

Original Research Paper

## Effectiveness of Inclusion on Social Maturity of Intellectual Disabled Children

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### ABSTRACT

Education, as a basic component of human development, captures the capability of acquiring knowledge, communicating and holds the key to progress for any inclusionary society. Various studies show that benefits of education include both economic and social returns; decline in poverty and income inequality; improved health outcomes and above all- a better quality of life. Education is also the key to human and economic development. Education enhances one's claim to a good quality life 'entailed in the concept of capabilities' E. Unterhalter (2004).

**Keywords:** *Assertiveness, Job Satisfaction*

### INTRODUCTION

Education, as a basic component of human development, captures the capability of acquiring knowledge, communicating and holds the key to progress for any inclusionary society. Various studies show that benefits of education include both economic and social returns; decline in poverty and income inequality; improved health outcomes and above all- a better

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quality of life. Education is also the key to human and economic development. Education enhances one's claim to a good quality life 'entailed in the concept of capabilities' *E. Unterhalter (2004)*.

The long term vision of India is to build a nation where every child can grow up healthy, protected from harm and educated, so they can reach their full potential with equal rights. The equity-based approach is one of the foundations of India's disability agenda, the main goals of which are to mainstream disability across all of our policies and programmes – both in development and humanitarian action – and to develop leadership on the rights of children with disabilities, building capacity among staff and partners.

A disability is any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner on within the range considered normal for a human being. Disability, particularly Intellectual Disability, has been the most neglected area in India. Majority of disabled persons failed to perceive recognition, respect and even protection of human rights. The opportunities for education, vocational training and occupational training are very limited. Inclusive education is the new concept of education in which the disabled children are taught with the normal children in the regular classrooms. Although, the concept of inclusive education is not new to the western countries but it is still in its infantile stage in India. Inclusive education is a life-long process where inclusive schools and early childhood education settings are transformed so that all children could reach their academic and social potential.

Generally, mainstreaming has been used to refer to the selective placement of special students in one or more "regular" education classes. Theoretically, mainstreaming generally assume that a student must "earn" his or her opportunity to be placed in regular classes by demonstrating an ability to "keep up" with the work assigned by the normal classroom teacher.

This concept is closely linked to traditional forms of special education service delivery. Inclusion is an educational Philosophy aimed at “normalizing” special services for which students qualify. Inclusion involves an attempt to give these special services by providing supplementary aids and support inside the normal classroom, rather than by pulling students out for isolated teaching. Inclusion involves the addition of general education curricula and goals to students getting special services. Finally, inclusion involves common responsibility, problem-solving, and common support among all the members of staff who provide services to students.

In India, inclusion can be viewed from three perspectives:

- **Physical Inclusion:** In physical inclusion a disabled child receives consistent promotion, support and facilitation from the government. All the policies and government regulations have made education free and compulsory for all children. No institution can deny admission to a child with disability on account of his or her disability. It will entail universal enrolment, retention and achievement.
- **Social Inclusion:** It refers to acceptance of persons with disability by all sections of society. In lower socio-economic strata, researches indicate that there is greater acceptance of persons with disabilities with minimum expectation from them, whereas people from economically upper and affluent class of society have high expectation from persons with disability and for their acceptance they often do not move beyond denial. Efforts are being made to change the attitude of all sections of society by undertaking various measures.
- **Cognitive Inclusion:** Cognitive inclusion refers to education of disabled children in general classrooms with non-disabled children. Cognitive inclusion is possible only if the subject-matter is broken down into smaller learning units and teacher makes sure that each of the micro units of a lesson is learned by all children to expected level of mastery. Each child is given equal opportunity to learn, understand, retain and reproduce the information at an appropriate time and in

an appropriate manner. Inclusive education is a system of education that accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. The range of challenges confronting the school system, while including children with diverse abilities and from diverse backgrounds, have to be met by creating a child-centered pedagogy capable of successfully educating all children.

An inclusive class may have, amongst others, children with disability or gifted children, street or working children, children from remote or nomadic population, children belonging to ethnic or cultural minorities or children from other disadvantaged or marginalized groups.

**Statement of Problem:** The present investigation attempts to find out the “Effectiveness of Inclusion on Social Maturity of Intellectually Disabled Children”

**Operational Definition:**

- **Inclusion:** Inclusion at its simplest is ‘the state of being included’ but it is a bit more complicated than that... It is used by disability rights activists to promote the idea that all people should be freely and openly accommodated without restrictions or limitations of any kind.
- **Social Maturity:** Social maturity involves learning to properly relate to acquaintances, family, neighbors, friends, and intimate relationships. It involves understanding how to honor and respect those in authority.
- **Intellectual Disability:** Person with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 is built upon the premise of equal opportunity, protection of rights and full participation; it provides definitions of disabled person following the medical model. According to this Act, Mental Retardation (Intellectual Disability) refers to: “*a condition of arrested or incomplete*

*development of mind of a person which is specially characterized by sub normality of intelligence."*

**Objectives:**

Following objectives are clarified with reference to the nature of problem.

- To examine and evaluate the effectiveness of social inclusion on mild intellectually disabled children.
- To examine skills of preparations for inclusion through transition programme for mild intellectually disabled children.
- To make recommendations for the focus and development of future research in this area.

**Hypotheses:**

For the present research process, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- Exposure of inclusion will increase the social maturity of mild intellectually disabled children. (Ha1)
- There will be no significant difference between pre & post test scores of control group with reference to social maturity. (Ho1)

**Research Design:**

Present research was pre and post experimental design, further divided purposively into experimental and control group. In the experimental group, mild intellectually disabled children were included in general school settings. The abilities of these children were measured after the exposure of inclusion in social skill areas, whereas in the control group the same abilities of the pupils were measured without exposure of the inclusion. Difference between these two sessions revealed the significance of inclusion on mild intellectually disabled children. It was a field experimental study; the intellectually disabled children were tested in general schools as well as special schools. In this investigation, independent variable was the exposure of

inclusion whereas dependent variable was social skills of intellectually disabled children. Design is as follows:-

**Experimental Group:**

| Assessment    | Exposure of Inclusive Setup in General School | Assessment    |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| Social Skills | Duration – 6 months                           | Social Skills |

**Control Group:**

| Assessment    | Special School without exposure to inclusion | Assessment    |
|---------------|--|---------------|
| Social Skills | Duration – 6 months                          | Social Skills |

**Variables:**

- **Independent Variable:** On the basis of above clarification and nature of problem independent variable of present study was the exposure of inclusive setup.
- **Dependent Variable:** Dependent variable was social maturity of intellectually disabled children.

**Population:** The population of the present study consisted of the mild intellectually disabled children of Jodhpur District of Rajasthan State.

**Sample:**

For the present research work investigator has randomly selected a sample of 70 mild intellectually disabled children initially. Screening was done by the researcher with the help of special educators and psychologist to select the sample. Students with other associated conditions and other categories were dropped out purposively and out of 70 students 30 were selected with the help of purposive sampling technique. Case Studies of 30 mild intellectually disabled were taken and were then divided into experimental and control group randomly. Out of 30 children, 3 of the children from control group were dropped out because of transfer of their parents to another city.

Finally, research was started with total sample of 27 mild intellectually disabled. These children were selected from different institutes and organizations of Jodhpur city. These children were diagnosed on the following basis:

- Interaction and observation of intellectually disabled children.
- Parental interview
- Teachers interview
- Application of Intelligence test
- No child was selected if he/she is having any other associative disorder.

**Details of sample:**

| Experimental Group | Control Group | Total |
|--------------------|---------------|-------|
| 15                 | 12            | 27    |

**Tools:**

The tools for the present study were selected in a manner to achieve an optimum level of confidence by the investigator for the objectives of the study.

**Vineland Social Maturity Scale- Indian Adaptation (VSMS)** – by *Bharathraj* (1992). The Vineland social maturity scale was originally devised by E.A. Doll in 1935 and since then this test is being used in many parts of the world. It proved itself to be uniquely useful instrument in measuring Social Maturity of Children and young adults. Since its first publication it has served the useful purpose of estimating the differential social capacities of an individual. The very first attempt to adapt this scale to Indian cultural conditions was done by Rev. Fr. Dr. A.J. Malin while working at the Nagpur Child Guidance Centre. It is important to remember in this context that this instrument just not only provides a measure of Social Age and Social Quotient. It will also indicate the social deficits and social assets in growing child. With the presently popular social skills training procedures

these information would go a long way in training intellectually disabled children to be socially self sufficient. The Nagpur adaptation stops at XV year level as compared to original VSMS by Doll which goes up to the level of XXV years. Hence, the upper age limit of this scale is 15 years.

**Procedure:**

***School Readiness and Transition from Special to General***

***School:***

The two main aspects were kept in mind by the researcher while planning and managing of inclusive curriculum for intellectually disabled children in general school. Firstly, school readiness and other is school transition. The concept of school readiness laid emphasis on the development of readiness skills which were pre-requisites for later learning of academics or formal schooling as well as social skills. According to the concept of school readiness, a child who enters the school should be prepared to learn. In this research, those children who were selected as a sample were included for preparations in school readiness skills. These children were taken to preparatory classes which helped them to develop their readiness or pre-requisite skills to attend the school formally (inclusive and special school). More or less these readiness skills in differently abled children varied from individual to individual. For differently abled children, developments in school readiness were of longer period as compared to general children. These skills include:

- a) Can sit for a required period of time and listens the teacher.
- b) Discriminate auditory and visual stimuli.
- c) Follow instructions.
- d) Enhance language
- e) Have eye hand coordination including gross and fine motor skills
- f) Self help skills
- g) Social skills for interaction with peer group and teachers
- h) Social skills during play activities
- i) Social skills for activities of daily living



***School Readiness:***

In this research, the investigator had made a team of experts consists of teachers in TEPSE & HEPSN Centre, parents of the children of both experimental and control group and the investigator himself. The team, in several sessions of meetings, had discussed on many essential areas for school readiness skills for the groups and pre-inclusion, inclusion and post inclusion for experimental group. After this, special educator assessed the preparedness and readiness skills of intellectually disabled children through BASIC-MR and MDPS assessment scales. Individual assessment was made on each mild intellectually disabled child of experimental as well as control group to check the requirement of school readiness. This assessment helped investigator to know about the abilities as well as limitations of the children. The result of the assessment clearly indicated the required training in readiness skill. The groups were then sent to the preparatory class for enhancement in readiness skills for a period of 30 days. In this preparatory class, more emphasis was given by the special educator on reading, writing and arithmetic areas of academic skills. In pre-reading concept, training of functional reading was focused at initial stage. Children of both groups were trained on sorting, identification, matching of objects, which are used or seen in immediate environment like domestic animals, shapes, colours, vehicles, fruits, flowers etc. After this training, the special educator started functional two letter words in Hindi language without *matras*. As intellectually disabled children takes longer time to learn, the special educator had selected the words based on ability of the children and those words which have high utility in their environment. Children were also encouraged to make stories on their own through the flash cards and pictures. The need for manipulative experiences to strengthen the muscles required for writing and pencil control was also felt by the team.

Hence, gross and fine motor activities of manipulations like knobs on puzzles, nuts and bolts, caps on small bottles, figure

painting etc. were performed by the children. Stages of writing like scribbling, tracing, joining of dots, copying on paper sheets were also conducted on them respectively. At the initial stage few students conveyed their displeasure in holding the crayon and pencil correctly. However, gradually in consequent days they didn't face much difficulty. Similarly, readiness skill in arithmetic was also an important part in training of these children. Concrete objects were used to provide meaning for the concepts. All the contents were arranged in a sequential order through task analysis approach. Instructions were given based on practical examples of daily life for social skills. Its Utility in social and vocational context was also in the focus. Drill and practice method was used to enhance the arithmetic skills. Practical situations and experiences were provided to establish associations between them and generalize the skills. After the preparatory classes and school readiness, these children were randomly divided into experimental and control group.

**Experimental Group:**

***Transition to General School:***

After completion of 30 days preparatory classes, the control group continued to take part in their routine in special school and the experimental group was introduced to the general school setup for inclusion. Every child, whether general or special, has to make adjustments to the new curriculum consisting of various curricular and co-curricular activities. However, disabled child face more adjustment problems in such transitions. To avoid these problems the investigator, prior to transition in inclusive setup, gave thorough information to the teachers and key persons about the children of experimental group. The researcher discussed on their performance and abilities as well as limitations of the intellectually disabled children in detail with general class teacher as well as with the Principal of the school. For smooth transition following suggestion given by Lillian Brinkley were applied:

1. Students were provided support system and tutors like peers, old students.
2. More consultation and information sharing between teachers of the class.
3. Children of experimental group were paired with highly socially active students of the class.

Thus, above mentioned suggestions were applied during the transition which facilitated the children of experimental group to adjust easily with new environment. Before giving inclusion to experimental group, pre-assessments were conducted to evaluate the social maturity of both experimental and control groups using appropriate tool. A meeting with the teachers of general school was also made to review the inclusion procedure before starting the actual process. During the meeting suggestions regarding the procedures were incorporated. Inclusion was provided to the students per day during schools hours by the general teachers with the help of investigator. This study took place over a period of six months. In this research, investigator had worked with the children of age group 9 to 12 years.

The first group, that is the experimental group, was introduced to Class II and III grade in general school for inclusion. During this period support as well as follow up process was also done by the investigator regarding teaching procedure. Each mild intellectually disabled child was placed besides the high achievers in the classrooms. Most of the disabled children initially hesitated to make contacts with the peer group, though after some days they adjusted easily with the group. Detailed case study of one of the disabled children in the group given in the Chapter IV will provide an idea of the process made by the investigator during inclusion.

**Control Group:**

In the second group, which was the control group, inclusion was not provided. Classroom teaching methods which were

generally used in special schools were used for instructions. The co-curricular activities of both the groups were same. The training period i.e. the school hours were also same in general school as well as special school. After six months, both the groups were assessed on social skill areas in post test evaluation through the tools used in pre test process.

### Statistical Analysis:

In the present study, to find out the significant difference between Pre and post assessment of mild intellectually disabled children, Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Paired Sample 't' test were used.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

**Table 1: Showing Mean, SD and 't' values between pre & post test scores of Experimental Group for Social Maturity (VSMS)**

| Measure       | Group     | N  | Mean  | SD    | SEM  | 't'  | Sig. Level |
|---------------|-----------|----|-------|-------|------|------|------------|
| Social Skills | Pre-test  | 15 | 41.58 | 14.94 | 4.31 | 7.26 | p<.01      |
|               | Post-test | 15 | 52.41 | 13.20 | 3.81 |      |            |

Furthermore, results of the last Table 1 summarized that mean value of Social Maturity (VSMS) is to be found for Pre test session  $M=41.58$  ( $SD=14.94$ ) after the training period the value of Post test session is  $M=52.41$  ( $SD=13.20$ ), this shows there is a significant difference and the 't' value is  $7.26(p<.01)$ . It reveals that now the group responded much more social maturity after the inclusion.

**Table 2: Showing Mean, SD and 't' values between pre & post test scores of Control Group for Social Maturity (VSMS)**

| Measure       | Group     | N  | Mean  | SD    | SEM  | 't'  | Sig. Level |
|---------------|-----------|----|-------|-------|------|------|------------|
| Social Skills | Pre-test  | 12 | 41.83 | 14.86 | 4.29 | 1.91 | NS         |
|               | Post-test | 12 | 42.08 | 14.92 | 4.30 |      |            |

Lastly, results of the Table 2 summarized that mean value of Social Maturity (VSMS) is to be found for Pre test session  $M=41.83$  ( $SD=14.86$ ) after the training period the value of Post test session is  $M=42.08$  ( $SD=14.92$ ), this shows there is a insignificant difference and the 't' value is  $1.91(p>.05)$ . It reveals that this group has not increase much more social maturity in special school's educational settings

## **DISCUSSION:**

In the present investigation, an attempt was made to understand the Significance of Inclusive Education on Mild Mentally Challenged Children. Results are discussed in relation to similarities and differences found between present study and the research works of others. Outcome of study also confirmed (Ha1) *Exposure of inclusion will increase the social skills of mild mentally challenged children* as well as (Ho2) *there will be no significant difference between pre & post test scores of control group with reference to social skills*. Thus, confirmation of hypotheses concluded that in social Skills, activities like meal time works, waiting for their turn, greetings at appropriate places and time students have shown tremendous change. Here, the researcher clearly observed the bonding among the students in inclusive classroom. Peer group have shown keen interest in helping the students who were lacking behind especially in leisure activities like games and sports and it was also observed at few places that some of the children of experimental group took initiative to support the peer group in team work. On contrary, these characteristics were less developed in control group.

Social skills were measured on Vineland Social Maturity Scale to ensure the result. Researcher found that experimental group has shown noteworthy variation in pre and post scores. It was observed that, in inclusive setup, they were performing comparably better in self care, family help, more cooperative with siblings, group activities like games and fun tasks as

compared to control group. Some of the intellectually disabled children in the group can now go home independently and they were also able to recognize the name of the streets as well as visual cues while going to school and coming back to home. Through the comparison between the results of experimental and control group, one can easily perceive that pre and post test scores of children with intellectual disability in special school settings have no conspicuous variation whereas the experimental group, through inclusive settings, has achieved higher scores in post test.

The movement in the direction of inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classes has become the overwhelming trend in education (**Chow & Kasari, 1999; Mamlin, 1999**). Not only does inclusive education for children with disabilities bring improved academic functioning (**Manset & Semmel, 1997; Sideridis et al., 1997**), but it also offers them the opportunity for socialization with their peers without disabilities in general education classrooms (**Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Shattman, 1993; National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1994**). While early studies have investigated the academic performance of children with disabilities in inclusive settings, there has been increased interest in and attention to the social adjustment and social functioning of children with disabilities in inclusive settings (**Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm, 1996; Vaughn, Elbaum, Schumm, & Hughes, 1998**). Some evidence revealed that students without disabilities as well as teachers in general education classrooms often do not accept a student with disabilities (**Bryan, 1997; Sale & Carey, 1995**). Peers and teachers often ignore or actively reject the overtures of such students, praise them less, and consider them less desirable than students without disabilities (**Heron & Harris, 1993; Stitt et al., 1988**).

An interesting study was carried out by **Stanovich and Jordan (2004)**, who analysed Canadian teachers' opinions on inclusion

in relation to the quality of their teaching methods. They found out that better and more efficient teaching methods were used at schools where teachers were disposed to include children with special educational needs in their classes and work with them responsibly, compared to schools where teachers had no trust in inclusion. Further, British experts **Dyson A., Farrell, P., Polat, F., Hutcheson, G., & Gallannaugh, F. (2004)** traced certain correlation between better study results and teachers' positive approach to inclusion, even if there were no children with special educational needs at a particular school.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Inclusive education not only focuses on academic results but also on developing children's social skills. Its goal is to teach children to work in a team, establish contacts with each other and get along in spite of having different skills than others. Children learn to respect and value the diversity and the skills, with which each child comes to a group, which contributes to their sense of belonging.

### **IMPLICATIONS:**

The following recommendations were made on the bases of present findings and conclusions:

- Educational institutes should organize in-service short term courses, workshops and conferences for general teachers on Special education. These teachers training programme should help inculcate positive attitudes among teachers and provide knowledge and skills to handle students with intellectual impairment in regular classrooms. In-service training through seminars, workshops or short term courses enable teachers to acquire knowledge and skills for successful inclusion.
- Inclusion programme should includes the trainings of the parents of differently abled children, normal developing children and participation of the parents into the activities seems more likely to be successful inclusion.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The authors profoundly appreciate all the people who have successfully contributed in ensuring this paper is in place. Their contributions are acknowledged however their names cannot be able to be mentioned.

## **Conflict of Interest**

The authors colorfully declare this paper to bear not conflict of interests

**How to cite this article:** Swadia, H. & Jangid, N. (2018). Effectiveness of Inclusion on Social Maturity of Intellectual Disabled Children. *International Journal of Indian Psychology, 6(3), 1-16.* DIP:18.01.201/20180603, DOI:10.25215/0603.201