

## Review Article :

# Education And Training of Differently Abled Children

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### Introduction:

The seven wonders of the world are to see, to Hear, to touch, to taste, to feel, to laugh and to love. The most precious things in life cannot be built by hand or bought by man. If any of the above or a combination of the above are not possessed by any human being he/ she is considered as disabled person, currently termed as 'Diferently abled'. It is an umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. A good method of teaching is based on multisensory approach, whether teaching disabled or non-disabled children. While teaching, the teacher should bear in mind that children with disabilities have reduction in the range and variety of some learning experiences due to their disabilities. Parents of disabled children should be made aware that disabled children are educable – so parents should make concerted efforts to seek for information about education of their children. The Rules and Regulations passed by parliaments of the relevant countries should help the disabled to be employed. What has been observed in the field is that disabled people themselves, parents of disabled children and those who work with disabled people are not aware of the conventions, documents and agreements, yet they are important in the development of appropriate services for people with disabilities.

### Key words:

Differently abled, disability, rehabilitation

WHO First Report on Disabled: The World Health Organization in its first ever global report on disabled persons brought out in June 2011,

estimated<sup>(1)</sup> Disabled population world over is of the order of one billion<sup>(2)</sup> This forms 15 per cent of the global population.<sup>(3)</sup> According to it, children with disabilities are less likely to start or stay in school than other children.

○ Employment rates are at 44 percent compared with 75 percent for people without disabilities in OECD countries. In developing countries the situation is more alarming.

○ It stated that despite a robust disability rights movement and a shift towards inclusion, disabled people remain “second class citizens”.

○ It also brought to the fore that disabled people world over are discriminated against in the health care, education and employment.

○ Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of the WHO said that disability is a part of human condition for all of us. “Almost every one of us will be permanently or temporarily disabled at some point of time in life. We must do more to break the barriers which segregate people with disabilities in many cases forcing them to the margins of society.”

### Education for the Disabled in Ancient India:

In ancient India the persons with disabilities were given education in the communities in which they lived. Education was given in the mainstream institutions alongside the non-handicapped peers in a gurukulum setting. Individualised instructions were given based on the individual child's need and age. A few residential institutions were established by the members of the royalty at different locations as an act of dharma, a duty. Disabled Education: In Colonial & Post Independence Era in India

○ During the colonial period and after, special schools were established mostly in urban areas and were expensive. Their coverage was only 2% of population in need. In the post-independence years India had around 100 special schools for persons with disabilities

○ The special schools were run by the government as well as non-government organizations. These special schools were inadequate considering the mammoth population in need of special education.

**Efforts towards Inclusive Education:**

The policies of the Government , opened up avenues for integrated education, now referred to as inclusive education, to provide education to every child in need. The initiatives included: The Kothari Commission, 1964 The National Policy on Education, 1968 ; Integrated Education for the Disabled Children-IEDC, 1974; the National Policy on Education-NPE, 1986.

**Efforts towards Inclusive Education and Protection of Disabled:**

Programme of Action (POA), 1992, made provisions for training of general teachers, preparation of learning materials, education devices, support teacher and staff and setting of resource centres; The revised IEDC scheme in 1992 to accommodate these provisions; the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) as an autonomous body assisted by a large number of professionals to carry out rehabilitation of disabled persons; and The Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act, 1995.

**Disability:**

It indicates any permanent loss of the functions of the particular organ to the extent that the individual cannot fully participate in the social and vocational pursuits.

**WHO – Disability Types:**

According to WHO, disability may be physical cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, and developmental or some combination of them. It is

an umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.

**Impairment:**

An 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. (2) Impairment means damage to the tissues. It can be measured and cured and it does not impose obstacles to a larger extent with any of the social and vocational pursuits of the individual.

**Handicap:**

Handicap is made and not acquired. Discrimination on the basis of disability leads to the handicapping condition The disability surrounded by a distressing environment makes the person feel handicap.<sup>(4)</sup> The need for non-discrimination should be taught to young children so that the disability does not become a handicap. As experienced by Helen Keller and others, the attitude of the public towards disability condition is the hardest burden to bear. Sometimes it is stereotypic in nature. The manpower development document of the Rehabilitation Council of India(RCI) (1995) reports. Not even five per cent of the disabled population is currently enjoying education facilities. The reason is that the present educational system is not able to take education to the doorsteps of the children. To provide education to this uncovered population, appropriate strategies need to be adopted for locating them for early intervention services. Early intervention would solve many of the problems of the child later in life.

**Other disabilities:**

Children with other disabilities are also in need of educational services. For example, learning disability is one category. Children with learning disabilities are those who have problems in processing information. “Cerebral palsy” is another category and means a group of non-progressive conditions of a person characterised by abnormal motor control posture resulting from

brain insult or injuries occurring in the pre- natal or infant period of development.

### **Cognitive Approach:**

By adopting the cognitive approach, identification of the children may be made as those who are mentally retarded, slow learners and gifted learners. This identification is purely based on the cognitive functions of the child. For example

- The child who has an IQ between 50 and 75 will come under the category of educable mentally retarded child.
- The trainable mentally retarded children have an IQ of 25 to 50 and they may find it difficult even to perform manual kind of work.
- Those who have an IQ of less than 25 are called totally dependent category.

### **Sensory Approach:**

Through sensory approach, visually impaired hearing impaired and deaf-blind children can be identified. Out of them, visually impaired children are neither cognitive impaired nor communication impaired. They lack abilities in the orientation of environment. The mobility skills are also affected due to the loss of vision. On the other hand, the deaf child's main problem is in the area of communication skills. Some of them use lip-reading skills whereas some use sign language. It is proper to use total communication system, which uses the combination of both. The deaf-blind children will have a serious disadvantage in both orientation and communication skills.

### **Ability-based Approach:**

There are many children who experience difficulty in processing information. Though their intelligence is normal and senses, too are normal, sometimes they perform poorly due to lack of ability in processing information. Information processing theorists feel that these children lack adequate skills in attention, perception, memory encoding etc. These children are called as learning disabled children. Dysgraphia, Dyslexia and

Dyscalculia are some of the defects associated with the learning problems is general.

### **Society-based Approach:**

Among disabled children, some of them are facing emotional problems too. The behaviour Disorders in these children may also be a result of social problems such as the state of experience of neglect, over-protection etc. A disabled child who doesn't have a conducive Family support or parental affection is likely to have psychological effects leading to isolation, maladjusted behaviour, etc.

### **Methods of Identifying Disabilities**

- ❑ Primary Health Centres (PHCs)
- ❑ Hospitals
- ❑ Population Centres
- ❑ Voluntary Organisations
- ❑ Through Teachers
- ❑ Through other Students
- ❑ Through village functionaries
- ❑ Census data
- ❑ Service Delivery Models

### **Special Schools:**

Special school concept is an accepted model of education for persons with disabilities throughout the world. As on today, more than 3000 special schools and institutions for the disabled children are functioning in India. Among them, approximately 900 are institutions for hearing impaired children, 400 for children with visual impairment, 1000 for mentally retarded and there remaining 700 for children with other physical disabilities (UNIISED Report 1999).

- In most of the special schools in India, the curriculum followed is similar to the one prescribed for non-disabled children of the same age group. However some exemptions are made with regard to specific disability areas.
- Schools for visually impaired children exempt visual oriented concepts in mathematics.
- Children with hearing impairment are

exempted from learning second or third language

- Children with mental retardation
- Children with locomotor disabilities

### **Integrated Schools:**

The population of children with disabilities in the school-going age group, as per the RCI's Manpower document is as follows: Visually Impaired-0.12millionHearing Impaired-0.65 Million; Mentally Retarded-3.61million; loco motor Handicapped -3.39 million though the population is huge, the coverage of these children in special school setting is rather low. Therefore, alternative approaches are emerging. Integrated education is one such alternative strategy. Integrated education emerged out of compulsion rather than option.

### **Inclusive Schools:**

In special school concept, special education component is APART from the general education system. Whereas in integrated school, special education is A PART of general education. Inclusive school goes one step further. In this approach, special education is an integral part of general education system. Therefore, inclusion is an ideology and not a programme. Inclusive education approach indicates that the general classroom teachers should be fully equipped to take care of the educational needs of disabled children.

### **Teaching Method**

A good method of teaching is based on multi sensory approach, whether teaching disabled or non-disabled children. While teaching the teacher should bear in mind that children with disabilities have reduction in the range and variety of some learning experiences due to their disabilities.

### **Curricular Adaptation**

As inclusive education is one of the most viable options to increase educational opportunities for persons with disabilities, a through curricular adaptation is needed for creating better learning environment. As far as possible, the curriculum

need not be changed for disabled children since it would work as a criterion for segregation. Adoptions in terms of methods of Presentation display, content, etc. may be necessary to enhance the learning experiences of these children. This approach not only helps children with disabilities, but also helps the teacher to assist children who have learning problems.

### **Concepts Development:**

Concepts development is fundamental in education of children with disabilities, particularly for those who are cognitively impaired such as mentally retarded children and sincerely impaired such as visually and/or hearing impaired. Loss of one sense of the child adversely affects the concepts development of these children.

### **How should education for the Disabled be promoted:**

First things first; parents of disabled children should be made aware that disabled children are educable. Hence parents should make concerted efforts to seek for information about education of their children. Notwithstanding the fact that DPOs should also be in the forefront in disseminating information on disability issues and rights. There should also be training institutions of specialist teachers for streamlined Special Schools and Mainstream classrooms. Teachers, especially specialist teachers are important if promotion of education and training for the disabled people is to be realized. Deliberate screening exercises countrywide in order to have a range of disabilities to be catered for.

### **Recommendations:**

Resources have to be availed to the disabled in order to empower them subsequently developing independent living skills. This could be fulfilling the goals of the learnership programmes. These learnership programmes if handled properly can surely help the disabled people to be self-reliant and not dependent. The Rules and Regulations passed by Parliaments (of the relevant countries) should help the disabled to be employed. This

suggests the quota system of employment in companies. For example the South African White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy with a vision commitment of a “better life for all persons with disabilities through excellence in governing and a mission which”ensures the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in leading, developing and managing the strategic agenda of Government.”DPOs should choose leaders on merit not as a serving duty which is rotated. This was a strong point mentioned by the blind people in Lesotho and some few parents of disabled people in KwaZulu Natal. Leaders given responsibilities through rotation lacked commitment, so are ineffective in their leadership. Institutions which rehabilitate the disabled like the Cheshire Homes should encourage some skills of the disabled. In most of the homes the researchers visited – the residents in these homes sounded that they wanted to be productive and not to live and be fed doing nothing. Almost 75% expressed a wish to be productive. So learnership programmes in these institutions could be very helpful and can promote skills training in a big way. In all DPOs there should be a training officer or an Education Officer to help monitor that issues to do with education are well catered for. This Officer will be an Advocate for disability issues all awareness programmes and parents' networking should be under his jurisdiction. Despite all that which has been recommended, there are challenge stranslating policies, guidelines and recommendations into ACTION.

### Conclusion:

What has been observed in the field is that disabled people themselves, parents of disabled children and those who work with disabled people are not aware of the conventions, documents and agreements. Yet they are important in the development of appropriate services for people with disabilities. The important documents available in these are: The Convention on the Rights of the Child, World Declaration on Education For All, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for

ACTION on Special Needs Education, the Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Once people are aware of these agreements, the researchers believed that synergies could be created through the development of collaborative relationships across levels, from National to Province, District to Community and to parents. In the research findings, it was realized that families have a right to full information about their disabled child and any choices that are posed. Help, support and training should be available to facilitate their decision making and to enable families to enter a full partnership with professionals. Also the research team realized that due to lack of professionalism in some disabilities issues, professionals need to be trained to take on the roles of facilitator, supporter, counsellor and mediator in their work with parents. All in all, the research team found out that, there is need to re-examine values, beliefs and attitudes, that could only be done if a number of promotion programme activities could be developed. These activities are:

- Identification
- Outreach
- Parent education and empowerment
- Home-based services
- Development of classroom programmes and
- Transition plans.

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