



Navigating Inclusion: A Comprehensive Study on Autistic Students' Integration and Experiences in Mainstream Educational Settings

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Abstract

Inclusive education promotes fairness and equal learning opportunities for all students. The main objective of the study is to investigate the participation of autistic students in mainstream schools, their challenges, inclusive strategies and their impact on both autistic students and the educational environment. The current status of inclusive education, how acceptable it has been in a developing country like India. The role of educational assistants and appropriate measures to increase the participation and equality of autistic students in inclusive education. In particular, this study shows how young children with autism participate in mainstream schools, how much their daily experience is like? How friendly and supportive they find the new environment and how they react to it. Also, what is the attitude of their parents? And how sincerely the teachers have embraced inclusive education for these children.

Keywords: *Autism, Inclusive Education, Policies, SNA*

Introduction

Inclusion in education, refers to the process of integrating all students into the educational system. Giving equal opportunities to rich and poor, high and low, male and female, rural and urban, physically and, mentally able and disabled children to study in the same school. Of Inclusive education is a process addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all Darners by increasing participation in learning within from education? (UNESCO, 1994) According to the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, run by the central government, equal rights and inclusion in the field of education for all children from pre-primary to higher secondary level have been mentioned. NEP-2020 aims to provide quality and equitable education to all children. Especially to the socially and economically backward classes (SED GS), women, transgender, SE/ST/OBC, minorities and children with special needs (CWSN). Various tools such as the use of Indian Sign Language (ISL), special training of teachers, use of ICT. Curricula have been Flexible for children of autism. Despite education being one of the basic human rights, autistic students face various problems while going to schools. Although there are policies for such students, the proper implementation of these schemes by the government is not seen. My research will try to find out the exact flaws in all these policies and try to solve them. The recent UN world Autism Awareness Day (2025) has been highlighted, where emphasis has been placed on inclusive education, employment, and healthcare. In India, the number of children suffering from autism is increasing, 2 out of 66 children are affected by this problem. This number is increasing due to increasing awareness and changing diagnostic criteria. In developing countries like India, the rate of children suffering from autism is the same as in other countries around the world. And boys are more affected by this disease than girls. This condition is increasing due to late diagnosis, lack of proper education and lack of adequate doctors. According to Leo Kanner and Hans Asperger, the concept of autism comes from the Greek word (self). Autism is a human condition that is caused by atypical development. A child with Autism

Spectrum Disorder (ASD); may experience difficulty with social interaction, communication. The child is seen doing repetitive things. Symptoms of ASD can be seen in a child from the first two years of life. The child does not make direct eye contact. The child does not respond when called by his name, he is not sensitive to sensory stimuli. That is, the main features of ASD are excessive light or sound to the mother. They react much more or more intensely to the mother than usual. They do not feel pain like normal or do not get hungry like normal children. ASD - is a lifelong process. However, with quick action, it is possible to remove their behavioural disabilities through speech therapy, occupational therapy, and oral therapy.

Significance of including children with autism in schools

Inclusive education helps autistic students. To practice social learning and experiential learning better. Communication skills increase and friendships develop naturally with classmates. As a result, they can easily establish contact with the real world in the next school.

With appropriate planned and consistent support, many children with autism can easily and naturally interact with the mainstream socially and educationally. When both autistic and neurological students enter a regular school, the diverse environment of that school helps the teachers understand the diverse mindsets of the students and helps children of normal intelligence to accept such children with autism and creates an inclusive environment. Through emotional, structured, and consistent effort in a mainstream environment, artistic children's social skills improve, which in turn increases their self-confidence, helping them achieve long-term, personal, and professional success in the future. Being educated alongside peers increases Ned's self-esteem and, in turn, these children with autism feel a strong bond with their relatives, neighbours, and society, which prevents them from becoming isolated from society.

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History of Autism

The word autism comes from autos, the Greek word for "auto's". UJ: Yuichi Bleuler first coined the term in 1940 to describe the social withdrawal of schizophrenia, while Leo Camer and Hans Asperger

The term autism is used again to describe a distinct childhood condition. 1900-1920: Eugen Bleuler uses the term autism again to describe the self-absorbed behaviour of adult schizophrenic patients.

1925: Ukrainian Grohk first studied the behavioural spectrum of autism. In 1940, Kanner and Asperger, after studying 11 children, described autism as a condition characterized by extreme isolation and difficulty communicating. In 1944, Hans Asperger, working independently, described autism in children with similar behaviour and high language and cognitive abilities, which later became known as ampullary midrash. In the 1950s and 1960s, psychologist Bruno Bettelheim believed that the condition was caused by a refrigerator mother or unresponsive parenting, which was influential for 10 decades but was later rejected. Neurobiologist Bernard Rimland DSM=1. (1980) formally separated autism from schizophrenia.

Autism

Millions of children around the world are currently affected by autism. Autism is a disorder in which children have limited social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviours. Different children exhibit different symptoms, with some children struggling with language and skills, while others gain social skills.

Common symptoms of autism include: these children do not make eye contact, do not respond when called by their name, are very late in learning to speak and are seen repeating the same words, have difficulty in nonverbal communication, engage in repetitive movements or actions, and lack interest in participating in social play with other children.

However, if autism is diagnosed early, creating a supportive environment can have a significant impact on the development of those children. Sign language and alternative communication systems can be used. Active children with autism are the ones who are not affected by symptoms Unique. Therefore, different support systems must be provided for the child with autism. Therefore, the treatment of this disorder must be continued continuously for a long time, so a good relationship must be built between parents, teachers and support organizations. Everyone in PK should be educated about autism and misconceptions should be removed. Children with good Mesa - Senior lecturer in Occupational Hamilton associate Profession Therapy is mesa@youksj.ne.uk and in Psychology Researcher indicates relatively poor outcomes for children with autism and young people at school. Most children with autism and young people in the UK are educated in main. Stream settings many but not all, have an Education, the child and cane Plan. Glykaki Paraskevi - University of East London research process show that teacher have a Positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with autism in general school. The sample consisted of eighty-five primary school teacher, including as a factor their Knowledge in the inclusion of children with autism in general school.

Literature Review

Billington, J. (2023) the researcher focused on children with autism without access to specialist support on without access to spell resource and how such children describe and make sense of their everyday experiences of mainstream school in England.

Dey and Basu (2023) -emotional action and La investigated the difficulties in social and, the difficulties in communal-Language, difficulties in imagination and flexibility of the thought of the Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) child Sample consisted to children with autism and their problem to communication.

Xinyi Peng (March 2025)

The cross-sectional study took place from July to August 2023 at 30 rehabilitation centers for children on the autism spectrum in Human Province, China Among children on the autism spectrum, 36.2% attended mainstream school. These children showed significantly higher Levels of social inclusion companied to non-attainers.

Ferguson (October 2014) this study was to explore the area of inclusion in education, from the perspective of primary school teachers, and parents of children with intellectual disabilities Teachers perspectives and experiences provided realistic insight into the professorate of archive and impel-regular school setting. Finding showed that while inclusive education is beneficial for children with and without disabilities

Objectives

1. To analyze the current Participation Rates of Autistic Students in Mainstream Schools.
2. To Identify challenges Faced by Autistic Students, Education, and Institutions in Inclusive Practices.
3. To Evaluate the Effectiveness of existing support systems for Autistic Learners in Mainstream Settings and Social Gaps.

Research Questions

The implications of inclusive education for children and societome questions have been asked through which we will understand that inclusive education is the 'best' method for children. The questions are:

1. Does the positive effect of the radiation from above have a beneficial effect when an autistic child and a child with normal intelligence sit in the same room?
2. What are the challenges of having all children sit in the same common classroom?
3. Isn't it more beneficial to have all types of children in the same class in an inclusive school? Special schools are still more beneficial for children.
4. Can children with autism and children with special needs meet their needs in the same classroom? Do they coexist amicably?
5. Is it possible to overcome the challenges that teachers and parents face every day in the fight for policies and real inclusion?

Methodology

Study Area: The Present research was carried out in selected autistic student of Madhyamgram Barasat Amdanga region of North 24 Pgs Bengal

Carried out in selected autistic student of Madhyamgram, Barasat & Amdanga region 24 Pgs (N) of west Bengal, India.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive and analytical research design to explore the relationship understanding the participation of Students in mainstream educational institutions. Also Understanding that Autistic students encounter various challenges in mainstream educational settings.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Multistage sampling technique was applied for selecting the respondents. In the first stage, the block's of Amdanga, Barasat, Madhyamgram from 24 Pgs (N) were In the & Second stage, Autistic student were identified from some main -stream school and – 23 Autistic students was from main-stream school and 7 Autistic were Students from special school included in the study. Both male and female children are selected through random sampling.

Sources and Tools of Data Collection Both primary and secondary data

Primary Data:

Prima information was collected directly respondents using the following methods.

- structured survey
- personal interview with members of autistic children family

Field observations related to live-hood activities of autistic child in mainstream school and special School.

Secondary Data:

Secondary information was gathered from books, research articles, government reports other published related to Autistic students

Techniques of Data Analysis:

After data collection, the information was systematically organized and analyzed using simple statistical techniques. Methods equal distribution frequency distribution such as percentage analysis. Were used to interpretation Rates of Current Participation Autistic Student's in Mainstream Schools, identifying challenges faced by Autistic students and Educators and Evaluating the Effectiveness of Existing Support System.

- The results of the study and presented based on the analysis of data collected from 30 Autistic students from Barasath, Amdanga Zone, 24 Pgs (N). West Bengal. The analysis focuses on Rates of Autistic Students in Main-Stream schools.

Participation Rates of Autistic student

Table - 1

Category	Number	Percentage
Autistic student in main stream school + special school	07	23.33%
Autistic students in special school	23	76.67%
Total autistic student	30	100%

Autistic students encounter various challenges in mainstream educational settings, stemming from sensory sensitivities, social communication difficulties, and rigid & institutional structures. Classrooms are often overwhelming due to noise Levels, Lighting and g Unstructured social interactions. These sensory and social demands can lead to stress and disagreement ; impacting academic performance

Table - 2

Challenges Faced	
Students	sensory overload, social and communication barriers, academy can organizational hurdles, lack of specialization
Teacher	Behavioral Management , Lack of training , collaborative challenges
Institute	Social and Communication, Difficulty in sensory overload, Inflexible Routine
Parents	lack of support and training School refusal and exclusion constant advocacy and burnout socially isolation and stigma behavioral challenges in school academic and social gaps

Support system for autistic Learners in main stream schools and colleges vary Widely in thin scope Common supports include Individualized Education Plans (IEPS), resource homes, peer mentoring programs, 3, and accent to counsellors and therapists. While these interventions have proven beneficial in many cases, their effectiveness is often contingent on implementation quality and institutional commitment

Table - 3

Support System	Effect
Applied behavior analysis	it emphasize positive behavioral and help develop social skills
Speech and language therapy	to focus on communication including argumentative and alternative communication
Occupational therapy	focus on sensory processing and functional living tasks
Social skills group	structured training for understanding social eves turn taking and problem solving

Major Findings

According to the information received from various teachers during this research, 60% of the teachers said that they do not have the necessary training to help students on the autism spectrum. Therefore, if children with autism are to be truly included, the mentality of teachers and support staff needs to change and they need to feel empathy and compassion for these children as well as their unity as a part of the society. Along with this, the training methods also need to be changed so that they can truly come to the point of inclusion.

Access to specialized support in schools, along with teacher training, is essential. Learning aids such as communication aids, sensitive provisions, and educational materials will help overcome the overall barriers faced

by autistic students. Schools will be helped to ensure that the main recreational areas, such as classrooms, libraries, and other sensitive areas, are made accessible.

The syllabus in schools should be made more flexible for children with autism. The application of the Applied Behavioural Analysis teaching process, oral examination and open-book assessment should be arranged. Instead of traditional entrance exams and examinations. The unique personality of an autistic child should be recognized and nurtured and their thoughts should be carefully observed and helped to make them more popular.

Parents and guardians of children with autism need to empathize with the children's situation and take necessary measures to help them adapt to the social environment.

Above all, the government should introduce anti-discrimination policies and campaign for a full-fledged effort to socialize children with autism by changing the perception of barriers in the classroom. Such laws should be brought in so that schools take all measures for the benefit of children with autism, i.e., sensitive, friendly classrooms, assistive technology and specially trained staff are appointed. The government should provide funding.

Recommendations

1. Individualized Support Plans: Develop tailored support plans that address the specific needs and strengths of each autistic student. These plans should include accommodations, such as sensory-friendly environments, flexible schedules, and alternative assessment methods.
2. Professional Development for Educators: Provide ongoing training for teachers and school staff on autism awareness, inclusive teaching strategies, and behavioral interventions. This ensures that educators are equipped to support autistic students effectively.
3. Creating Inclusive Classrooms: Design classrooms that are inclusive and welcoming to all students. This includes implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, offering diverse instructional materials, and promoting cooperative learning activities.
4. Leveraging Technology: Utilize assistive technologies, such as communication devices and adaptive software, to support autistic students in overcoming communication barriers and enhancing their learning experiences.
5. Promoting Peer Support: Establish peer mentoring and buddy programs that pair autistic students with supportive classmates. These initiatives encourage social interaction, build friendships, and reduce feelings of isolation.
6. Engaging Families: Involve families in the educational process by fostering open communication and collaboration. Parents and caregivers can provide valuable insights into their child's needs and preferences, contributing to more effective support plans.
7. Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns: Conduct campaigns to raise awareness about autism and promote a culture of inclusion within schools and communities. These initiatives can help dispel myths and encourage positive attitudes towards autistic individuals.
8. Monitoring and Evaluation: Implement systems to monitor the progress and outcomes of inclusion efforts. Regular assessments can identify areas for improvement and ensure that support strategies are meeting the needs of autistic students.

Conclusion

Inclusion benefits not only autistic students but also the broader educational community. It challenges educators to innovate and adapt, enhancing their ability to meet the needs of all Learners. It prepares students to thrive in diverse workplaces and communities, fostering social cohesion and mutual respect.

Moreover, inclusion sends a powerful message about the value of diversity and the importance of equity in society. By embracing the strengths and potential of autistic individuals, mainstream education can lead the way in creating a world where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

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