

Inclusive Education Method and Disabled Children

Md. Sazedul Islam

MOHAMMAD Azizul Islam, 12, son of Nur Salam of Mahmudpur village in Sirajganj Sadar upazila faced trouble in carrying out his study due to his disability.

When his father along with the staff of Child Sight Foundation (CSF), a NGO, went to admit him to a primary school at his village, the school authorities agreed to admit him but did not allow him to attend classes with other students saying that other students may be panicked seeing his unusual eyes.

The school headmaster said he can get admitted to school and appear at examinations, but he would not be allowed to attend classes with other students due to his visual impairment.

This is not an isolated incident. Such type of incident happens though there is no law restricting disabled children from attending classes with normal students.

There are many other people in our country who live with disabilities which can exclude their participation in society.

Education experts said segregated schooling for disabled learners violates their basic human right to education.

Speakers at a seminar in Dhaka on June 13 urged the government for introducing "inclusive education" to modernize the country's education system. They also apprehended that the country's education system would face problems without introducing the method.

Explaining the inclusive education, Prof. Maniruzzaman Mia, former Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, said it based on the right of all level learners to get a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives.

Inclusive education is based on the right of all learners to a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches lives. Focusing particularly on vulnerable and marginalized groups, it seeks to develop the full potential of every individual.

The ultimate goal of inclusive quality education is to end all forms of discrimination and foster social cohesion.

Inclusive education is a developmental approach seeking to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus

on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion.

Inclusive education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers, and support staff. Schools have a duty to educate children with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Inclusive education means inclusion of those children who have sight or hearing problem and those who cannot walk or learn in slow process.

It also means all other children who remained out of study process and deprived of receiving education. These children cannot adjust the education system, which has been formulated for normal children.

As they suffer from different diseases and malnutrition and cannot do well in their study, they are most likely to drop out of education. Some of them may be pregnant, some may be HIV/AIDS virus carrier or working children. At this time, they were likely to attend school, but they cannot do it because of responsibility of earning livelihood of their respective families.

Besides, there are some children who are admitted to school but they cannot equally participate in different class lessons. Because, there is no books in their mother tongue or first language and they are never asked to participate in learning process, those who never want to participate, those who cannot see blackboard or text books or fail to hear lecture of teachers and those who cannot learn well, but they are not given assistance for it.

These children generally sit on back benches in class room and, at one stage, they drop out of education. A teacher has to create such an atmosphere where all children can carry out their study, all learners want to learn and feel that they are part and parcel of this school or class room.

It is needed to change the teachers, school authorities and education system to ensure inclusive education. Because, it meet all requirements of different children at classroom or school and they can easily take part in all the activities of school.

In inclusion perspective, a

teacher has to find out these children and take up responsibility for ensuring assistance from school authorities, society, family, students, educational institutions, social leaders and others for admitting them into school for their education.

In inclusive education, all the obstacles which hamper the learning of children in and outside the school are identified and steps taken for its solution.

The topic, inclusive education, is being discussed for adoption in the developing countries. Under inclusive educational system, congenial educational atmosphere is created in the schools. Local schools are fitted with necessary policy, physical infrastructure, human resources and educational inputs for giving education to handicapped children.

This model is gaining acceptability to guardians, teachers and policy makers across the globe. The human rights of children and full flourishing of a child get priority in this system.

The government put more emphasis on creating educational opportunities for the children with special needs under the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP). A plan of action has also been formulated for inclusive education under PEDP-2 project.

Earlier, Primary Education Department felt the necessity of inclusive education and sent separate letters to various educational departments.

Inclusive education for children with special needs affords a sense of belonging to the diverse human family, provides a diverse stimulating environment in which to grow and learn, evolves in feelings of being a member of a diverse community, enables development of friendships, provides opportunities to develop neighborhood friends, enhances self-respect, provides affirmations of individuality and provides peer models provides opportunities to be educated with same-age peers.

The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (Salamanca, Spain, 1994) and was restated at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000). The idea of inclusion is further supported by the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of

Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities proclaiming participation and equality for all.

Inclusive education enhances educational opportunities for all students. To this end, schools create environments where: all students feel a strong sense of belonging, all students learn to interact respectfully with others, all students learn to understand and appreciate diversity, and all parents and carers in the community can take an active role in the life of the school.

Child Sight Foundation (CSF), a NGO working for elimination of visual impairment and rehabilitation of the visually impaired children, included inclusive education in their programme. It held cultural and sports programme comprising normal and impaired children in Sirajganj and Naogaon districts for promoting inclusive education.

In CSF's education service model, there are advocacy, pre-school education, education for visually impaired children, school development and education at local school.

Pre-school education: Its objectives are making a visually impaired child suitable for admission into a school, and initial development of children. A visually impaired child receives training for 8-18 months under pre-school education for admission into school.

Education at local school: Assisting teachers at class rooms and assisting visually children at home, making classmates of visually impaired children and manage necessary books, materials, dress and education expenditure.

School development: Introduction with inclusive education system, annual and biannual training of headmasters and teachers and change and increase of physical infrastructure.

Advocacy: motivating parents, society and school governing body and making them aware.

Education experts and development workers hoped that the rights of all children will be ensured with introduction of inclusive education method.