

**Inclusive Education In The 21st Century: Challenges And Opportunities For Karnataka****Dr.Ravikiran.B**Principal National B.Ed College  
Kalaburgi (KARNATAKA)**Abstract**

*The readiness for acceptance of inclusion varies across countries and continents of the world. While countries within the advanced economies have gone beyond categorical provisions to full inclusion, Karnataka is still grappling with the problem of making provisions for children with special needs especially those with handicaps, even on mainstreaming basis. This paper attempts to highlight and examine the concept of inclusion and the prospects it holds, for special education practice in Karnataka in the 21st century. In addition, the paper discusses the challenges of inclusion in Karnataka, while reflecting upon the ground reality in the state.*

**Introduction**

Today, if there is any concept that has gained currency in the world of special needs education, it is inclusion. A run down of major publications in the field, will reveal the volume of intellectual energy that has been (and is being) dissipated in the examination of this emerging concept. Inclusion is generating thoughts and attention world wide as a new approach in the provision of services for learners with special needs. International organisations particularly UNESCO, now see inclusive schooling as an effective approach in the education of this class of learners. The Salamanca Declaration of 1994, provided the needed international and theoretical frames for inclusive education. In the report, the point made was that "the task of the future is to identify ways in which the school, as part of the social environment can create better learning opportunities for all children and by this means, address the challenge that the most pervasive source of learning difficulties is the school system itself .

**Conceptual Exploration**

Inclusion refers to the "full-time placement of children with mild, moderate and severe disabilities in regular classrooms" . The inclusion movement believes that children with special needs should be placed in the regular school classroom which they would have otherwise attended, if they

had been normal children. In other words, each child belongs to the regular classroom and therefore, there should be no condition imposed, to exclude him/ her from that environment.

**The aims Of Special Education As Stated In The Policy Are As Follows**

1. To give a concrete meaning to the idea of equalising educational opportunities for all children; their physical, mental and emotional disabilities notwithstanding
2. To provide adequate education for all handicapped children and adults, in order that they may play their roles fully in contributing to the development of the nation.
3. To provide opportunities for exceptionally gifted children to develop their skills at their own pace, in the interest of the nation's economic and technological development (10).

**Implementation Of Special Education Provisions**

At the level of policy provisions, it can be said that special education has fared better. It is however a different ball game when it comes to the implementation of the policy declarations. Very little success has been seen in the actualisation of the programmes that are part of the nation's education policy. This is even acknowledged in the National Blueprint on education of the Handicapped published . According to the blueprint " success made so far in the delivery of special education in Karnataka, although minimal in terms

of anticipated impact, largely due to inadequate funds" .

### Conclusion

Presently in Karnataka, inclusion still remains in the realm of theory and far from practice. Special needs education in Karnataka is still grappling with problems of policy implementation, an environment that is not conducive for practice and a lackadaisical attitude of the people and government. Implementing inclusion in such an environment may be unrealistic and counterproductive. In addition, the complexity and diversity of the State requires more intensive mobilisation of resources and information dissemination before inclusion can be institutionalised. With a State still given to unscientific modes of explaining natural phenomena and human conditions, where illiteracy still exists in significant proportion, adoption of the inclusive school system, may end up not in the best interests of the concerned individuals.

### References

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