

# Teachers Training For Differently-Abled Students In Higher Education (With Special Reference To Shillong, East-Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India)

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*Abstract: A teacher is the backbone of education. The ability to bring a change to the society or in particular to an individual depends on a teacher. Differently abled students need to be taken care and nurtured by a teacher in any educational institution. Consequently, to cater to the needs and requirements of these special students, teachers need to be trained and equipped with the knowledge and skills so that they will be able to handle these students appropriately and efficiently. Many a times, teacher's training programme or teacher education programme for the teachers of differently-abled students concentrates and is imparted only to the elementary and secondary teachers. However, in higher education this has been neglected and left unnoticed which may also be the reason behind the decrease in their enrollment in higher education. Thus, the paper focuses on the need and importance of teacher's training for differently abled students in higher education.*

*Keywords: Teachers, Training, Differently abled, students, Higher Education.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

A disability or differently abled is defined as a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual or group. The term is used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment mental illness, and various types of chronic disease.

Differently abled are people with mental or physical conditions who possess a unique set of abilities and perspectives. Each and every person has different ability and therefore we need to acknowledge and accept it in any matter. Being 'Differently abled' does not hide the fact that your loved one has been diagnosed with a condition, but continues to empower them despite it. In fact, differently abled people see, hear and think what others can't. This makes their ability different i.e, neither inferior nor superior but just different.

## II. TEACHERS

A teacher is a person who imparts knowledge or instructs someone to do something. Many scholars also use the word 'teacher' to refer to the teaching profession. A teacher is a person who has knowledge, skills and special trainings in teaching, explaining and educating. The teacher is the person who is capable of creating behavioural change in terms of cognitive, psychomotor as well as affective domain (Mbise 2008). The teacher is the most important element in any educational programme. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible in playing an important role for the transformation in the students, which will lead them from darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge.

## III. TEACHERS TRAINING

Teachers' training is the process of teaching or learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be a teacher in an

educational setting. It is a more practical aspect of learning where the teachers can learn new skills or improve one's knowledge. Teachers training help teachers to add more skills into existing knowledge. It educates others and imparts knowledge and understanding relevant to their different levels of learning. Teachers training enable teachers to educate students to improve their capacity to understand key issues, gain skills and develop academically.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers training or teacher education programme enable teachers to have knowledge of how children grow, develop and learn which is very essential for teachers. Many a times, this type of teacher's training or teacher education programme is mainly concentrated only to elementary and secondary level of education, whereas in higher education it is being neglected and left unnoticed. This in turn may have affected the enrollment of the differently abled students in higher education.

## II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the coming of the new approach on education for disabled viz, inclusive education; the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 2005, implemented a National Action Plan for the inclusion in education of children and youth with disabilities. Furthermore, IEDC was revised and named Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage (IEDSS) in 2009-10 to provide assistance for the inclusive education of the disabled children at IX and X classes. This scheme now subsumed under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) from 2013.

Since the Central government want to implement inclusive education in schools, most of the teachers today have to undergo training so that they can enhance the skills to teach the differently abled students also in a normal school and to implement it. However in higher education, neither the central nor the state government take the initiative to conduct training of teachers for differently abled students at the higher level. Thus the study focuses on the need of teachers training for differently abled students in higher education.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To find out the availability of teachers training for differently abled students in higher education.
- ✓ To examine the needs and importance of teachers training for differently abled students in higher education
- ✓ To suggest remedies whereby teachers training for differently abled students in higher education can be introduced

## IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Seema Menon K.P (2016) conducted a study on "Awareness on Learning Disabilities among Elementary

School Teachers" in Kerala. The study aims to find out the awareness on learning disabilities among elementary school teachers. The sample for the present study consisted of 500 elementary school teachers of Kerala. In this study the investigator used an Awareness Test on Learning Disabilities to measure the Awareness on Learning Disabilities among Elementary School Teachers. The study reveals that elementary school teachers possess an average level of Awareness on Learning Disabilities and also that there exist significant difference in the mean scores of Awareness on Learning Disabilities with respect to gender, locale, type of management but no significant difference exist in the mean scores of Awareness on Learning Disabilities with respect to teaching experience and also that there exist significant difference in the awareness on different dimensions on learning disabilities among elementary school teachers such as Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia.

Dr. Ravindra Kumar Gupta (2016) had written a paper on "Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Education". Inclusive education is based on the principle that local schools should provide for all children and young people regardless of any perceived social, emotional, cultural intellectual or linguistic difference or disability. Students who would previously have been referred to specialist forms of provision, having been judged 'less able', are now believed to belong in mainstream classrooms. However, it is often argued that teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to work with such students in inclusive classrooms. The paper identifies key concepts associated with inclusive education and discusses them in relation to issues in the reform of teacher education. It argues that the reform of teacher education for inclusive education is an important activity in improving educational equity.

Aarti Kapur (2018) had conducted a study, "Teachers need special training to deal with differently-abled students" in Chandigarh. Out of 195 schools, 22 responded to the questionnaire. During the study, it was noticed that the dropout rate among the students with disabilities is more in higher class and lesser in the lower classes. According to the findings of the study, there is an immediate need to have a modified curriculum according to the disabilities of the children. Teachers dealing with such students need to pay additional attention to them. For capacity building of teachers, 90-day in-service training programmes should also be arranged. The study suggested that to teach the students with disabilities, teachers need to know how to handle students with disabilities without being offensive. The study also found that there is inadequate resource staff in the schools to handle the special children.

Sneh Bansal (2016) had written a paper on "Teacher Education Programmes Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Classrooms: A North India Context". With the complex and heterogeneous educational environments, the challenges faced by the teaching profession are increasing day by day. Teachers need to have not only theoretical and practical knowledge but also the capacity to bring about optimal levels of learning for all students. The paper reflects the extent to which teacher education programme prepares their teacher education candidates to identify the specific needs of each individual learner, and respond to them by deploying a wide range of teaching strategies in inclusive classrooms. Reviews related to

the teacher education curriculum from the perspective of learners with special educational needs and the existing two year B.Ed. curriculum framework of Universities of North India (Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Delhi) were studied and compared. It has been found that there are no in-service training programmes for teacher educators to teach about inclusive education. Teachers remain heavily biased towards learning the theory of inclusive education without opportunities to practice and gain confidence with teaching methods needed to support diverse learners. Further, after critically analyzing the 2 year B.Ed. curriculum, it has been found that in the last semester (IVth) theory of inclusive schools trainees are taught for a 50 mark course for 1-2 hours per week on an average including internal and external evaluation and no credit is given for practical part. They are provided with the understanding of the theory of inclusion schools, however their understanding this limited or almost nil. Another point that has been noticed that the theory of inclusive schools has been taught after the school internship programme of 16 weeks, which raises a question-Understanding the inclusive Schools/classrooms, should be after or before the Internship programme?

After reviewing the existing literature and curriculum framework, it can be substantiated that there are obvious gaps in teacher preparation program. Stakeholders should view these gaps as a major roadblock to the actualization of inclusion at the very basic level (the General Teacher Education Programmes). To ensure a better match between teacher preparation and the realities of inclusive classrooms, changes to the current approaches are necessary and critical.

Only few studies had been done on training of teachers for differently abled students in school level. However, there were no such studies on training of teachers for differently abled students in higher education. Thus the investigator wants to study on teachers training for differently abled students in higher education.

## V. METHODOLOGY

The investigator had used descriptive method in the present study

### A. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprises of 11 reputed colleges located in Shillong, East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya.

### B. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The investigator had selected 45 teachers both male and female from 3 different colleges, 15 teachers from each college. Simple random sampling was used for the selection of college and teachers.

## C. TOOLS USED

Constructed Structured questionnaires were used for data collection from both the teachers and students.

## VI. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS

### A. AVAILABILITY OF TEACHERS TRAINING FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

According to the responses collected from all the 45 numbers of teachers, it is found that none of them have undergone or experienced such kinds of teacher's training for differently abled students. This means that till date no seminars/conferences/courses have been organized for the training of teachers on differently abled students in higher level. None of the teachers have come across such kind of teacher's training for differently abled students in higher education. From the data collected, the investigator had also encountered that no organizations have organized such kind of programme. It is also found that training facilities is not available for the teachers to deal with differently abled students therefore none of the teachers have received any formal training pertaining to differently abled students at the higher level.

### B. NEEDS AND IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS TRAINING FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

After studying the unavailability of teachers training for differently abled students in higher education of Shillong, Meghalaya; we can depict that there is an urgent need and importance of teachers training for differently abled students in higher education. Be it at the primary or higher level, differently abled students are different from the normal students. Therefore the teachers need to be well equipped in that particular area, to cater to the needs of these students.

One of the colleges in Shillong has differently abled students such as hearing impaired, visually impaired and physically handicapped. Teachers in this college are facing many problems in dealing with such students since they have not undergone or experienced any kind of training to teach such students. The institution does not have or provide any kind of instruments which are helpful for the differently abled students. In spite of this, the teachers have tried their best to make these students learn by using different techniques and methods of teaching in order to meet the needs of the differently abled students. Furthermore, the teachers do not differentiate between the normal and differently abled students so that they will not feel left out. The findings also depict that the institution and teachers gives equal opportunities to both the normal as well as the differently abled students to participate in different activities and they also give special attention to these types of students. However, all the 45 numbers of teachers suggest that teacher's training for differently abled students is essential, and should be implemented or introduced at the earliest since teachers are

facing many difficulties in dealing with these types of students. Likewise, students belonging to these categories are not able to cope or be at par in their learning when compared with the normal students though they are being treated equally and getting support from both the institution and the teachers.

### VIII. SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ Short term training or refresher courses of 3 to 4 months duration should be organized in colleges/universities or any organizations and focus on the awareness of teachers about the psychological needs of differently abled students at the higher level.
- ✓ It should be made mandatory that all the teachers should undergo these training.
- ✓ Both the government and private institutions should take the initiative and train the teachers to be able to teach the differently abled students also in higher education.
- ✓ Seminars/conferences/workshops should be organized for teachers to teach the differently abled students in higher education.
- ✓ Adequate resources and instruments should be made available in the institutions for teaching the differently abled students.
- ✓ The expenditure should be shared between the government and the institutions for the upliftment or progress of teachers to undergo training for differently abled students in higher education.

### IX. CONCLUSIONS

With the introduction of inclusive education in schools, there is a need of teacher's training for differently abled students in higher education also so that teachers will be able to enhance the skills and knowledge to teach, encourage and motivate the differently abled students for further studies. Since there is no such training till date, hence the study suggests the introduction of such types of training for the benefit of the differently abled students in particular and for the benefit of the teachers and the society as a whole.

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