



From Policy To Practice: Exploring Effective Interventions For Creating An Inclusive Environment At The School Level

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Abstract

A positive school climate is a analytic factor in fostering inclusive education, guarantee that student of all abilities, they feel safe, valued and supported.

This research explores the connection between school climate and inclusive education by evaluating important factors such as student's interactions and the availability of resources.

Indicate that teacher training in inclusive education peer support and well define policies contribute to a welcoming and healthy inclusive climate however there are some challenges also such as resource limitation and negative basis towards students with disabilities affects the complete establishment of inclusive education.

While looking at this we reached out to a qualitative approach through the data we have collected from teacher and student's perspectives in surveys as well as with classroom observations along with four middle schools along with inclusive education programs.

Key words: learning environment, student's interactions, inclusive schooling.

Introduction:

A positive school environment is considered as an essential element for inclusive education, where students from other backgrounds and with different abilities learn together, Inclusive education ensures that every learner including those with disabilities should get fair chances of getting equal opportunities along with a supportive setting. However achieving this goal, it requires some curriculum adjustments which depends on fostering respect with acceptance and a sense of belongingness among students and staff.

The motive of this paper is to survey the relationship between a positive school climate and its role in encouraging an inclusive education system. This research brings forward teacher's efforts school policies, peer support and the factors that contribute to effective inclusive climate. It also breakdown challenges that school, and teachers face in creating an effective and healthy environment.

Objectives of this research are as follows:

- Identity key components of a positive school climate: Including elements such as strong relationship, clear communication, supportive roles and structured learning environment.
- Examine the role of parents and the community. In supporting inclusive education focuses on aspects like parent involvement and community engagement.
- Explore the strategies for enhancing a positive school climate: emphasizing on professional development collaboration models and feedback mechanisms.

This research is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the key components of a positive school environment that supports students with special needs?
2. What roles do parents and community play in fostering a supportive school environment for inclusive education?

Literature Review

1. **Darling – Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018)** “Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success” This study focuses on importance of a positive school climate for the development of students it highlights that learning depends on reliable connections and integration of social, emotional, and academic skills. It also focuses on the role that how school climate affects students academically and socially highlighting on the fact where it focuses on social emotional learning and how climate fosters better student outcomes and draws our attention towards the role that school should implement non punitive discipline policies which not only help in enhancing teacher student relationships but also provides support towards student mental health.
2. **Teri Dary and Terry Pickeral (2013)**, "School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability." gives a complete framework for make better school climate. Author tells about the four areas of improving school climate: 'safety','relation','teaching and learning', 'outdoor environment'. These features are significant for encourage a supportive and inclusive conditions. Inclusion and School Climate: Coulston and Smith’s “School Climate and Inclusion (2013)” offered to the same series focuses on the significance of inclusive environments encourage social - emotional learning and abate barriers to education. By the given strategies by the author, school can blend student well-being and academic success.
3. **Rohi Fayaz (2019)**, “Inclusive Education in India: Concept, Need and Benefits” is about the areas of bringing disabled students to share classrooms with their normal peers in order to create a effective classroom environment. The author focuses on inclusive education to ensure safe classroom environment for disabled students with positive attitudes while paying attention to their unique abilities. It shows the challenges that are being faced in implementing inclusive education such as introducing traditional attitudes and the practices which needs to be updated while encouraging great awareness towards a productive outcome of inclusion and to help India to match with developed countries in educational and training practices.
4. **A.D. de Boer, V. Munde (2015)** , Parental point of view toward the inclusion of children with insightful and multiple disabilities in conventional primary education in the Netherlands have been a subject of interest in educational research. A study by A.D. de Boer and V. Munde emphasize the complexity of parental approach regarding inclusive education. This research suggested that while some parents aiding inclusion due to its likely benefits for social alliance and emotional growth, others convey concerns about the effect on the learning

background and the ability of schools to meet the different needs of all students. The study highlights the importance of understanding parental outlook to inform effective policies and practices that uplift inclusive education. By inspect these perspective, instructor and policymakers can better address the summons and chance associated with merge children with extreme intellectual and multiple disorder into general primary education settings.

5. **Angel Deroncele – Acosta (2024)**, “Overcoming challenges positive education in inclusive schools: multi country study” it shows the problem in inclusive schools and shares practical ways to create a positive and supportive learning environment. This multi – country education adopts a assessable methodological method, involves data collection, encoding and assessment, to inspect the perspectives of mentors, policymaker, and other contributor on inclusive education. It tells about key challenges that are existing in real time such as lack of resources, inefficient training for educators, discrimination and bias against the student and deprived knowledge about inclusion. “The PICS (positive inclusive climate for schools) model”, it discusses about some major changes in field of education, such as a flexible curriculum, inclusive and newly develop methods for assessment. It also insists on creating a positive and accessible environment in school by focusing on realistic and practical solutions, and the need for teachers who can adapt new techniques and methods and are skilled enough to meet the diverse needs students. The result stress that inclusive schooling the role of constructive education as a fundamental principal for produce inclusive school atmosphere that prioritize learner’ welfare alongside academe success. The composer focuses on the value of cooperate between schools, societies and regulators to ensure renewable inclusion.
6. **Riwu Wulan and Wira Sanjaya (2022)** " Developing Positive School climate for Inclusive education " talked about a critical role of providing a positive school climate for the advancement of inclusive education. The paper talks about emphasizing on the role to provide a supportive and inclusive school environment which plays an important role in addressing the special educational needs. The author focuses on providing the positive school environment in consideration with mutual respect among the stakeholders and highlights on the role of practices that promote equity. This school climate not only helps in promoting the academic engagement and social development of all students but also helps in providing learning to marginalized groups.

This study marks upon some of the key strategies that helps in developing a climate which includes professional development for teachers while providing them with equipments in order to practice inclusive education leading to strong bond between teachers and students and prioritizing inclusivity. According to the author inclusive education does not mean only to bring students under mainstream classrooms but also to help in promoting Diversity amongst students. With this also comes some challenges such as limited resources lack teacher training, and some recommendations have also been made that addresses the collaborative efforts made by policymakers.

7. **Sabrina B. K. and Poornima Rajendran**, “The Social Principle of Inclusive Education and Addressing Diversity in Indian Schools: An Appraisal of Post-Salamanca Initiatives in India”
India has actively promoted the idea of ‘special need children’ being integrated into mainstream schools after the Salamanca Statement in 1994 was issued. India has attempted to set an inclusionary framework for education as articulated in post-salamanca initiatives by integrating the RTE 2009 and RPWD 2016, which make provisions for usual school attendance by children with disabilities. The interrelated problem of inadequate infrastructure, societal stigma, as well as lack of trained teachers in the field, hinders progress, despite the existence of laws. In addition to community awareness and few resource-friendly initiatives like public campaigns, the authors suggest investing more in infrastructure and education. The suggestion entails greater resource allocation towards teacher training and infrastructural provisions, which would aid in properly addressing diversity in Indian education systems.

8. **Sarthaka Singh (2020)** "Inclusive Education in India Status, Importance, and Role analyzes the status and challenges of the sector". mentions the 2009 Right to Education Act and 2016 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act as attempts to integrate children with disabilities and children from poor backgrounds into regular schools. As much as these documents are laudable, there are many issues such as lack of adequate facilities and trained personnel, stigma, and poor policy execution that need attention. The paper advocates for more targeted approaches like teacher training and community education to edge out the challenges. However, the document makes us appreciate the role of inclusive education in enhancing equal learning opportunities and fostering a tolerant society and the need for all educators together with the policy makers and the society at large to build an inclusive education system.
9. **Amrit Thapa (2013)** "A review of school climate research "focuses on the key dimensions of school climate which involves safety, relationships, teaching, and learning along with institutional environment. Not only this but it also talks about the importance of school climate with improvements that are being made to improve educational outcomes emphasizing on the parts such as reducing bullying and the betterment of school. It also emphasizes on the need for more methodologies to be introduced for defining school dimensions also offering with some actionable recommendations for policy makers and researchers to promote social emotional learning in school.
10. **Wilson Hurley 2014** "Enhancing Positive School Climate via Compassion and Analytical Narrow Focusing Abilities (COMPASS)" offers very practical ideas for building an ambiance in which teachers and students feel supported and content in school. With this compass concept, one can gently combine keen analytical abilities with empathy to encourage empathy and good solution solving. Enhancing relationships, lowering tension, and fostering cooperation among the school community help to advance student results. Emphasis is given on teacher training and leadership, which helps to create and keep an inclusive environment in schools as well as provide new material on little legislative ways to support children. The concept that wealthier interactions and all-around kid support rely on teacher and leader coaching and mentorship underlies it.

Methodology

Research design

This study employs a mixed method approach by taking both qualitative and quantitative data into consideration

Participants

- Teachers (general and special educators)
- Students (with and without disabilities)
- Parents (children with special needs)

Data Collection

Collection of data was done through survey consisting of self -constructed questionnaire with multiple choice questions and open-ended questions to understand the perspective of teachers, students and parents.

To understand the existing conditions, non-participant observation was also conducted by the researcher.

Ethical considerations

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- Data was anonymized to protect participant privacy.

Results

Key components of positive school environment

1. Strong relationships

- 72% of teachers stated that they lacked training inclusive practices.
- 65% of students wanted more inclusive group activities.

2. Clear communication

- 45% of parents felt uninformed about school decisions affecting their child.
- Teachers rated communication effectiveness as 3.5/5 on average

3. Structured learning environment.

- Only 30% of schools had fully implemented inclusive education policies.
- Parents expressed concern about limited accommodations for their children.

4. Role of parents and Community

- 58% of parents wanted greater involvement in decision making.
- Only 30% of schools engaged with local organizations for inclusive programs.

Discussion

The research identifies several major challenges inherent in special education: a lack of resources, a dearth of time, the range of challenges inherent in creating and implementing Individualized Education Plans, inadequate teacher training, parental involvement, and community engagement. Together, these factors create obstacles for any effective service delivery to students with additional needs.

1. **Resource limitations-** Lack of funding is a key hurdle confronting special education. Too many schools have difficulty providing adequate programming and support for students with disabilities, usually because of financial constraints. The effects of financial limitations usually translate into few trained special education teachers, limited specialized materials, limited assistive technologies, and limited classroom accommodations. Such limitations do little to assist with personalizing teaching for their students. Months in actual training for the special education teachers further complicate this case. Teacher shortages in this area are therefore compounded by heavy workload, lack of support from classroom administrators, and nonavailability of quality teacher preparation. Without these critical improvements, schools are sometimes forced to hire uncertified or emergency-credentialed teachers, particularly in underserved areas.
2. **Time constraints – time management** forms one more big challenge. Educators have packed schedules that allow for little time to work on and prepare the individualized education plans, the IEPs, for each student. The complicated process of making sure IEPs are comprehensive requires major collaboration among the teachers, parents, and support staff. However, time constraints, different priorities, and lack of clear communication can all hinder effective teamwork, ultimately resulting in gaps in student support. Moreover, the heavy load of administration duties associated with documentation and compliance takes away from the time when educators

could be addressing instruction and engagement with students. This administrative overburden can cause great distress and, consequently, low job satisfaction, which further aggravates the already shaky state of special education.

3. Complexities in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) -Developing and implementing effective IEPs is a cornerstone of special education, yet it poses considerable challenges. The process necessitates meticulous coordination among educators, parents, and specialists to tailor educational strategies that meet each student's unique needs. However, constraints such as limited time, resources, and communication barriers can impede the creation of effective IEPs, potentially compromising the quality of education that students with special needs receive.
4. Teacher Training Deficiencies - The data indicates that many teachers lack proper training in inclusive education, a finding consistent with prior research. This deficiency underscores the need for mandatory professional development programs to equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support students with diverse learning needs
5. Parental attitudes toward inclusion are mixed. While many parents desire more involvement in their children's educations, schools may not have the formal avenues through which such collaboration could be pursued. This disconnect could hinder the development and implementation of viable support strategies for the children with special needs.
6. 6. Very few schools say that they are engaging with local groups, indicating that there is an urgent need for policy changes at the higher level to improve support networks and community involvement.

Implications and Recommendations

To address these challenges a multi-faceted solution is needed with components focused in three areas:

- Funding Advocacy: Working to increase the amount of financial support available through public and private sector means thereby allowing districts to better able fund the necessary staffing and resources for special education.
- Targeted Development: Providing current educators with extensive training on managing differences will go a long way to make attrition rates decrease and give them the tools they need to actively engage various learners.
- Coordination Through Personalization: Creating time in the day where teachers, may work together with their colleagues, support staff or families, collaborate on the best IEPs and strategies geared to assist student learning.
- Outreach in Design: Offering parent engagement in formal contexts can increase and provide more targeted and intense support as ideas and work plans are better integrated with schools.
- Networking Beyond: Connecting the dots between community groups and the schools themselves can help supply additional resources for classes and programs for students with disabilities. This demonstrates that recognizing and overcoming challenges may lead to a more fair and fruitful educational experience for all students, offenders or not.

Conclusion

This research validates the significance of a supportive school climate for the achievements of special students who want need and require much more than the rest. While also underlining the critical role of teacher training, parental and community partnerships in promoting inclusiveness. Opportunities for future studies that conclude this research-Investigate roles of school leaders touching on inclusive education, Study the long-term effects of parental involvement on student success.

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