

Inclusive Education: A Micro Analysis

Education is a multidimensional process by which our mind, soul and latent talent develop through formal, and even informal learning. It is indeed a life-long process. It is a mental, psychological, intellectual and social training which provides opportunities to overcome all kinds of difficulties and obstacles to national development and overall progress.

Education is one of the fundamental rights of human being. In our country it is also recognized as our constitutional right. There are necessary constitutional safeguards for ensuring education for all citizens of Bangladesh. In spite of this some people of our society are deprived of enjoying equal rights and opportunities in receiving formal education. Ours is a liberal democratic country. In democracy everyone is equal in the eye of law. So democratic values and norms never support any kind of discrimination among the citizens.

In order to ensure equal facilities for all types of learners at secondary level, Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) authority has included "Inclusive Education" as one of its training contents and strategies. In fact inclusive education is such a strategical and technical process where all types of learners can receive education in a congenial and cooperative environment. Here all students are included in learning process and different activities. For establishing human dignity and fundamental human rights, such kind of education can play a vital role. It is in fact the foundation of an inclusive society.

In different educational institutions, the following variation and diversity can usually be observed: (a) Brighter students and dull students, (b) Learners from poor families and rich families, (c) Male students and female students, (d) Introverts and extroverts, (e) Shy students and confident students, (f) Learners with (physical and mental) abilities and disabilities, (g) From an ethnic minority and greater population, (h) From rural areas and urban areas etc.

Inclusive Education considers diversity as a resource, not a problem. It positively recognizes diversities and variations and assists the learners in fulfilling their various demands and dreams of life. It encourages the persons concerned and authorities to provide with quality learning opportunities for all children. It prepares the learners for establishing an ideal society that respects and values diversity and difference.

But in the context of our country, the path and doorway of Inclusive Education is not so smooth. Especially at secondary level, we can find out some barriers to Inclusive Education: (i) Lack of trained and skilled teachers, (ii) Superstitions and prejudice, (iii) Infra-structural limitations, (iv) Want of proper teaching aids and materials, (v) Lack of social awareness and support, (vi) Shortcomings of prevailing education system, (vii) Lack of modern and suitable teaching methodologies and approaches, (viii) Unfavourable attitudes and behaviour towards the learners with disabilities, (ix) Absence of congenial classroom atmosphere.

It is certain that these barriers are not present in the same dimension in all the educational institutions. Rather despite a lot of problems, many dedicated and career-oriented teachers are trying their level best to spread the light of education to the learners effectively and selflessly. They pay equal attention and even in some cases they show special sympathy and fellow feelings for the problematic and disabled learners.

However, for overcoming these barriers, some pragmatic and dynamic initiatives must be taken. To achieve the goal of inclusive Education, necessary reformation and change should be brought in our education system. Diversity and different characteristics and needs of the learners should be considered as a normal thing. Equal right of education must be ensured even for the disabled children. All learners' active and spontaneous participation in different activities of the school must be encouraged through participatory approach. Child-centred teaching is very essential for achieving inclusion. Suitable teaching aids, special resources and moral support are needed for Inclusive Education.

Diversity should not be thought as a difficulty, or a negative liability; rather we all should take it as a challenge and a humanitarian and moral activity. So an enabling, welcoming and encouraging educational environment must be created in the schools. Proper motivation, interpersonal communication, collaboration, partnership and real-participation may be the best means of promoting inclusion. All elements and components of curriculum and contents should be flexible and responsive. Deep, cordial and meaningful relationship and effective co-ordination should be developed among the teachers, students, guardians, school managing committee and local elites. With a view to building an exploitation-free, welfare-oriented inclusive society and modern democratic country, real, suitable and progressive Inclusive Education should be introduced as early as possible. The nation is eagerly looking forward to having such an education system, not only at secondary level but also at primary level.

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