Impact Of Sign Language In Overcoming By Learning Disability For The Children

Abstract

The term ‘Special Education’ is the main focus in Educational policies of India for the past few decades. Different steps are taken for the upliftment of ‘Differently Abled’ children during these years. Earlier special schools, then Integrated Education, and very recently their educational needs are put forth as Inclusive Education. Even though integrated education and Inclusive education are similar in many ways, the practical feasibility and their outcomes faces too many issues in many attributes of Indian Educational system. This paper highlights the importance of studying the sign language as the second language by all the children in an Inclusive type of school to collaborate well with the exceptional peers especially in case of hearing impairment difficulties. The special educational needs are being taken seriously by everyone in the world. Being good citizens of the universe it is our duty to pave the way for them to lead a normal life along with us.

Keywords: Differently Abled, Inclusive Education, Integrated Education, Sign language, Hearing Impairment

Prelude

As per the Census report of 2011, India consists of 2.21% of physically and mentally challenged people. Out of the 121 crore population, 2.68 crore persons are disabled. Considering their educational needs, our country didn’t reach the benchmark yet. However, all the statutory bodies of the Indian Government started implementing the steps formulated in the long way of our educational system. Overcoming all the hurdles of applicability and accomplishments, specially challenged children are educated to have self-confidence and to live for their bread. This goal is reached by the services of teachers associated with the efforts of State and central Governments, NGO’s and parents eliminating the barriers, improving the communication and encouraging them to be independent. The physically disabled people face various problems in life but they can cope up with others in most of their cognitive capabilities (Moores, 1987).

Hearing Impairment

One of the main sensory pathways for both speech and verbal communication is the hearing. The pupils with hearing disabilities are called as hearing impairment. The hearing impairments are termed as either deaf (complete hearing loss) or hard of hearing (hearing defects).They may arise either from birth, congenitally deaf or by accidental means, adventiously deaf. The important variables responsible for these difficulties are the degree of hearing loss, age of the onset and type of hearing loss. On the basis of auditory acuity, the conversational speech will have the frequency between 500 and 2000 Hertz. Hereby the deaf person exhibit the hearing loss of 70 dB or greater while the hard of hearing person face the hearing loss of 35 to 69 dB.

Learning Disability

A learning disability is a neurological disorder. Learning disabilities are disorders that affect one's ability in the domains of spoken or written language, mathematical calculation, attention or the coordination of movements. It can be lifelong conditions that can affect one's experience at school or work or in social situations.

Special Education Needs (SEN)

Education helps to bridge the gap between different individuals and between different sections of the society. It is the fundamental right of everyone irrespective of caste, creed, religion and also disabilities. The hamstrung children's education is a lifelong process. Education shapes them and moulds them to get adjusted in the society. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Department of Education of States initiated enormous programmes for meeting the demands of the disabled population. The first priority was to probe into identifying disability at the starting age and treating them properly. The models of shifting from charity model to bio-centric, then to functional model and finally human rights model were done to make these special children access the school. In all the ways, they were made to participate in all the school activities. Two primary approaches, disability as a social pathology and as an individual pathology were reflected in every law, policy and programmes.

The needs of girls with disability have to be addressed in all the spheres of education with utmost care and concern. The existing human rights model positions disability as a universal feature and can be obscured equality and defeat the discrimination by breaking down the barriers. They were accommodated reasonably, provided accessibility and enjoyed private and public freedom

Inclusive Education

In 1970's 'Integrated Education for Disabled children' was the sponsored scheme launched by the Government of India aimed at the achievement of special children. They were given opportunities in regular schools. Following the National council of educational Research and Training NCERT and United Nations Children's' Fund, UNICEF introduced the project 'Integrated Education' in 1987 strengthening their association into the usual schools. In 1997, Integrated Education for the Disabled Children IEDC was amalgamated with other projects like DPEP (Chadha, 2002) and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Department of Elementary Education, 2000). Accordingly, one special teacher for every eight children with disabilities was allotted besides the availability of a resource room. To facilitate the learners with special needs, even the State Governments has introduced reservations, scholarships and allowances.

Inclusive Education has the potential to lay the foundation of a more inclusive society where being "different" is accepted, respected and valued (Baquer & Sharma, 1997). Sure all these integration and inclusion into ordinary schools bring about an impetus for ample number of innovations in special education needs SEN or in special need education SNE. More radical changes were required which later led to the re-conceptualization of the special needs. All these helped in an orientation towards Inclusive Education. Here the children with special needs are prompted just like the other children. Even the teachers accepted them with greater care and concern. Salamanca statement (1994) has a major role in the above said education type and it has made the differently abled children to enjoy their fundamental rights.

Educating such pupils part time in special schools and part time I regular schools doesn't mean inclusion (Loreman & Deppeler, 2001). Since learning is an enthusiastic activity, it should be carried out in such a way to overwhelm their disabilities. A few attractive instructional strategies are to be followed. Even the curriculum is designed to impart vocational education, thereby developing their self-confidence and assisting those students to be normal in their life. Provided, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is useful in subduing the obstacle faced by them.

In short, inclusive education is really a tremendous task to attain. Nothing is impossible; its practicability lies in the hands of many stakeholders like parents, policymakers and teachers. All educational institutions should have a heart to do so, like the upcoming 'Akshara' and The Heritage' kind of educational institutions. They implement the inclusive educational system proving the dynamism.

Mutual understanding

The success of inclusive education lies on the collaboration and cooperation. It means not only the understanding between parents, school communities and society but also the rendering hands of the children without special needs. The students, both hearing impaired and the normal ones comply at all the educational activities. Both categories have to compete with each other with a healthy competition. Not the sympathy, equal par in consideration is the requirement of such pupils. The attitudinal change of the common mass enriches the lives of such pupils, facilitating their bright future.

Differently Abled, especially hearing deficit members of the educational system feel comfortable and will be able to communicate via sign language. Every country has their own style of sign language. A very well rapport is extended through this sign language. Though the hearing problems children observe everything in and around their school campus with sharpness, they lag behind due to their communication hindrance.

Importance of sign language

In general, the active teachers wish the hard of hearing as well as the deaf children get the ample school experiences with enough benefits. To foster the balance between dependency and over-dependency, they are the wide variety of social skills and listening skills. Communication barriers influence interpersonal relationships, many folds. Actually this inability to communicate delays the usual pace of language development. Communication hazards can be overcome by way of sign language. It helps a teacher to identify the physical and mental state of them in order to establish a harmonious milieu. Assigning involves the physical movement, it adds the kinesthetic element to learning. When it is included in the curriculum as a part and parcel, these special students will be befitted a lot and their active participation will be improved. Researches show that their confidence is raised making them to feel secured. Like other countries such as USA and UK, India too can introduce sign language as the second language for safeguarding the upliftment of differently-abled ones.

In spite of the controversies between American Sign Language (ASL) and Sign Language (BSL), both represent the living testament of being human. Therefore sign languages interpret their own spoken languages and also display the structural differences in them. This sign

language discovery led to the literary culture as well. These well said facts about sign language can be appreciated by making it as the second language in the educational system of India, where inclusive education has started finding its avenue.

Endorsement for policymakers

According to the latest census, India has five million deaf and hearing-impaired people. Modes of instruction and therefore the learning materials for them are given due consideration in national education policy and curricular vision. The outcomes of learning rely on a curriculum where the special needs are to be tallied. One way of obliging the hearing impairment is the introduction of sign language as the second language. This is one of the compensatory instructions designed to subdue the effects of disabilities in case of aural defects also. Due to these factors the paper recommends the urgent need of formulating the sign language as the second language in the syllabus of Indian inclusive type of education as it reinforces the other classroom actions. Not only the communication but also the whole environment becomes conducive for an enjoyable learning process. Sure it will have broad educational implications of mute children in particular.

References

1. Baquer,A.,Sharma,A.(1997).Disability: Challenges vs Responses. New Delhi:CAN.
2. Chadha, A.(2002).”Inclusive Education in DPEP. Journal of Indian Education.Special Issue on Education of Learners with special needs.
3. Department of Education(2000).Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.A programme for Universal Elementary Education. New Delhi: MHRD, GOI. Doi:10.7877/jasl.25.31
4. Loreman,T.,Deppeler,J.M.(2000).Inclusive Education in Victoria: The UNESCO Education For All 2000 assessment. Interaction, 14(3), 13 – 17.
5. Marschark,M., & Spencer,E.P.(Eds.).(2016). The Oxford handbook of deaf studies in language. New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc.
6. Mayberry, R.I.(2006).Learning sign language as a Second Language. In B.Woll(Ed.). Sign Language, Vol.6, Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics and Edition, Ed.Keith Brown, pp. 739 – 743.Oxford: Elsevier.
7. Moeller,M.P.,Ertmer,D.J., & Gammon.C.S. (2016). Promoting language & literacy in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Baltimore, BC: Brookes Publishers.
8. Oshika, A.(2016). Report on deaf or hard-of-hearing children with developmental disorders and sign language. Japanese journal of sign language studies, 25, 31 – 38
9. Schamroth, K., & Lawlor, E.(2017). Smile therapy: Functional communication & social skills for deaf students and students with special needs. London, UK: Taylor & Francis Ltd.
10. UNESCO (1994). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. Paris: UNESCO.
11. Yeseldyke, J.E., Algozzine, B.(2003).Special Education: A Practical Approach for teachers. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.