

Special Education in Teacher Training Programme

(Concept, Legal Provisions & Role of Special Education Teacher in Inclusive Setting)

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Abstract

Special education describes a process to educate the students with special need, keeping in mind the individual differences and their needs. Ideally, this process involves the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings, and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs to achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community that would be available if the student were only given access to a typical classroom education. Special education allows the teachers to cope up with such behavior of those children within the instructional environment. Students who are overly aggressive or exhibit violent behaviors that are socially inappropriate, benefit from special education in general classroom. In the present paper concept, legal provision and role of special education teacher in inclusive setting are discussed so that special education teacher can meet the need of such children in present education system.

Key words: special education, legal provision, role of special education teacher

Introduction

All children whether they are disabled or not have the social, human right and after the enactment of RTE as a legal provision, it also becomes the fundamental right of education in India. Some children with special needs may not benefit from regular/inclusive education due to various reasons including disability. In such a case, it is only appropriate that they are being provided education in some other meaningful way. Special education facilitates academic progress, cooperation, ability to learn from each other and problem solving skills to the children with disabilities. Special education programs also teach behavior that is appropriate and acceptable by the society. Some students with disabilities may exhibit behaviors that are objectionable, offensive or disruptive to social and classroom situations. Special education allows the teachers to cope up with such behaviors within the instructional environment, as teachers work to educate the student academically and behaviorally. Students who are overly aggressive or exhibit behaviors those are socially inappropriate benefit from special education programs.

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Meaning of special education: Special education is the education which meets the need of those children who are different from average children either mentally, physically or socially. The children may suffer from emotional disturbance, mental retardation, deafness, dumbness, blindness and any other ailments which hamper the intellect growth of the individual. The teaching strategies in special education school also differ from standard schools and are more individual oriented to adapt to the individual needs. Depending upon the condition of the individual, education policies and education laws, the students may or may not be admitted in a standard academic school. There are separate schools or separate classroom for student with special needs but some students with mild impairment are allowed in a regular school or classroom for a limited or full period of time. As the students require more care and attention, special education is also referred as ‘special need education’ or exceptional children education. Special education describes a process to educate the students with special need, keeping in mind their individual differences and needs. Ideally, this process involves the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings, and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs to achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community that would be available if the student were only given access to a typical classroom education.

Special education has also been defined and understood in numerous ways, depending on the jurisdiction, school system or school. It is important to define special education locally for the public education system. Special education is particular to students who have been diagnosed and/or identified and require specialised programming and services to meet their individual educational needs. It therefore refers to the provision of direct educational and related supports for children with emotional or behavioural, communicational, intellectual (including gifted), physical or multiple exceptionalities, who require specialised instruction and supports. Education may be met through accommodations, and/or educational programmes that are modified above or below the age-appropriate year level expectations for a particular subject or course of study.

Misconception about special needs of the student: Special education refers not only to the process of teaching students with learning disability, developmental disability or a behavioural problem, but it also extend to cover children who display

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exceptional abilities and talents in or more fields who are called gifted children.

Need of special education: In the Indian education system all children are included in the same classroom irrespective of their ability or disability. State is committed to provide better education services to all children. But all children could not be the same in respect of physical, mental, intellectual and other factors affecting learning. So the students with disabilities require different planning, extra support to develop socially desirable behaviour, additional awareness about various disabilities, needs of disabled, making interaction with peer groups, opportunity in developing self-confidence and guidance regarding their individual problems. A general teacher is not comfortable to solve these problems due to the various reasons such as knowledge of all type of disabilities, skill, class size, time constrain to instruct and assessment to the individual etc. So a role of special teacher is most important in this situation to provide full support to these children in school and society. A special education teacher should believe the words of Prof. Henryk Skolimowsky- Each of us are a sunlight source of energy, an enormous reservoir ready to be release. What unlocks this celestial battery is the will, though is the mediator but will is the doer.

Philosophy of special education: Every educational institute has a philosophy towards achieving their objective, so do the special education institutes. This philosophy forms the basis of course curriculum and requires the provisions of providing a source, caring and stimulating environment which stimulates emotions, intellectual, physical and social growth. Below are mentioned some of the essential philosophy that any special education institute should consider.

- Same opportunity for education, regardless of the state of disability.
- Protect confidentiality rights of special education students.
- Be respectful of their emotional needs and of their privacy.
- To encourage and foster parental involvement by communicating about the students' performance, achievement, illness and whenever a disability requires individualize education.
- Students vary in terms of abilities and achievement. They will have individual goals apart from academic one's and teachers need to understand that the individual goals are also important.
- Encourage social interaction between all students
- Development of teaching methods to such environment.
- The needs of special students are flexible in nature. It is important to understand and modify the education process accordingly.

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- Techniques and strategies may not show instantaneous results. Some will require modifications and refinement over a period of time to show result.
- It not only provides formal education to the students but also develop their intellectual abilities by improving their social, emotional and behavioral skills.
- To remain motivated and passionate towards the welfare of special students through education, strong mind, body and any tool which enhance the abilities.
- Be educated and informed to utilize all tools available to create the best possible learning environment for each child and be motivated and passionate so that the teaching is meaningful, flexible and in tune with the students educational needs.

Legislation in India: Although the demand for special education raised before independent i.e sergeant report in (1944), Kothari commission (1964-66) talks about the need of special education but regarding the need of special education an important turning point has been taken in the National Policy on Education (1986). This policy for the first time included a section on disabilities (Section 4.9). Briefly, the points made in this section include;

- Education of children with mild disabilities will be in regular schools.
- Children with severe disabilities will be in special schools with hostel facilities in district headquarters.
- Vocationalization of education will be initiated.
- Teachers training programmes will be reoriented to include education of disabled children;
- All voluntary efforts will be encouraged.

RCI ACT-1992 says that special need students have the right to be served by trained and qualified rehabilitation professional and guarantee of maintenance of minimum standard of education required for recognition of rehabilitation qualification by universities or institutions in India. Maintenance of central rehabilitation register and for matter connected therewith or incidental thereto which is right step in the right directions. It provides a regulatory mechanism for development of human resources in the field.

Persons with disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of rights and full participation), Act 1995 This Act provides both for preventive and promotional aspects of rehabilitation like employment, education, vocational training, research

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and manpower development and provide barrier free environment for disabled. This act also ensure through the appropriate government and local authority that every child with disability has access to free education up to the age of eighteen year.

It also encourages the residential education, functional literacy, and non-formal education, education through open school or university. Children with disabilities have the right to free books, scholarship, uniform and other learning materials.

National Trust Act (1999): This act is for strengthen the PWD Act, 1995 especially give provision for the person with Autism, MR, CP and multiple disabilities. This trust act is to enable and empower persons with disabilities to live as independently and as fully as possible within and as close to the community to which they belong.

National Policy for Person with Disabilities (2006): The national policy for persons with disabilities was release by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in February 2006. It has been realize that every child with disability has access to appropriate pre-school, primary and secondary level education by 2020. The major focus of the policy with regard to the education of persons with disabilities are-

- Physical rehabilitation strategies,
- Rehabilitation Measures
- Prevention of disabilities
- Counseling and Medical rehabilitation
- Early detection and intervention
- Economic rehabilitation of persons with disabilities
- Assistive device
- Employment in govt. establishment
- Wage employment in private sector
- Self employment
- Women disabilities
- Children with disabilities
- Barrier free environment
- social security
- Issue of disability certificate
- Sports, recreation and cultural life
- Amendments and Existing acts dealing with the PWDs.

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- Research
- Promotion of NGOs
- Psychological rehabilitation centers for mentally ill persons
- National Open School & Distance learning programme.

Special Education in Teacher Training: The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) accredits various Diploma, PG Diploma, Graduate (B.Ed), Post Graduate (M.Ed) Programmes and Certificate Courses in special education by different institutions. These programmes include - Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, Learning Disability, Rehabilitation, Clinical Psychology, Speech and Hearing, Locomotion and Cerebral palsy, Autism Spectrum and Disorder etc. The special education teachers are required to have different skills and knowledge depending on their students need, to provide individual based training.

Role of Special Education Teacher in Inclusive Setting: In the present education system students with or without disabilities learn together, live together. Children with disabilities require individual attention. So to fulfill the need of such children's, a special education teacher is require to deal the students with varying learning, mental, physical and emotional disabilities students having mild/ moderate behavioral problem can be tackled by the regular teacher in the classroom itself. . In other situations, the special education teacher may have their 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. The role of a special education teacher in such a arrangement varies according to the needs of individual students and how well the two teachers work together can be understand in the following points:

- I) Planning:** In an inclusion classroom, the special education teacher and regular education teacher engage in co-planning. They work together to design lesson plans to fit the needs of all students, with the special education teacher focusing on the needs of the special needs students. In some cases, however, the general education teacher plans the classroom lessons and the special education teacher adapts those lessons to meet the needs of her students. He/She may also use the lessons to develop review materials or plan one-on-one instruction with special needs students before or after the class.

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- II) Instruction:** The amount of actual instruction a special education teacher gives in an inclusion classroom varies. In some inclusion classrooms, the two teachers take turns presenting lessons. This may be done on a daily basis, with each teacher taking a portion of the lesson, or the special education teacher may teach the class one or two days a week. When not teaching the entire class, the special education teacher may sit beside students and provide one-on-one help or additional instruction. To help students feel more included as a part of the class, the special education teacher may not be in the inclusion classroom every day, unless a student's needs require it.
- III) Classroom Management:** Even though the focus of a special education teacher's job is meeting and satisfying the needs of the student. He/She is also responsible for helping the general education teacher manage the classroom. Other students must listen to and respect the authority of the special education teacher. In order to maintain the classroom discipline it is essential to plan activities and strategies to the psychological needs of the students. The planned strategies should not only satisfy the needs of the special students but also leads to progressive direction in terms of overall development. He also helps set the classroom rules and routines, working with the teacher to create a classroom climate that benefits students with special needs. It is also a special education teacher's job to be aware of individual students' behavior plans and provide discipline accordingly.
- IV) Other Responsibilities:** Special education teachers often have responsibilities that other teachers do not. These teachers must regularly review and develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and hold meetings to discuss these plans with parents, administrators, counselors and other individuals involved in the education of a child with special needs. They must regularly administer skills tests and other assessments to determine the progress of special needs students or to determine whether students who are not currently enrolled in a special education program need their services. It's the special education teacher's job to make sure that laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act are precisely followed and correct any possible violations.

Conclusion: Primary responsibility of special education teachers is to provide instruction by adapting and developing materials to match the learning styles, strengths, and special needs of each of their students. Contrary to traditional methods, the act of placing special education students in regular education classrooms is called inclusion. It is central to contemporary special education and is a program affecting education today. Special education teachers use various techniques to promote learning. Depending on the disability, teaching methods can include individualized instruction, problem-solving assignments, and small group work. When students need special accommodations in order to take a test, special education teachers see that appropriate ones are provided, such as having the questions read orally or lengthening the time allowed to take the test. Special education teachers help to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each special education student. The IEP sets personalized goals for each student and is tailored to the student's individual needs and ability. Teachers work closely with parents to inform them of their child's progress and suggest techniques to promote learning at home. They are involved in the students' behavioral, social, and academic development, helping the students develop emotionally, feel comfortable in social situations, and be aware of socially acceptable behavior. Special education teachers communicate and work together with parents, social workers, school psychologists, speech therapists, occupational and physical therapists, school administrators, and other teachers. Special Education teacher can be provided to students a one to one setting outside or within his/her formal educational environment.

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