. Education holds much importance for Children with Special needs as they have been a subject of discrimination for a long period of time. A special education teacher often has students with varying learning, mental, physical and emotional disabilities. Teachers whose students have mild to moderate disabilities may work with the children in a regular classroom alongside the classroom teacher. In other situations, the special education teacher may have her own classroom. Some special education teachers teach lessons similar to those of regular education students, while other special education teachers teach students independent living skills. However it gives them a holistic perspective with respect to dealing with diversity or challenge negative attitudes. The challenges and prospects in India are elucidated in the present paper.

Keywords: Children, Special Education, Teacher, Skills

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful instrument of social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure. There by helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. The educational scene in the country has undergone major change over the years, resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices. In 1944, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) published a comprehensive report called the Sergeant Report on the post-war educational development of the country. As per the report, provisions for the education of the handicapped were to form an essential part of the national system of education, which was to be administered by the Education Department. According to this report, handicapped children were to be sent to special schools only when the nature and extent of their defects made this necessary. The Kothari Commission (1964–66), the first education commission of independent India, observed: “the education of the handicapped children should be an inseparable part of the education system.” The commission recommended experimentation with integrated programmes in order to bring as many children as possible into these programmes (Alur, 2002).

The government's agenda to universalize elementary education, and its commitment to the Directive Principles of the Constitution, are guided by the recognition that a new universal system of education should be based on equity, the redressal of past

imbalances, and the provision of access to quality education, especially for marginalised groups. Recent educational developments and the Seventy Third and Seventy Fourth Constitutional Amendments outline the possibility of entrusting basic education to the local elected bodies in towns and villages. This would allow for community participation in education at the elementary level and would introduce radical change, leading to the empowerment of learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Until the 1970s, the policy encouraged segregation. Most educators believed that children with physical, sensory, or intellectual disabilities were so different that they could not participate in the activities of a common school (Advani, 2002). Christian missionaries, in the 1880s, started schools for the disabled as charitable undertakings. The first school for the blind was established in 1887. An institute for the deaf and mute, was set up in 1888. Services for the physically disabled were also initiated in the middle of the twentieth century. Individuals with mental retardation were the last to receive attention, the first school for the mentally challenged being established in 1934 (Mishra, 2000). Special education programmes in earlier times were, therefore, heavily dependent on voluntary initiative.

The government's (Department of Education) initiatives after independence were manifested in the establishment of a few workshop units meant primarily for blind adults. These units later included

people who were deaf, physically impaired, and mentally retarded.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

“Inclusive Education means all learners, young people-with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary preschool provisions, schools, and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services. (MHRD, 2004)” Inclusive Education means including the children with disabilities in the regular classroom that have been designed for children without disabilities (Kane, Thomas J., Eric S. Taylor, John H. Tyler, and Amy L. Wooten 2010) Inclusive education refers to an education system that accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. For the development of social skills and better social interaction of the student's inclusive education is the need of education system. (Tyagi (Ed), 2013. Despite of the efforts, many children with disabilities are still denied access to education. It is believed that not more than 2-3 per cent of children with disabilities have access to education (Draft National Policy on Special Education 2002). The Rehabilitation Council of India estimates that 30 million disabled children are in need of education; it aims to educate 10 per cent of all disabled children by 2020. As under Children with Special Educational Needs 29.57 lakh children identified while only 24.77 lakh could enroll in schools in 2009-10.

Inclusive education has increasingly become a focus of debate in discussions about the development of educational policy and practice around the world (Farrell and Ainscow, 2002). The education of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities is now an established key policy objective in many countries for (Lindsay, 2007). The legislative and policy trends of the past 30 years or so have seen a clear shift away from the acceptance of the orthodoxy of segregated education for children with special educational needs. The US paved the way with the introduction of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which was subsequently amended as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990 and updated again in 1997, to promote ‘whole-school’ approaches to inclusion (Evans and Lunt, 2002). All EU countries now have legislation in place designed to promote or require inclusion. Some commentators have described inclusive education as a ‘global agenda’. However, the definition and meaning are still the subject of much heated debate, and defining best practice is no simple task. The inclusive education movement has been endorsed internationally by UNESCO’s Salamanca Statement and reflects the United Nation’s global strategy of Education for All. Inclusive education is now seen as central to human rights and equal opportunities and a priority policy objective of liberal democracies. Inclusion challenges all those policies and practices that serve to exclude some children from

their right to education. The underpinning ideal is that all children have the right to be educated together regardless of any special need or disability. The inclusion agenda is also fuelling discussions around the roles of various specialists within the field of SEN, the purpose of those specialists, and special educational facilities that currently exist within the system. It should not be assumed, however, that there is full acceptance of the wisdom of inclusion. There is considerable debate about whether it is achievable, how it could be achieved. Debate also exists regarding the extent to which this involves the deconstruction of the field of special educational needs and construction of a regular system that will meet the needs of all students (Norwich, 2002). The principle of an inclusive education system in which tolerance, diversity and equity is striven for may be uncontested; however, the way in which we achieve this is much more challenging. Inclusion is an elusive concept. Furthermore, in 1998, Florian suggested that while there were many definitions of inclusion put forward in multiple contexts, no single definition had been universally accepted. Ten years on from this assertion, a single definition is still elusive, which may reflect the complex nature of inclusion locally, nationally, and internationally. While the ideological concepts of inclusion are important, the needs of children and young adults in the education system and how these are met in high quality and effective settings must be paramount. There are multiple perspectives in the field of inclusion and many complex challenges and tensions involved. The complexities and contradictions, however, make oversimplification an inherent danger in the process of reviewing and interpreting the literature. In addition, Slee’s review of the literature notes that authors place their own lens on what they describe or justify as practices of inclusion thereby underlining ‘the dilemmas of generating a vocabulary for and theory of inclusive educational practice’.

The roles and responsibilities of special education teachers

➤ Training

A special education teacher must have a bachelor’s degree and a state license to teach in any of the states. Certification varies by state and by subject taught. Some states require special education teachers to have training in general studies, such as elementary education, while other states allow special education teachers to have a major in a content area, such as communication arts. As part of the training to become a special education teacher, a student spends at least one semester in the classroom learning the responsibilities of a special education teacher.

➤ Administrative Duties

Special education teachers must be mindful of the rules and regulations imposed on them and their school district by federal laws, such as the Individuals

with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, of 2004. Special education instructors must also protect the privacy of their students under the guidelines of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, FERPA. Each special education student in the district has an individualized education plan, or IEP, customized to his disability. The special education teacher serves on the IEP team, along with parents, administrators and other teachers, to see that the IEP's goals are met.

➤ **Resource Room Teacher**

The special education teacher's primary task is to meet each of the goals established in his students' IEPs. The teacher who works with special education students in a separate classroom creates lessons geared to meet those objectives. The classroom setting, which is sometimes call a resource room, also provides the teacher the chance to work with his students on life skills and behavior modification techniques.

➤ **Team Teacher**

In most instances, IEPs seek to place special education students in regular classrooms as much as possible. In that situation, the special education teacher attends classes with her students. She gives her students modified homework that covers the same topics covered in the daily lessons. The special education teacher may work with small groups of students who may or may not qualify for special education, and she may team-teach the entire class with the regular classroom teacher.

CONCLUSION:

Efforts aimed at the education of children with disabilities in India have been largely framed by the distributive paradigm of social justice, where the focus has been on equality in terms of access and provision of resources. However working with such a conception of justice is rather limiting and has two basic flaws. On one hand, it can be argued that this focus on redistribution of resources and access is desirable and important, as children with disabilities tend to belong to the lower economic strata, and without these special schemes are likely to remain deprived of basic essentials. However, such a narrow focus on structural issues is wholly inadequate and does not deliver the whole of justice. Here the tendency is to 'fix' first level concerns, wherein access does not automatically deliver equality. Evidence from efforts aimed at educating the girl child have highlighted that while ensuring basic conditions for ensuring girl's access to education such as infrastructure is essential, there is also a need to focus on transformations in the curriculum and pedagogy.

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