



## Building inclusive learning friendly classrooms: need of the hour

Siddiqui Fakeha Salahuddin

Assistant Professor Marathwada College of Education, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

### Abstract

Inclusive education refers to an education system that accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. It includes children with diverse abilities and from diverse backgrounds have to be met by creating a child-centered pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children. Present research article focus on the right to education and its aim of including ALL children in mainstream education. It explains the concept of inclusive education. It also tried to explore how to build inclusive learning friendly classroom and deals with the aspects in creating inclusive classroom.

**Keywords:** ALL children, Inclusive education, learning friendly classroom

### 1. Introduction

One of the major features of classrooms in our country is learners' diversity. If all learners have to gain access to quality education, a dramatic shift from exclusivity to inclusivity is required. Over the years, the term 'inclusive education' has come to replace the term 'integrated education'. Inclusive systems have the potential to respond to the learning styles of each and every student, to teach values of respect for diversity, foster collaborative approaches and build social capital. This underscores the important role inclusive education has to play in the current scenario. Inclusive Education as a movement got impetus since the adoption of the 1994 Salamanca statement in the 'World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality', organized by UNESCO in Salamanca, Spain. The conference officially adopted, for the first time, inclusive education as the most effective means of securing education for all (UNESCO 1994). The Indian Constitution also guarantees provision of equal access to opportunities. The Government of India has created numerous policies since the country's independence in 1947.

The Right of children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 passed by the Indian Parliament in 2009 mandates free and compulsory education of all children of 6-14 years' age until they complete elementary education in a neighborhood school. There is also a reference of children with disabilities who are to be given elementary education in the age range of 6-18 year of age as defined in clause (i) of section 2 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection and Full Participation) Act, 1996 in accordance with the provisions of Chapter V of the said Act. The Act also has a provision for

every child, who is above six years of age and has not yet been admitted to any school or could not complete his/ her elementary education due to any reason, to be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age. The child admitted under age appropriate admission has a right to receive special training or additional instruction in order to be at par with other children of the class. To make inclusive education a success and build country social capital inclusive schools, teachers, parents and community have to work together. This is possible when we understand what exactly inclusive education means.

### 2. Concept of inclusive education

Inclusive education refers to an education system that accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. It includes children with diverse abilities and from diverse backgrounds have to be met by creating a child-centered pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children. An inclusive class may have amongst others, children with disability or gifted children, street or working children, children from remote or nomadic populations' children belonging to ethnic, linguistic or cultural minorities or children from other disadvantaged or marginalized groups.

'Inclusion means full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspect of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. It involves regular schools and classrooms genuinely adapting and changing to meet the need of all children as well as celebrating and valuing differences' (Loreman & Deppeler, 2001)

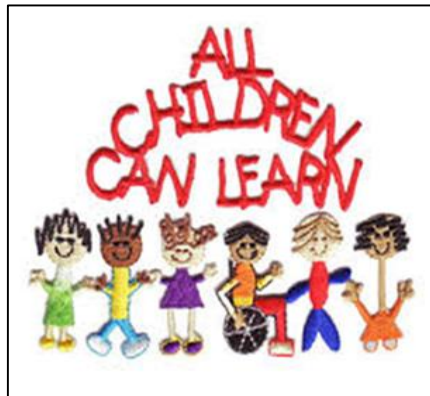
Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that

provides all students with community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. Inclusion is about making sure that each and every student feels welcome and that their unique needs and learning styles are attended to and valued. Inclusion has been defined as the acceptance of all pupils within the mainstream education system, taught within a common framework, and identified as the responsibility of all teachers (Thomas, 1997). Within an inclusive education approach, learning environments are fostered where individual needs are met and every student has an opportunity to succeed. Inclusive education is based on ethical, social, educational and economic principles. It is a means to realize the right to high quality education without discrimination and with respect and dignity.

Inclusive education is based on the principle that

- All children are equal and should be respected and valued.
- Every one belongs to the school.
- Everyone is welcomed to the school

Inclusive education is a fundamental way towards the advancement of Education for All (EFA) and life-long learning. It is an approach to the entire education system (from education policy to schools and classes) to energize and accelerate EFA efforts in order to help achieve a proper synthesis between equity and quality.



The aim is to improve each child’s participation and learning, rather than concentrating on the subject matter and examinations. There are no set paths or ready-made “quick fix” solutions to follow. The important thing is to have a positive attitude towards change and a firm commitment to creating an Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environment.



### 3. Building inclusive learning friendly classroom

In order to understand how to create inclusive learning friendly classrooms, especially where children with special needs are present, teachers must develop their knowledge and skills, and an understanding of key strategies critical to achieving success. Successful inclusion practices highlight the significance of not only the presence of children in the class but also the quality of their experiences and their achievement across the curriculum. Teachers play a pivotal role in mainstreaming inclusive education.

An inclusive, learning-friendly classroom (ILFC) welcomes, nurtures, and educates all children regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other characteristics. An ILFC is thus one in which the teacher understands the value of this diversity in the classroom and takes steps to ensure that all girls and boys come to school.

### 4. What is “Learning-Friendly”?

” A “child friendly” school is one in which children have the right to learn to their fullest potential within a safe and welcoming environment.

A “learning-friendly” environment is “child-friendly” and “teacher-friendly.” It stresses the importance of students and teachers learning together as a learning community. It places children at the Centre of learning and encourages their active participation in learning.

### 5. Steps in ILFC

#### 5.1 Planning for Teaching and Learning

**5.1.1 Classroom Routines:** Regular classroom activities help children to start work quickly and meaningfully. Children should be made aware of rules and routines.

**5.1.2 Children’s Responsibilities:** ALL children should participate irrespective of their sex, learning ability, or cultural background in helping with classroom duties and tasks, Committees can be formed- Health, discipline, supervision committees.

**5.1.3 Lesson Planning:** Lesson should be activity based. Choose an activity or discussion at the end of the lesson that reinforces the learning objectives.

#### 5.2 Maximizing Available Resources

It is important to utilize Available Resources properly and make learning environment exiting and interesting.

### 5.2.1 Physical Space

- Room to Move: The seating arrangement should be such so the children can find enough space for movement when working in small group.
- Light, Heat, and Ventilation: Arranging the desks so that the children get proper light heat and ventilation, special care should be taken for visually handicap children.

### 5.2.2 Learning Corners

Science and mathematics corners can stimulate children's curiosity and improve learning. Children can collect and organize all of the things that interest them, and these resources can be available for use by ALL children. There can be small groups, teams, or committees that can establish and maintain the learning corners.

### 5.2.3 Display Areas

The work of ALL children should be appropriately displayed to show their unique abilities and improve their self-esteem, "hanging learning corners" can also be used.

### 5.2.4 Class Library

A class library can be created just by using a cardboard. When children create their own books and they take pride in seeing their story "in print." They also learn about how books are made, classified, and cared for.

## 5.2 Managing Group Work and Cooperative Learning

### 5.3.1 Approaches to Group Work

- Direct teaching to the entire class. This approach works especially well for introducing topics.
- Direct teaching to a group of one grade (especially in multigrade settings). While you are teaching one group, the other groups do their own work.
- Individual teaching: This helps a child who has fallen behind because of absence, who has learning difficulties, or who is new to the class.
- Small group teaching is when you divide your whole class into small groups for learning.

### 5.3.2 Using Different Class Groupings

Grouping children in many different ways; for example, single grade groups, mixed grade groups, same sex groups, mixed sex groups, same ability groups, mixed ability groups, interest groups, social or friendship groups, pairs, threes, or fours. Children gain a great deal from being grouped in different ways and at different times. ALL children should be given the responsibility of leading groups.

### 5.3.3 Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning occurs when children share responsibility and resources, as well as when they work toward common goals. Cooperative group work can help all learners by increasing their understanding and promoting enjoyment and positive attitudes towards work and about themselves.

### 5.3.4 Interpersonal Skills for Learning

Children should be encouraged to think of themselves as a learning team or a learning community in which the success of

one child helps everyone to succeed. Effective communication involves listening, speaking, etc. Guidelines for participation, or "ground rules," can help you to organize discussion sessions with your children. These guidelines provide the basis for open, respectful dialogue and allow ALL children to participate.

### 5.3.5 Managing Peer Learning

Peer tutoring, also known as peer teaching and child-to-child learning, occurs when more able or older children finish their own work and then they help younger or other learners. The child "tutor" takes pride in teaching, while he or she also learns from the experience.

### 5.3.6 Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning is important because children need to learn independently of the teacher. This allows both the student and teacher to make the best use of the time available.

### 5.3.7 Planning for Differentiation

Differentiation is simply attending to the learning needs of a particular child or small group of children, rather than the more typical pattern of teaching the entire class as though all the children were alike.

### 5.3.8 Managing Behaviors in the Inclusive Classroom

Children may misbehave if they are not noticed or cared for. They may need attention, particularly if they are not receiving adequate care or attention at home. Creating an interesting curriculum with materials that are meaningful to children, then they will be interested and become involved, where children are actively engaged and motivated.

- Problem-Solving Approach
- Emphasis on Positive Discipline
- Focus on developing positive relationships
- Manage the learning environment enthusiastically and professionally.
- Finding Alternatives to Corporal Punishment:
- Giving learners the opportunity to succeed.
- Allow learners to take responsibility.
- Giving attention seekers what they want
- Using professional assistance. Colleague, professionals, such as psychologists or counselors.

### 5.3.8 Managing the Active and Inclusive Classroom

Managing active learning involves many different elements.

- Planning- Create a weekly plan scheduling classroom activities.
- Preparing. Prepare for each classroom activity, check to make sure that ALL children can participate in the learning activities.
- Gathering resources. Collect or create the resources that are needed
- Connecting learners to activities.
- Connecting learners to each other.
- Guiding and observing.
- Focus on participation.

## 5.4 Active and Authentic Assessment

Assessment is a way of observing, collecting information, and

then making decisions based on that information. These observations are made at many times during the year, for instance, at the beginning, middle, and end of terms, or even more frequently. Continuous assessment can be achieved through: observations; portfolios; checklists of skills, knowledge, and behaviors, tests and quizzes; and self-assessment and reflective journals.

#### 5.4.1 Authentic Assessment Approaches

Authentic assessment means involving the child in evaluating his or her own achievements.

#### 5.4.2 Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio is a record of the child's process of learning, that is, what the child has learned and how he or she has learned it. Portfolios enable children to participate in assessing their own work. The portfolio keeps track of a child's progress. It follows the child's success rather than his or her failure.

#### 5.4.3 Feedback and Assessment

Before giving feedback, it is important that a safe, secure, and trusting relationship exists between the teacher and the child. There is a shift from teachers telling pupils what they have done wrong, to pupils seeing for themselves what they need to do to improve, and then to discussing it with the teacher.

#### 5.4.4 Assessing Skills and Attitudes

The final outcome for students should be related to what they could do before and what they can do now. It should not be related to just a standardized test at the end of a year. Children in the same year group (class or grade) may have at least three years difference in general ability between them, and in mathematics there may be as much as seven years difference. This means that comparing children using one standardized test is unfair to many children. If a child is having difficulties, continuous assessment using authentic methods may reveal these difficulties, thus allowing us to give remedial help to the child.

### 6. Conclusion

Inclusion is a process of removing barriers to participation and learning for all children. All children and young people have the right to learn together, so that they can develop relationships, skills and knowledge for everyday life. Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes. Inclusive education is based on the simple idea that every child and family is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. It's about building friendships, membership and having opportunities just like everyone else. Inclusive education is a dynamic process because it addresses all aspects of child development – emotional, physical, intellectual, creative, social etc. It is about celebrating diversity and changing the rigid school system in order to meet the needs of all children.

### 7. References

1. Conceptual Policy and Legal Frameworks: Inclusive Education. (n.d). National council of Educational research and training. Retrieved from [www.ncert.nic.in/html/pdf](http://www.ncert.nic.in/html/pdf)

2. Creating an Inclusive School. (n.d). NBACL. Retrieved from [nbacl.nb.ca/wp-content/uploads/Creating\\_An\\_Inclusive\\_School\\_Tool\\_-\\_Web.pdf](http://nbacl.nb.ca/wp-content/uploads/Creating_An_Inclusive_School_Tool_-_Web.pdf)
3. Dash Neena. Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs, 2006. Retrieved from <https://books.google.co.in/books?isbn=8126906871>
4. Including Children with Special Needs: Primary Stage. (n.d). National council of educational and training. [www.ncert.nic.in/pdf\\_files/specialneeds.pdf](http://www.ncert.nic.in/pdf_files/specialneeds.pdf)
5. Inclusive Education: Learning Disabilities (n.d). Education: PBS Parents. Retrieved from [www.pbs.org/parents/education/learning-disabilities/inclusive-education/](http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/learning-disabilities/inclusive-education/)
6. International Conference on Education. 2008. UNESCO. Retrieved from [www.ibe.unesco.org/en/international-conference-education/48th-session-2008](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/international-conference-education/48th-session-2008)
7. Introduction to inclusive education. (n.d). National council of educational research and training. Retrieved from [www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/degsn/pdf\\_files/](http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/degsn/pdf_files/)
8. Koham A. Inclusive Education in India: A Country in Transition, 2012. Retrieved from [intldept.uoregon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/INTL-UG-Thesis-Kohama.pdf](http://intldept.uoregon.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/INTL-UG-Thesis-Kohama.pdf)
9. Managing Inclusive, Learning Friendly Classrooms, 2004. UNESCO. Retrieved from [www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Education/Embracing5](http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Education/Embracing5)
10. Our Beliefs. (n.d). Inclusive Education Action Group. Retrieved from [www.ieag.org.nz/inclusive/our-beliefs-inclusive-education-action-group](http://www.ieag.org.nz/inclusive/our-beliefs-inclusive-education-action-group)
11. Soni RBL. Status of Implementation of RTE Act-2009. National council of Education research and training, 2013. Retrieved from [www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dee/publication](http://www.ncert.nic.in/departments/nie/dee/publication)
12. Teachers Role in Inclusive Education. (n.d). Uniassignments. Retrieved from [www.uniassignment.com/essay.../education/teachers-role-in-inclusive-education-](http://www.uniassignment.com/essay.../education/teachers-role-in-inclusive-education-)
13. The Promise of Inclusive Education. (n.d). Nevada partnership for inclusive education. Retrieved from [nvpie.org/inclusive.html](http://nvpie.org/inclusive.html)



**Siddiqui Fakeha Salahuddin**

Assistant Professor  
M.Sc. (Botany) M.Ed., NET (Edn.),  
M.A. (Psy),  
Marathwada College of Education, Aurangabad