
UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Inclusion as a philosophy or practice cannot be discussed meaningfully unless it is situated in the context of diversity across the members of the group, especially in the framework of inclusive education. Diversity in literary terms means differences. The term diversity, when used in discourse related to people or communities or in social contexts is more specific, indicates that a group of people is made up of individuals who are different from each other in some way or the other or it means collective differences among people, that is, those differences which mark off one group of people from another. For example, differences in culture, language, gender, appearance (e.g. skin colour, hair type) lifestyle, social and economic status, family structure, abilities, (e.g. physical, social, creative, and intellectual), values and beliefs (Jingran, 2009).

On an analysis of diversity from the perspective of uniformity, the term diversity is an antonym of uniformity. Uniformity means similarity of some sort that characterizes a group of people. 'Uni' refers to one; 'form' refers to the common ways. So, when there is something common to all the people in focus, we say there is uniformity in that group of people. When students of a school, members of army, police or the navy wear the same type of dress, we say they are in 'uniform'. Like diversity, thus, uniformity is also a collective concept. When a group of people share a similar characteristic, be it language or religion or any such, it is understood to depict uniformity with reference to the characteristic in focus. But when there are groups of people hailing from different races, religions and cultures, they represent diversity, clearly denoting that diversity means variety.

The scope of diversity widens as social groups that are identified as marginalised use a variety of strategies to make their issues acknowledged and accepted by the society. At the same time, subsumed in the notion of diversity is the understanding that certain differences may bring specific disadvantage to the person in terms of his/

her social position and life chances where as others may not, to the same extent. Finally, diversity is not simply a descriptive term; it implies an ideological position that values and respects cultural pluralism and supports its preservation within a society; the concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect for members of a group; it is loaded with a political perspective positively inclined to equity and justice in society.

From the above thread of analysis we understand that diversity gets linked to inclusion. Here diversity subsumes the value and respect for pluralism in a social group establishing positive inclination to inclusivity while fostering a feeling of oneness and a sense of belongingness in each of the members of the pluralistic society. It is diversity that brings in the advocacy for equity and justice for each of the diverse persons in a group irrespective of their abilities, disabilities, social status, religion, class, caste and so on and so forth.

Another thread of analysis is that it is diversity and exclusion of some who are not like the majority in their group that has given rise to inclusion as a significant discourse in today's academia.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, the students will be able to:

1. Identify diversity in a social group as that which brings in the advocacy for equity and justice for each of the diverse persons in a group irrespective of their abilities, disabilities, social status, religion, class, caste and so on.
2. Identify disability as one of the important dimensions of diversity in a learner group
3. Discuss the phenomenon of social exclusion and inclusion
4. Draw a historical sketch of the societal response to people with disabilities: from extermination to inclusion
5. Discuss the various models of disability: Charity model to affirmation model
6. Understand the philosophy and practice of inclusive education of children with disabilities
7. Develop an overview of National and International policies and legislation for the education and general welfare of persons with disabilities

1.3 UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITIES: LINGUISTIC, SOCIO-CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, GENDER AND DISABILITY

Let us see some of the different dimensions of diversity seen in our social groups around.

Linguistic Diversity

Like many other countries in the world, India is pluri-lingual. The language canvas in India is like a mosaic with an overwhelming variety of patterns of speech woven together in an organic whole. It is usually difficult to attach language labels to the varied speech patterns across locales. There is seldom any consensus on the dilemma about delineating between languages and dialects with a reasoned-out argument for taking a stance. A countable proportion of the population is multilingual. There are

many languages that are used in social communication, which are often hybrids of other languages; there are constant shifts from one language to another language; there are several layered patterns of use of language among many communities, for example, use of the home or regional language by parents with their children, while their ancestral language is used with their elders.

Socio-Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity to a sociologist refers to the variety of human societies or cultures in the world; to the variety of the makeup or the varied cultures of a group or organization or region. It is also called multiculturalism. It includes the various social structures, belief systems, rituals, ways of living and strategies the cultures adhere to, for adapting to life situations in various parts of the world. The phrase “cultural diversity” is also sometimes used to mean the variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world. Over thousands of years, geographical, historical and religious influences have woven the colorful fabric of Indian culture, one of the oldest known to humanity. The complex demographic profile left in our society by the distinctly different looking Aryans, Asians and Dravidians has been the fore runner of our socio-cultural diversity in many ways., religion, in many forms, is the basis of our cultural context. This is enmeshed with every aspect of life and culture in India and is a prime factor that contributes to our diversity. In fact, every region within a state of India has its own identity owing to the rich cultural heritage quite different from the neighboring region and of course the other states of the country. The types of festivals, the ways of celebration of these, even if some are same across states and the religious rituals contribute to the unique identity of each of the regions. It is this richness and uniqueness of the cultural heritage of the different regions of each state that contribute to our cultural diversity.

Economic Diversity

The varied levels of social classes and the gap between these have been increasingly contributing to diversity in our society. From the time, the caste system got rooted in our society and education got monopolized by the upper caste people who knew Sanskrit, the seeds of class differences also got sown in our soil. Thus, the money power related to caste and class gave rise to economic differences and added yet another dimension to our diversity.

Gender Diversity

Gender is a social construct where as sex of a person is a biological status. Gender diversity refers to the difference in the societal outlook to people around vis a vis their sex. Right from ancient times, a female has been considered as the weaker of the two. A female, as a child, is to be protected by her Father, as a wife, by her husband and as an old mother, by her son. Her role is to bear children and look after everyone in the family. A male is looked upon as the bread winner, protector and savior of the family. From this social discriminatory position of males and females, the life experiences of a girl and boy have been very different simply because of their sex. This difference immensely contributes to diversity in our society to varying degrees across regions.

Ability, Disability and Diversity

Diversity in any social group has yet another dimension of disabilities and capabilities. Disability is a diversity classification that transcends all other indices like class, caste, race, religion and language. It represents the only minority group that anyone can become a member, anytime in life (Slorach, 2011). “The principle of diversity

provides the foundation to accept disability as part of human variation. However, it is a sad reality that in practice our treatment of difference has been rather poor, especially in the context of disability” (Ability Junction, 2011). Disability is a widely misused and misunderstood concept, as illustrated by the World Health Organization (WHO) definition: Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairment, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

These definitions reflect the progress made since persons with disabilities were referred to officially as spastics, imbeciles and cripples. However, they also obscure the vital distinction established by the disability movement between individual impairment and disability as social discrimination.

It is a universal understanding that members of any social group will have varying capabilities and abilities. We also know that all of us who have no disabilities at a point in time are temporarily able bodied. Anyone can end up with disability anytime, especially physical disabilities. Many of the persons with disability have been so from birth and others have acquired it through their years owing to numerous factors. Disability is an inescapable element of human experience. It is so, first, in the sense that, world-wide, an enormous number of people have disability/disabilities. The proportion of people who have disability/ies in different national populations varies significantly with respect to the country’s status of economic development, health care, general awareness and other factors. Furthermore, because of the way this group of people is constituted, it is arguably more heterogeneous than those of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. Disabilities may affect one’s senses or one’s mobility; they may be static or progressive, congenital or acquired, body form related (affecting the shape of the body) or functional, visible or invisible. These differences converge to the point that any population of disabled people is far from a monolithic; it stands out distinctly with differences that affect the identity of each of its members. For example, people with congenital impairments are more likely to identify themselves as disabled and reflect pride and self-respect in their social behaviour as compared to those with acquired impairment. Indeed, most people born deaf and well versed with sign language do not consider themselves disabled at all, rather they consider as akin to an ethnic minority, set off the mainstream by their language and culture. Those with acquired impairment are more likely to resist being identified as disabled and spend most part of their life time fighting for an identity of a ‘able person’ with medical and rehabilitative support. In any case, the border between the disabled and the abled is less permanent and more permeable than those between races and religions and classes. On the one hand, with the help of bio medicines and rehabilitation, individuals may pass from the status of being disabled to that of non-disabled; on the other hand, anyone can become disabled at any time and barring sudden or accidental deaths, most people will eventually become disabled to a significant degree as one grows old. In fact, we are all temporarily able bodied in a way. So, as a form of social diversity, disability is distinct in its variability, contingency and extent.

From all these facts, the most thought-provoking aspect is that each of these persons identified with disability/ disabilities may also have certain talents, skills or capabilities which are overlooked or overshadowed due to the strong disability identity. Disability is fundamental in that it may outrank other minority statuses. For example, for people with a disability and other attributes that make them distinct from the mainstream,

their disability becomes their master label, their primary identifying characteristic over-looking the others. So, it is justified that disability is a more fundamental form of diversity than differences in race, religion, ethnicity and other such factors.

Activity I

Make a checklist of the students in your class mentioning the diversity across them in terms of all the dimensions discussed above.

1.4 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

Social exclusion or social marginalization is a term used across disciplines including education, sociology, psychology, politics and economics. Because of social exclusion, the affected individuals or communities are prevented from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the society in which they live. Alienation or disenfranchisement resulting from social exclusion applies to people with a disability, people from minority groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people, drug users, HIV positive patients, sex workers, orphans and the elderly. Anyone who appears to deviate in any way from perceived norms of a population may thereby become subject to varying degrees or forms of social exclusion

In “Excluded & Invisible”, UNICEF Report, 2006, the definition of social exclusion is accepted as multi-dimensional including deprivations of economic, social, gender, cultural and political rights making exclusion as a broader concept than material poverty. All the same, poverty and social exclusion are inextricably linked and one of the major causes of poverty is unemployment.

Social exclusion, on another analysis is the process of relegation of individuals or social groups to the fringe of society; they are systematically blocked from (or denied full access to) various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of mainstream groups, and which are fundamental to social integration within these groups (e.g., housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation).

People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups who are at the risk of social exclusion. On an analysis of the general condition of the disabled population that consists almost 10% of the world’s population, one realizes that this population is excluded from essential services for living such as food, clothing, basic education, health care, employment opportunities and such other essentials which ultimately affect their participation in the activities of the people around eventually leading to their exclusion from the society. One also observes that this population is looked upon as invalid; they are at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation and miss out the chance for protection of their rights. Such population gradually becomes invisible as if denied of their very existence.

The societal systems fail to provide facilities for early detection, identification and intervention to infants and young children with disabilities and provide support to their parents and caretakers; this results in secondary disabling conditions which further limit their capacity to benefit from educational opportunities. Denial of education to children and youth with disabilities results in their alienation from access to vocational training, employment and income generation. This in turn affects their economic and social independence leading them to poverty perpetuated generation after generation (Barnes, 2012).

Social Inclusion

At the core of most definitions of social inclusion lies the concept of full participation in all aspects of life, while exclusion refers to the conditions that hamper inclusion. Participation is most significant as it denotes an active involvement in the process, not merely having access to society's activities, but engaging in them, and building and maintaining a social network. Participation also creates a sense of responsibility towards others, a community or an institution, and influences decisions or enables individuals to have access to the decision-making processes.

Social inclusion refers to a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, be it money, class, ethnicity, gender, race or whatever the index of diversity be, to enable full and active participation in all aspects of life, including civic, social, economic, and political activities, as well as participation in decision-making processes. Social inclusion can be approached as a goal, an objective, and a process. Its process affects almost all societal activities, and should therefore be approached from various dimensions.

If a society is inclusive it means that it understands, accepts and respects diversity, it not only recognizes diversity but also embodies it so that each member of the diverse society can achieve their full potential in life. Such societal conditions instill in each member, a sense of belonging to the community and society at large. Exclusion conversely is a process and a state resulting in lack of access to full participation in the mainstream of society.

Activity II

Discuss with your friends in the institution you study, the reasons of social exclusion as experienced by them.

Disability and Exclusion

People with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups in the world. Rates of disability are increasing, due to population ageing and the global increase in chronic health conditions.

People with disabilities have poorer health outcomes, lower education achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities

Excerpts from WHO Report, September 2013

In rich countries, the expanse of the free market, the proliferation of services like, human, welfare, social and educational and professionals and the increasing need to be 'intellectually fit' for work, makes disabled people economically vulnerable and socially excluded.

Let us now see the stages of development of societal response to persons with disabilities, i.e., how they are moving from social exclusion to inclusion.

1.5 FROM EXCLUSION TO INCLUSION: A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

History sketches a clear progress of attitude and policy-change from exclusion to inclusion of people with disabilities, through three phases: the era of exclusion, extermination, neglect and denial; the era of segregation; the special school; and the era of integration moving to inclusion.

Stages of Exclusion

Much worse than exclusion, annihilation was the fate of people with disabilities world over.

Perspective on Exclusion of People with Disabilities from a Eugenicist Lens

Eugenics is the study of or belief in the possibility of improving the qualities of the human species or a human population, especially by discouraging reproduction by persons having genetic defects or presumed to have inheritable undesirable traits (negative eugenics) or encouraging reproduction by persons presumed to have inheritable desirable traits (positive eugenics). (Based on Random House Dictionary, 2009)

Till as late as late 19th century, Eugenicists believed that, just as weaker or “inferior” members of a species were not meant to survive in nature, they were not meant to survive in a competitive human society; they propagated the myth that there was an inevitable genetic link between physical and mental impairment and crime and unemployment. In the notorious decision of 1927, the US Supreme Court upheld the legality of the forced sterilization of disabled people. Compulsory sterilization for people with disabilities became German law in 1933. More than 400,000 people with disabilities were forcibly sterilized (Slorach, 2011).

Extermination

The intellectually impaired people were referred to by the adjectives, ‘feeble-minded’, ‘invalid’, ‘imbecile’ till as late 18th century. The process of extermination of the disabled from the mainstream of the general population through killing, mutilating, burning, exiling, abandoning or making them vanish from the scene somehow or the other, were practices in vogue throughout the globe in almost all the ancient civilizations of the world.

Era of Acceptance as Subjects of Amusement

What followed was the era of acceptance of disabled people as subjects of amusement. Disabled children who survived the violence due to reasons like undetected conditions, post natal deformities or due to humanistic concerns of a few, began to be accepted as, not human beings, but as subjects of amusement and entertainment and means of serving one or the other ulterior motives of the people in authority.

Era of Legal Discrimination and Prohibition

The rise of Church as a religious institution in the medieval period led to a new period in the history of disabled people. Disability was given a label of legal uncleanness thus disqualifying disabled people from active participation in social activities.

Era of Sympathy and Asylum- Institutionalization

The second phase of Christian era saw the beginning of attempts to stop the abuse of disabled people. Children with disabilities were regarded as those poor souls who are denied opportunities to lead a normal life because of the annoyance of the Almighty for committing sins; they were thus subjects of sympathy rather than of suspicion or amusement. Influenced by the wave of sympathy and charity, efforts to protect disabled people and establishment of institutions for their welfare and rehabilitation were seen in Europe. Along with these developments, a wide number of institutions, including the mental hospitals called as, lunatic hospitals, and centres

for providing asylums to people with other categories of disabilities were seen mushrooming throughout the globe.

Era of Isolation and Special Schools

The renaissance movement that set off in the 16th century and spread throughout the West in the 17th century was a turning point in the world of disabled people. Contrary to the inhuman approach adopted in the past, there was a faith established in the capacities and capabilities of disabled people. The spirit of renaissance sparked off efforts in the direction of special education for the disabled population. (Mangal, 2012)

As a major contribution of renaissance and enlightenment movement disabled persons started getting recognized with potential to learn and achieve. Consequently, major efforts were evident to establish special schools for children with disabilities segregated from the mainstream settings. It is pertinent to mention here that only deaf, blind and mentally impaired caught the attention of the society till much later after this period.

Era of Segregated Settings- Special classes in regular schools

With the dawn of 20th century, education arena for disabled children witnessed a turning point: moving from the isolated setting of special schools to the segregated settings of special classes within the regular schools. It was the result of a new wave of humanism, coupled with the burning cries for equity of educational opportunities for all children irrespective of their disabilities in the state-run schools. By the second half of 20th century the momentum for integration although the philosophy and modalities of which were not clearly spelt out, grew in all strength and vigor in the developed countries, with very little critical analysis of it.

The early phase of this historical milestone saw the establishment of special classes in mainstream schools perceived as 'integration', while recommending that special schools become resource centres for other schools in their neighborhood areas. Slowly the percentage of children in special schools diminished and by the mid-century a considerable shrinking of state support to special schools led to the closure of many special schools. This was the scenario in the western countries especially the US. Some critics felt that the change of policy in favour of integration was catalysed more by financial than by educational considerations, while others saw it simply as a fashion, with many unquestioned assumptions. In fact, this policy change gave rise to anxiety among teachers in the remaining special schools regarding their role, their existence, and the future of their league which had been central to government policy a decade before.

Era of Integration

The era of inclusion, i.e., educating all students with or without disability in the regular schools represents the modern era and the latest global philosophy in the history of education of children with disabilities. It was after the mid-20th century that this new wave of change that spread across the developed countries, brought in the landmark change in the policy of education of children with disabilities. Upholding the right of each child and providing equity and equality of educational opportunities to all children was the philosophy that led to this new wave of change. (Mangal, 2012)

This phase started off with integration, making a limited number of additional arrangements for individual children with disabilities in schools which changed very little overall. It was almost like letting these special needs children be there rather than being convinced about the philosophy of inclusion and adapting to their needs.

This stage slowly evolved into that of inclusion wherein school systems started attempting to bring in radical changes to embrace all children.

Integration and Inclusion

Integration involves preparing pupils for placement in regular schools. It implies readiness from the part of the society or school for a change from special to regular schools. Students are expected to adapt to the school ethos and the other facilities with no assumption that the school will change to accommodate a greater diversity of students than before the scenario of integration. Integration is all about making the regular schools, suitable for children with disabilities by transplanting the best special school practices, teachers or equipment into regular settings even without analyzing the needs of the children with special needs including disabilities to ensure if these are necessary or not.

Inclusion implies a radical reform of the school in terms of conviction and philosophy followed with curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, grouping of pupils and the school environment and ethos. It is based on a value system that welcomes, respects and celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language of origin, social background, religion, class and caste, level of educational achievement, disability etc.

Inclusion cannot be truncated from exclusion. Inclusion can be defined in terms of two linked processes. 'It is the process of increasing participation of learners in and reducing their exclusion from the curricula, cultures and communities of neighborhood mainstream centres of learning' (Booth, 1999).

The History of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in The Indian Context

Ancient

In the Vedic era, we have the example of Ashtavakra, a chronic and severe case of orthopedic impairment, of becoming a scholar by the educational facilities available to all irrespective of their abilities or disabilities. The great Rishis as Gurus were known to be firm believers in the theory of Karma and hence believed persons with disabilities be given ample opportunities to learn the art of self-actualization and doing good in life so that they would get better life in the next birth.

Consequently, the treatment, care and education of the disabled children also passed through the phases of exclusion, extermination, ridicule and amusement sympathy and asylum. In the later periods of ancient history, practice of treating persons with disabilities as mark of evil spirit, bad karmas of the previous birth and bad omen for the family was quite prevalent. Witchcraft was also quite common in rural parts. This was followed with establishing hospitals and asylums for the disabled and destitute.

Pre-Independence

The tradition of state funding and the charitable flow for the care and protection of the persons with disabilities continued through the medieval India. The Mughals and the Maratha rulers were also known for their charitable activities to the persons with disabilities and poor. Sympathy, protection and caring attitude for the disabled people were predominant. Special school for the deaf in 1883, for the blind in 1887, for children with mental retardation (currently called intellectual disability) in 1941 were all landmark developments. The pattern of special school education as seen today owes its origin to the work done by the Christian missionaries and charitable organizations of the country.

Post-Independence

India attempted to focus on the education of disabled children in the post-independence era. Special provision was laid down in Article 45 of the constitution, stating, free and compulsory universal primary education for all children up to 14 years of age, budgetary provision for PwD was allocated in the various Five-Year Plan and as a landmark in this direction, education of children with disability in integrated settings was emphasized in the Kothari Commission (1964-66). Integrated Education of the Disabled Children (IEDC) scheme was launched in 1974 which got merged in 1997 with the District Primary Education Project of 1985 that emphasized that universalization of elementary education was possible only if disabled children were covered under the umbrella of educational initiatives. Special schools for disabled children and integrated settings for them were working side by side. By 1980s the number of schools for children who were deaf, blind and mentally retarded crossed 150.

Integration of Children with Disabilities (CwD) in regular schools gathered momentum after the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 followed with the Programme of Action 1992.

The turning point in the history of education for CwD was when inclusive education was added as a key component in District Primary Education Programme in 1997. Since then there have been efforts in the direction of inclusive education, with national legislation, establishment of Trusts and other statutory bodies and by India being signatory to important World initiatives for education of CwD in inclusive settings.

After the RTE implementation, the role of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) has been significant in the field of inclusive education of CwD.

Check Your Progress I

1. How is disability as a dimension of diversity different from the others?
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2. Analyze the social phenomenon of exclusion and inclusion.
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3. Discuss the process of social exclusion with respect to persons with disability.
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1.6 MODELS OF DISABILITY

Corresponding to the evolution of the philosophy of inclusion can be drawn the evolution of models of disability. A radical rethinking on policy and practice can be seen to have resulted in the contemporary philosophy of inclusion and that it reflects a fundamentally different way of thinking about the roots of difficulties encountered by a person with disability: a shift from a defect within- the-child model based on the assumption that the origins of learning difficulties is largely within the child, to a thinking that it is the societal system that are discriminatory and disabling, demanding attention to the alleviation of obstacles to the participation of disabled people in all the events and developments of the society. Let us examine these models of disability.

Charity Model

Driven largely by emotive appeals of charity, this model sees Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) as helpless people needing ‘care’ and ‘protection’. This model relies largely on the goodwill of benevolent humanitarians for ‘custodial care’ of the PwDs rather than justice and equality.

Medical Model

The medical model of disability views disability as a ‘problem’ that belongs to the disabled individual and is based on the view that disability is caused by disease or trauma and its resolution or solution is intervention provided and controlled by professionals.

Rehabilitation Model

The traditional rehabilitation model is based on the medical model and the belief that disability is a challenge which can be overcome with adequate effort on the part of the person. PwDs are often perceived as having failed if they do not overcome the disability. Like the medical model, the rehabilitation model perceives care and support as determined by professionals.

The Social Model

The social model of disability views disability as socially constructed and a consequence of society’s lack of awareness and concern about persons who require specific modifications in their environment to live full, productive lives. The model, referred to by some as the barriers model, views the medical diagnosis, illness or injury as having no part in disability. The social model of disability, in the example presented above, in the context of the student using wheel chair in a building with no ramps, would see the steps or the environmental factors as the barrier disabling the student.

“In the broadest sense, the social model of disability is about nothing more complicated than a clear focus on the economic, environmental and cultural barriers encountered by people who are viewed by others as having some form of impairment – whether physical, sensory or intellectual.” (Oliver, 2004)

Nothing about us without us! By seeing impairment as an ordinary part of life, and disability as the result of discrimination and exclusion, the social model has underpinned efforts to extract disability from the medicalised, ‘special needs’ ghetto and push for the mainstreaming of disability concerns in all development policies and practices. The social model has also provided a powerful framework for bringing disabled people together in a common struggle for equality and rights. By doing this the social model has promoted the idea that disabled people should be actors in

their own lives, rather than passive recipients of care. This equates almost exactly to current thinking on a rights-based approach to development, adopted by government development agencies throughout the world (Albert, 2004).

Activity III

Discuss the below given classroom/school scenarios and analyze each of these to see which perspective of disability does each reflect:

A wheelchair using student is unable to get into a building with stairs because of the absence of ramp. Seeing this, a non-teaching staff member says “naturally, this student will not be able to enter because she is on wheel chair, what is the big deal about it anyway

A course leader meets with a visually impaired member of the group before the beginning of a course to find out how hand-outs can be adapted so that the student can read them

A teacher makes hand out of the day’s discussion available to all members of the group before a lecture. This allows dyslexic students to look up unfamiliar terminology before the lecture, and gives them an idea of the structure that will be followed. This ‘framing’ helps students to understand the transactions better;

A teacher carries on with her classroom discussion in a class with a partially sighted child. She distributes hand outs but does not provide hand outs in larger font for the partially sighted student justifying that the student should cope with the givens. The student is thus deprived of participation in the class discussion.

Human Rights Model

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The rights based model of disability can be clearly understood from the UNCRPD (2006)

The UNCRPD is an international human rights treaty of the United Nations intended to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. The rights model is primarily a fight for access to the privileges people would otherwise have had if they were not disabled. A focus on rights is not a struggle for fundamental social change; rather, it strives to make changes within the existing system.

A human rights approach to disability acknowledges the rights of people with disabilities and views social structures and policies restricting or ignoring the rights of people with disabilities as often leading to these disabled peoples’ discrimination and exclusion. A human rights perspective requires society, particularly governments, to actively promote the necessary conditions for all individuals to fully realize their rights.

Bio-psychosocial Model

The bio-psychosocial model of disability situates disability as rooted in an amalgamation of factors at the physical, emotional and environmental levels.

This approach or model goes beyond the individual and emphasizes issues that interact to affect the ability of the individual to maintain as high a level of health and wellbeing as possible and to function within the society. This approach is consistent with the WHO’s revised definitions of disability. (Smeltzer, 2007)

Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual while trying to involve in life situations. Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by people with disabilities requires interventions to remove environmental and social barriers.

The bio-psychosocial model thus recognizes that disabilities are often due to illness or injury and does not dismiss the importance of the impact of biological, emotional and environmental issues on health, well-being and function in society.

Disability as a Multiple Identity

Disability is the quintessential post-modern concept, because it is so complex, so variable, so contingent, so situated. It sits at the intersection of biology and society and of agency and structure. Disability cannot be reduced to a singular identity: it is a multiplicity, a plurality. An adequate social theory of disability would include all the dimensions of disabled people's experiences: bodily, psychological, cultural, social, political, rather than claiming that disability is either medical or social" (Shakespeare & Erickson, 2000).

Affirmation Model of Disability

A new model of disability is emerging within the literature by disabled people and within disability culture, especially emerging in the Disability Arts Movement called the affirmative model. It is essentially a non-tragic model of disability to include positive social identities, both individual and collective, for disabled people. The affirmation model balances the limitations of the social model through the realization of positive identity encompassing impairment, as well as disability.

1.7 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

Classroom is a cross section of society where the diversity existing among people in the community is reflected. The increasing number of learners from diverse backgrounds admitted to elementary classrooms has reinforced the importance of making schools more inclusive. With a relatively much higher variation in the talents, and social, cultural, economic and political backgrounds of the learners, a teacher is expected to transfer the understanding and position about diversity into the classroom processes, identify and recognize the threads of diversity among learners in order to address the corresponding issues and challenges with respect to curriculum design, teaching-learning practices and processes and learning materials, so that subsequently the different learning needs of children are met. Precisely, the elementary classroom in India is confronted with an immense challenge of weaving in diversity constructively into classroom processes to democratize these processes and practices, all geared to the larger goal of social justice.

Inclusion is an unrelenting process of augmenting learning and participation for all students irrespective of their differences. It is an ideal to which schools can aspire but which is seldom fully reached. But as soon as the process of increasing participation of all diverse learners starts the school is in the path of moving towards inclusion. Participation means actively engaging in learning with others while sharing learning experiences and engaging in collaborative learning. Inclusion starts when exclusionary

pressures are removed, the differences between students is respected and each one in the class group feels recognized, accepted and valued for what he or she is.

In the context of diversity, the importance of the agenda of “inclusive education” is further reinforced by the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Inclusion as Philosophy

Inclusion is a philosophy, a mindset, a conviction that every person has the right to enjoy equal opportunities and live with equal dignity, irrespective of how different they are from the others in any group they belong to. The philosophy of inclusion goes beyond physical inclusion and incorporates a system of basic values and beliefs that promotes the participation and sense of belonging of every member in any group. Hence, you can make inclusive education a reality in your class only when you have the conviction and belief in inclusive educational practice.

Inclusive Practices

Inclusive education makes it possible for all students to study in their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes. In this situation, they are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. All students mean every child irrespective of abilities, disabilities, socio-economic background and gender, religious and regional belongingness. Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms and activities so that all students learn and participate together.

Let us see what inclusion in education is more closely:

- It is a process to bring all students together in one classroom and school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, and it seeks to maximize the potential of all students
- It is a process where diversity in a group with respect to any aspect is appreciated and in which everyone is recognized and respected for his/her worth
- It is an effort to make sure that diverse learners – those with disabilities, different languages and cultures, different homes and family lives, different interests and ways of learning – are taught using teaching learning strategies adapted to individual learning needs
- It is a process that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship
- It is a means of enhancing the well-being of every member of the community.

Activity IV

Reflect on the following classroom processes and values and beliefs of teachers and examine if they are conducive to an inclusive classroom ethos or not:

Some children are valued more than others in a group

Some students’ participation in the curricula and other activities of school is curbed due to barriers in the classroom

Maintaining school policies and practices which are non-responsive to the diversity of learners thus fostering inequalities

A perspective that inclusion mostly concerns disabled learners and that school changes made for disabled children will only benefit them

Differences between students are problems to be overcome

Segregated schooling for disabled learners violates their basic human right to education without discrimination.

Academic achievement seen as the main aim of schooling, thus being prejudiced against the disabled children and being unable to see the abilities and capabilities in them. Inclusion in education seen as a separate phenomenon not in zinc with inclusion in society

Reflect on the following views about inclusive education

1. *Inclusion jeopardizes the education of those without impairments*
2. *Full inclusion (placing all students with disabilities in general education regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities) is mandated by law.*
3. *Segregating students with disabilities has been effective.*
4. *“I’m sorry, but they have nothing to do with me.” (The “THEM” and “US” mindset.)*
5. *“Inclusion is another educational fad. The pendulum will swing back to segregated education.”*
6. *Special education is being phased out because of inclusion. So this area of study does not have good prospects.*

(adapted from Villegas, 2015)

See the following facts and perspectives corresponding to each of the above views:

1. *When it is done correctly, supported inclusive education enriches the quality of education. Research has consistently documented the benefits for all students. Denying diversity diminishes the lives of students with and without disabilities.*
2. *Far from mandating full inclusion, law mandates placement in the least restrictive (least segregated) environment that is most appropriate for all students on a case-by-case basis.*
3. *The outcomes of systematic, segregated special education such as denial of civil rights, learned helplessness, social distancing, and diminished quality of life are all unacceptable. Adults with disabilities are the least employed, poorest, least educated, most excluded of all.*
4. *This is about all of us. We all become disabled due to aging, unless we die early. Any one of us may become severely disabled due to injury or illness. This is the one minority group we all get to join. What we do to improve quality of life for people with disabilities, we do for ourselves.*

- 5. *A return to completely segregated special education would take the repeal of our constitutional amendments and policies, the repeal of years of legislation, and overturning nearly many years of litigation.*
- 6. *The number of segregated settings for students with special needs has decreased, not special education. There is a worldwide, nationwide shortage of special educators. Because of inclusion, we need more special educators than ever.*

Inclusive education, therefore, means much beyond just enrolment of CwDs to a feeling among all learners of an equal sense of belonging to the school, irrespective of their backgrounds. Inclusive classrooms and schools in this sense would mean a place where diversity among learners is appreciated and considered a learning resource rather than a problem; where children from diverse backgrounds are valued for what they are, and are made to feel safe enough to express whatever they know, without fear or discrimination; and where the curriculum, teaching-learning methods and materials are culturally responsive to meet the different learning needs and interests of children from diverse backgrounds.

Check Your Progress II

- 4. Explain how bio-psychosocial model encompasses the medical and social model.
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- 5. What are the indicators of inclusive education?
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1.8 CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND ACTS

International scenario

International organisations, United Nations being the prominent of them, have focused their efforts on the needs of persons with disabilities and their better education and living.

The Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons was a declaration of the General Assembly of the United Nations, made on 9 December 1975. **World Conference on Special Needs Education, Salamanca, 1994** and **The UN Council on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), 2006** have been landmarks in the global efforts in the path of inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Indian Scenario

Looking back into our country's history, the Sargent Report, 1944 written prior to independence and the Kothari Commission (1964- 1966) signal the government's approach of integration of children with disabilities with other children. This was reiterated in the National Policy of Education (1986). The RCI Act (1992) and National Trust Act (1999) were the subsequent major legislations in this field. The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 (PWD Act) has been a landmark in the path of legislations in welfare of people with disabilities. This act has been replaced by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

Constitutional Provisions

It is stated in the preamble of the Constitution of India that people of India solemnly resolved to constitute India as a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic, Republic which secures to *all* its citizens right to Justice; Liberty; Equality; and Fraternity. The Constitution guarantees Fundamental Rights to all its citizens. There are specific provisions in the Constitution of India that ensure social justice and empowerment to all citizens including "persons with disabilities" and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

Legislations, Policies and Programmes

Over the years, the government of India (GoI) has launched various programmes and schemes dedicated to fulfilling the education and inclusion of children with disabilities. India became signatory to the Salamanca Statement, 1994 and with it came the incorporation of the term 'inclusive education' in various official documents and reports of GOI.

There have been several attempts by the Government in the form of Acts, Rules and Regulations, Policies and Guidelines for the welfare of persons with disabilities.

The legislative framework for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities is covered by the following Acts:

The Mental Health Act (1987) consolidates and amends the law relating to the treatment and care of mentally ill persons to make better provision for them.

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Act (1992) deals with the development of manpower for providing rehabilitation services. The Act was amended by the Parliament in 2000 to make it broad based. The RCI standardizes syllabi and maintains a Central Rehabilitation Register of all qualified professionals and personnel working in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education. The Council also regulates and monitors the training of rehabilitation professionals and personnel, promoting research in rehabilitation and special education.

Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act (PWD Act- 1995) is one of the key acts, which provides for education, employment, creation of barrier free environment, social security etc of persons with disabilities. As per the Act every child with a disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment until he or she attains the age of eighteen years. This Act has been replaced by Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act), 2016.

National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, (National Trust Act-1999) The Act has provisions for legal guardianship of persons under each of the four categories of

disability and for creation of enabling environment for as much independent living as possible. The main objectives are to enable and empower persons with disabilities to live as independently and as fully as possible, to extend support to registered organizations providing need based services, and to evolve procedure for appointment of legal guardians for persons with disabilities requiring such protection’.

The Right to Education Act (RTE Act), 2009

The RTE Act provides for the right of children to free and compulsory education to the children of 6-14 years age group including children with special needs.

The RTE Act was subsequently amended in 2012 which came into effect from 1 August 2012 and contains provisions relating to children with disabilities such as:

- (i) Inclusion of children with disabilities in the definition of “child belonging to disadvantaged group” under Clause (d) Section 2 of the RTE Act.
- (ii) Children with disabilities (including children with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, autism and multiple disabilities) shall have the right to pursue free and compulsory education.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD Act), 2016

As mentioned earlier, this Act Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) 2016 has replaced the existing PwD Act, 1995. In this Act disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept. The types of disabilities have been increased to 21 and the Central Govt has power to add more types of disabilities. The new Act is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is not only a signatory but one of the early countries to ratify.

The 21 disabilities are given below: -

1. Blindness
2. Low-vision
3. Leprosy Cured Persons
4. Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing)
5. Locomotor Disability
6. Dwarfism
7. Intellectual Disability
8. Mental Illness
9. Autism Spectrum Disorder
10. Cerebral Palsy
11. Muscular Dystrophy
12. Chronic Neurological Conditions
13. Specific Learning Disability
14. Multiple Sclerosis
15. Speech and Language Disability
16. Thalassemia
17. Hemophilia

18. Sickle Cell Disease
19. Multiple Disabilities including Deaf-Blindness
20. Acid Attack Victims
21. Parkinson's Disease

National Programmes

Some of the important national level programmes in the field of education of CwD are presented below:

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The SSA attempts to implement inclusive education of children with disabilities and provides multiple options for these children. It ensures that every child in the age group of 6-14 years with any kind of impairment, irrespective of the kind, category and degree of impairment, is provided meaningful and quality education. It extends the range of options from special and mainstream/ 'regular' schools to Education Guarantee Scheme/Alternative and Innovative Education (EGS/AIE) and Home-Based Education (HBE). Each district is given the necessary flexibility to plan activities depending on the resources available for the effective implementation of inclusive education programme.

Under the scheme of Home Based Education (HBE) within SSA, children with severe disability can be educated within home-based and alternate educational settings to enable them to achieve independent living skills.

Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS)

IEDSS is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of GOI the aim of which is to enable all students with disabilities, to pursue four years of secondary schooling i.e. classes IX to XII after completing eight years of elementary schooling (Class I –VIII) in an inclusive and enabling environment. The Scheme of Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) was launched in 2009-10 replacing the earlier scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). The IEDSS Scheme will cover all children passing out of elementary schools and studying at secondary stage in Government, local body and Government-aided schools in the age group 14+ to 18+ (classes IX to XII).

Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)

The RMSA scheme was launched in March 2009 with the objective to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality. The scheme aims to enhance the enrollment of students at secondary stage by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of habitation, targeted to ensure general enrolment rate of 100% by 2017 and universal retention by 2020.

What is evident from the constitutional provisions, acts and policies and national programmes is that there is a focus on the education of children with disabilities in all these with an obvious movement towards inclusive education. The ball has started rolling although it is a long way ahead for us.

1.9 LET US SUM UP

Inclusion as a philosophy or practice cannot be discussed meaningfully unless it is situated in the context of diversity across the members of the group, especially in the framework of inclusive education. It is diversity that brings in the advocacy for equity

and justice for each of the diverse persons in a group irrespective of their abilities, disabilities, social status, religion, class, caste and so on and so forth. It is diversity and exclusion of some who are not like the majority in their group that has given rise to inclusion as a significant discourse in today's academia. Because of the process of social exclusion, the affected individuals or communities are prevented from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the society in which they live. Alienation or disenfranchisement resulting from social exclusion applies to people with a disability, people from minority groups, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people, drug users, HIV positive patients, sex workers, orphans, the elderly etc. People with disabilities are among the most vulnerable groups who are at risk of social exclusion.

History sketches a clear progress of general attitude of society and policy regarding people with disabilities - shift from exclusion to inclusion, through three phases: the era of exclusion, extermination, neglect and denial; the era of segregation; the special school; and the era of integration moving to inclusion.

Analysis of models of disability that can be seen to correspond to the societal response to persons with disability brings to light charity model, driven largely by emotive appeals of charity, the medical model that views disability as a 'problem' that belongs to the disabled individual, the traditional rehabilitation model that believes that disability is a challenge which can be overcome with adequate effort on the part of the person, the social model that views disability as socially constructed, human rights approach that acknowledges the rights of people with disabilities and the bio-psychosocial model that situates disability as rooted in an amalgamation of factors at the physical, emotional and environmental levels. A new model of disability called the affirmative model that is essentially a non-tragic encompassing the positive social identities is the latest in this thread of development.

Inclusive education is a process to bring all students together in one classroom and school, regardless of their strengths or limitations in any area, and it seeks to maximize the potential of all students, where everyone is recognized and respected for his/her worth.

Internationally, main declarations and policies have been landmarks in the path of inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities. There have been several attempts by the Indian Government in the form of Acts, Rules & Regulations, Policies, Guidelines, etc. for the welfare of persons with disabilities right from 1987 till date.

What is evident from the constitutional provisions, acts and policies and national programmes is that there is a focus on the welfare of persons with disabilities and on the education of children with disabilities with an obvious crusade towards inclusive education. The ball has started rolling although it is a long struggle ahead.

1.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. What all criteria should be considered while deciding the educational placement of a child with disability?
2. How is exclusion important as a premise for inclusion?
3. How does discussion on social inclusion lead one to diversity among people?
4. Is inclusion of children with disability in regular schools THE solution for all types and degrees of disability?

5. In the context of education of children with disabilities what is the significance of special schools?
6. Is inclusive education *THE BEST OPTION FOR EDUCATIONAL PLACEMENT* for all children with disability irrespective of the type and severity of the disability?
7. How do you understand educational inclusion from the perspective of students without disabilities?

1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Disability is a diversity classification that transcends all other indices like class, caste, race, religion, language etc. It represents the only minority group that anyone can become a member, anytime in life.

Disability is an inescapable element of human experience. It is so, first, in the sense that, world-wide, an enormous number of people have disability/ disabilities. Furthermore, disability is arguably more heterogeneous than those of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation as it may affect one's senses or one's mobility; they may be static or progressive, congenital or acquired, body form related (affecting the shape of the body) or functional, visible or invisible.

For people with a disability and other attributes that make them distinct from the mainstream disability becomes their master label, their primary identifying characteristic over-looking the others. So, disability is a more fundamental form of diversity than differences in race, religion, ethnicity etc.

2. At the core of analysis of social inclusion lies the concept of full participation in all aspects of life, while exclusion refers to the conditions that hamper inclusion. Social exclusion is the process of relegation of individuals or social groups to the fringe of society; they are systematically denied full access to various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of mainstream groups, and which are fundamental to social integration within these groups. Social inclusion is the process to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, be it money, class, ethnicity, gender, race or whatever the index of diversity be, to enable full and active participation in all aspects of life, including civic, social, economic, and political activities, as well as participation in decision-making processes.
3. People with disabilities are the most vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion. They are excluded from essential services for living such as food, clothing, basic education and health care, employment opportunities and such other essentials which ultimately affect their participation in the activities of the people around eventually leading to their exclusion from the society. They are looked upon as invalid; are at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation and miss out any chance for protection of their rights. The societal systems fail to provide facilities for early detection, identification and intervention to infants and young children with disabilities and provide support to their parents and caretakers. Denial of education to children and youth with disabilities results in their alienation from access to vocational training, employment and income generation. This in turn affects their economic and social independence leading them to poverty perpetuated generation after generation.
4. The bio-psychosocial model of disability situates disability as rooted in an amalgamation of factors at the physical, emotional and environmental levels. It

recognizes that disabilities are often due to illness or injury and takes into consideration the impact of biological, emotional and environmental issues on health, well-being, and function in society.

5. It brings all students together in one classroom and school, regardless of their strengths or limitations in any area, and it seeks to maximize the potential of all students

Diversity in a group with respect to any aspect is appreciated and everyone is recognized and respected for what he/she is worth

Efforts are made to make sure that diverse learners are taught using teaching learning strategies adapted to individual learning needs

Every individual is helped to feel accepted, valued, and safe, thus enhancing the well-being of every member of the community.

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