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## Editorial

### **Equity & Inclusion in Education: ...and how far ..?**

*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*

– Nelson Mandela

Education is the part of human life which provides stability, financial security, self-dependency, confidence, and acts as weapon to turn dreams into reality. The Delors Commission Report in 1996 proposed for vision of education on two focal concepts, one is learning throughout life and another is four pillars of learning viz. to know, to be, to do and to live together. Education cultivates thoughts and perspectives to build opinion and interpret the world around us.

Inclusion aims to include everyone, regardless of their caste, class, gender, disability or economic disparities. It is about providing equal access and opportunities to all learners, eradicating discrimination and intolerance, and making it simpler to tear down obstacles. Inclusive growth strategies must incorporate positive action measures aimed at the socially disadvantaged, excluded, economically destitute, and individuals with disabilities. Inclusion may be achieved by putting the tribal and rural poor, backward minorities, and mentally and physically disabled children, all of whom have been neglected for far too long, as underlined in the Educational Policies.

The elite and prestigious institutions substantially stay away from the education of socio-economically disadvantaged students. There are sure features of avoidance that are explicit or considerably more serious in higher education. On the other hand, students belong to privileged backgrounds usually choose science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, while the students belong to socially excluded or disadvantaged groups or rural people, choose arts and social science subjects. While access to higher education has improved for all parts of the population, disadvantaged people continue to be excluded from core courses in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The barriers of inclusive education, including geographical and financial constraints, language barrier, opportunity cost, scarcity in employment, etc. need to be properly addressed. To construct an education for a composite culture, we must ensure that all of our children not only have access to education, but also that they have equal educational chances and of acceptable quality.

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Inclusive education already becomes evidence based best practice for the students having disabilities which yields better learning outcomes in terms of scholastic and co-scholastic activities. In higher education level, the settled frameworks which hinder to inclusive education for the students having cognitive disabilities should be restructured to offer support based instruction.

Acknowledgement of students having special needs and striving for their inclusion in mainstream education systems also falls under the holism, which extensively lines up with the objectives of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016. The inclusive education is a value and civil rights issue. Students having disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities, reserve the privilege of going to a similar educational institution to which they would attend if they did not have a disability, finding a greeting environment, and being a respected person in the educational environment, and to study close to their peers or classmates.

We will fizzle as a nation on the off chance that education at any level is as yet not being available to every single person in each side of the country. There is need to foster a conscious familiarity with jobs and obligations and involvement of local community which would limit the exclusion of students based on disparity and disability. The incorporation of life skills courses, need-based courses, new pedagogical systems, research and extension activities can also fall under inclusion.

Hemanta Kr. Baruah  
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