CHAPTER TWO
CONCEPT OF INCLUSION

Sub-topics

- Definition of inclusion,
- Rationales for inclusion,
- Factors that influenced development of inclusion,
- Benefits of inclusion to students, teachers, parents and society,
- Characteristics of inclusive society, school and inclusive classroom environments,
- Strategies to implement inclusion
- Differentiate the major barriers to inclusion.

2.1. Definition of Inclusion

Inclusion refers to — an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education/services for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities and eliminating all forms of discrimination. Inclusive services at any level are quality provisions without discrimination or partiality and meeting the diverse needs of people.

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all persons through increasing participation in learning, employment, services, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion at all social contexts. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all people, a conviction that it is the responsibility of the social system to educate all children (UNESCO 2005), employ and provide social services.

Inclusion is defined as having a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education and services. It acknowledges that learning begins at birth and continues throughout life, and includes learning in the home, the community, and in formal, informal and non-formal situations.

Inclusion seeks to enable communities, systems and structures in all cultures and contexts to combat discrimination, celebrate diversity, promote participation and overcome barriers to learning and participation for all people. It is part of a wider strategy promoting inclusive development, with the goal of creating a world where there is peace, tolerance, and sustainable use of resources, social justice, and where the basic needs and rights of all are met.

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This definition has the following components:

1) Concepts about learners

¬ Education is a fundamental human right for all people

- Learning begins at birth and continues throughout life
- All children have a right to education within their own community
- Everyone can learn, and any child can experience difficulties in learning
- All learners need their learning supported child-focused teaching benefits all children.

2) Concepts about the education system and schools

- It is broader than formal schooling
- it is flexible, responsive educational systems
- It creates enabling and welcoming educational environments
- It promotes school improvement – makes effective schools
- It involves whole school approach and collaboration between partners.

3) Concepts about diversity and discrimination

- It promotes combating discrimination and exclusionary pressures at any social sectors
- It enables responding to/embracing diversity as a resource not as a problem
- It prepares learners for an inclusive society that respects and values difference.

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4) Concepts about processes to promote inclusion

- ✓ It helps to identifying and overcoming barriers to participation and exclusionary pressures
- ✓ It increases real participation of all collaboration, partnership between all stakeholders
- ✓ It promotes participatory methodology, action research, collaborative enquiry and other related activities

5) Concepts about resources

- ➢ Promotes unlocking and fully using local resources redistributing existing resources
- ➢ It helps to perceive people (children, parents, teachers, members of marginalized groups, etc) as key resources
- ➢ It helps to use appropriate resources and support within schools and at local levels for the needs of different children, e.g. mother tongue tuition, Braille, assistive devices. McLeskey and Waldron (2000) have identified inclusion and non-inclusive practices.

According to them inclusion includes the following components:

- ➢ Students with disabilities and vulnerability attend their neighborhood schools
- ➢ Each student is in an age-appropriate general education classroom
- ➢ Every student is accepted and regarded as a full and valued member of the class and the school community.
- ➢ Special education supports are provided to each student with a disability within the context of the general education classroom.
- ➢ All students receive an education that addresses their individual needs
- ➢ No student is excluded based on type or degree of disability.
- ➢ All members of the school (e.g., administration, staff, students, and parents) promote cooperative/collaborative teaching arrangements
- ➢ There is school-based planning, problem-solving, and ownership of all students and programs
- ➢ Employed according to their capacities without discriminations

- On the other hand, they argue that inclusion does not mean:
- Placing students with disabilities into general education classrooms without careful planning and adequate support.
- Reducing services or funding for special education services.
- Placing all students who have disabilities or who are at risk in one or a few designated classrooms.
- Teachers spending a disproportionate amount of time teaching or adapting the curriculum for students with disabilities.
- Isolating students with disabilities socially, physically, or academically within the general education school or classroom.
- Endangering the achievement of general education students through slower instruction or a less challenging curriculum.
- Relegating special education teachers to the role of assistants in the general education classroom.
- Requiring general and special education teachers to team together without careful planning and well-defined responsibilities.

2. Principles of Inclusion

The fundamental principle of inclusion is that all persons should learn, work and live together wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusion extends beyond special needs arising from disabilities, and includes consideration of other sources of disadvantage and marginalization, such as gender, poverty, language, ethnicity, and geographic isolation. The complex inter-relationships that exist among these factors and their interactions with disability must also be a focus of attention. ***Inclusion begins with the premise that all persons have unique characteristics, interests, abilities and particular learning needs and, further, that all persons have equal access education, employment and services***. Inclusion implies transition from separate, segregated learning and working environments for persons with disabilities to community based systems. Moreover, effective transitions from segregated services to inclusive system requires careful planning and structural changes to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with appropriate accommodation and supports that ensure an inclusive learning and working environment.

Furthermore, UNESCO (2005) has provided four major inclusion principles that support inclusive practice. These include:

1. ***Inclusion is a process*.**
2. ***Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers that hinders the development of persons with disabilities.***
3. ***Inclusion is about the presence, participation and achievement of all persons.***
4. ***Inclusion invokes a particular emphasis on those who may be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement*.**

3. Rationale for Inclusion

Why do you think inclusion in education is implemented in many countries of the world? The major rationales include: educational, social, legal, economic and inclusive society building foundations

Rationales** for **Inclusion and Their Respective Descriptions **Educational Foundations**

- Children do better academically, psychologically and socially in inclusive settings.
- A more efficient use of education resources.
- Decreases dropouts and repetitions
- Teachers competency(knowledge, skills, collaboration, satisfaction

Social Foundation

- Segregation teaches individuals to be fearful, ignorant and breeds prejudice.

- All individuals need an education that will help them develop relationships and prepare them for life in the wider community.

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- Only inclusion has the potential to reduce fear and to build friendship, respect and understanding.

Legal Foundations

- All individuals have the right to learn and live together.
- Human being shouldn‘t be devalued or discriminated against by being excluded or sent away because of their disability.
- There are no legitimate reasons to separate children for their education

Economic Foundation

- Inclusive education has economic benefit, both for individual and for society.
- Inclusive education is more cost-effective than the creation of special schools across the country.
- Children with disabilities go to local schools
- Reduce wastage of repetition and dropout
- Children with disabilities live with their family use community infrastructure
- Better employment and job creation opportunities for people with disabilities

Foundations for Building Inclusive Society

- Formation of mutual understanding and appreciation of diversity
- Building up empathy, tolerance and cooperation

¬ Promotion of sustainable development

2.3. Factors that Influenced Development of Inclusion

- Inclusiveness originated from three major ideas. These include: education is a basic human right; quality education results from inclusion of students with diverse needs and ability differences, and there is no clear demarcation between the characteristics of students with and without disabilities and vulnerabilities. Moreover, inclusion has got the world's attention because it is supposed to solve the world's major problems occurring in social, economic, religious, educational and other areas of the world.
- For instance, it is supposed to : counteract-social, political, economical and educational challenges that happen due to globalization impact; enhance psychosocial, academic and other benefits to students with and without special needs education; help all citizens exercise educational and human rights; enhance quality education for all in regular class rooms through inclusion; create sustainable environmental development that is suitable for all human beings; create democratic and productive society that promote sustainable development; build an attitude of respecting and valuing of differences in human beings; and ultimately build an inclusive society.

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Inclusive education is facilitated by many influencing actors. Some of the major drivers include:

1. **Communities: pre-colonial and indigenous** approaches to education and community-based programs movement that favor inclusion of their community members.
2. **Activists and advocates**: the combined voices of primary stakeholders – representatives of groups of learners often excluded and marginalized from education (e.g. disabled activists; parents advocating for their children; child rights advocates; and those advocating for women/girls and minority ethnic groups).
3. **The quality education and school improvement movement**: in both North and South, the issues of quality, access and inclusion are strongly linked, and contribute to the understanding and practice of inclusive education as being the responsibility of education systems and schools.
4. **Special educational needs movement**: the ‗new thinking' of the special needs education movement – as demonstrated in the Salamanca Statement – has been a positive influence on inclusive education, enabling schools and systems to really respond to a wide range of diversity.
5. **Involvement o**f **International agencies**: the UN is a major influence on the development of inclusive education policy and practice. Major donors have formed a partnership – the Fast Track Initiative – to speed progress towards the EFA goals. E.g. UNESCO, etc.
6. **Involvement o**f **NGOs movements, networks and campaigns**: a wide range of civil society initiatives, such as the Global Campaign for Education, seek to bring policy and practice together and involve all stakeholders based on different situations
7. **Other factors**: the current world situation and practical experiences in education**.** The current world situation presents challenges such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, political instability, trends in resource distribution, diversity of population, and social inclusion. This necessitates implementation of inclusion to solve the problems. On the other hand, practical experiences in education offers lessons learned from failure and success in mainstream, special and inclusive education. Moreover, practical demonstrations of successful inclusive education in different cultures and contexts are a strong influence on its development

Benefits of Inclusion

It is now understood that inclusion benefits communities, families, teachers, and students by ensuring that children with disabilities attend school with their peers and providing them with adequate support to succeed both academically and socially.

8. **Benefits for Students with Special Needs Education**

In inclusive settings people will develop:

- Appropriate models of behavior. They can observe and imitate socially acceptable behaviors of the students without special needs

- Improved friendships with the social environment

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- Increased social initiations, interactions, relationships and networks
- Gain peer role models for academic, social and behavior skills
- Increased achievement of individualized educational program (IEP) goals
- Greater access to general curriculum
- Enhanced skill acquisition and generalization in their learning

¬ improved academic achievement which leads to quality education service s

¬ Attending inclusive schools increases the probability that students with SEN will continue to participate in a variety of integrated settings throughout their lives (increased inclusion in future environments that contribute building of inclusive society).

¬ Improved school staff collaboration to meet these students‘ needs and ability differences

¬ Increased parental participation to meet these students‘ needs and ability differences

¬ Enhanced families integration into the community

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2. Benefits for persons without Special Needs Education

Students without special educational needs (SEN) will:

¬ Have a variety of opportunities for interacting with their age peers who experience SEN in inclusive school settings.

¬ serve as peer tutors during instructional activities

¬ Play the role of a special _buddy‘ during lunch, in the bus or playground.

¬ Gain knowledge of a good deal about tolerance, individual difference, and human exceptionality.

¬ Learn that students with SEN have many positive characteristics and abilities.

¬ Have chance to learn about many of the human service profession such as special education, speech therapy, physical therapy, recreation therapy, and vocational rehabilitation. For some, exposure to these areas may lead to career choices.

¬ Have increased appreciation, acceptance and respect of individual differences among human beings that leads to increased understanding and acceptance of diversity

¬ Get greater opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others

¬ Have increased academic outcomes

¬ have opportunity to learn to communicate, and deal effectively with a wide range of individuals; this prepares them to fully participate in society when they are adults that make them build an inclusive society

3. Benefits for Teachers and Parents/Family

- Inclusive education has benefit to teachers. The benefit includes: developing their knowledge and skills that meet diverse students‘ needs and ability differences to enhancing their skills to work with their stakeholders; and gaining satisfaction in their profession and other aspects. Similarly, parents/family benefit from inclusive education. For example, parents benefit from implementation of inclusive education in developing their positive attitude towards their children‘s education, positive feeling toward their participation, and appreciation to differences among humankinds and so on. For detailed information, see the table below. when they participate in inclusive education of their children.

Benefits for Teachers

- They have more opportunities to learn new ways to teach different kinds of students.
- They gain new knowledge, such as the different ways children learn and can be taught.
- They develop more positive attitudes and approaches towards different people with diverse needs.
- They have greater opportunities to explore new ideas by communicating more often with others from within and outside their school, such as in school clusters or teacher networks, or with parents and community members.
- They can encourage their students to be more interested, more creative and more attentive
- They can experience greater job satisfaction and a higher sense of accomplishment when ALL children are succeeding in school to the best of their abilities.

- They get opportunities to exchange information about instructional activities and teaching

Benefits for Parents/Family

They:

- Learn more about how their children are being educated in schools with their peers in an inclusive environment
- Become personally involved and feel a greater sense of accomplishment in helping their children to learn.
- Feel valued and consider themselves as equal partners in providing quality learning opportunities for children.
- Learn how to deal better with their children at home by using techniques that the teachers use in school.
- Find out ways to interact with others in the community, as well as to understand and help solve each other's problems.
- Know that their children—and ALL children—are receiving a quality education.

strategies, thus expanding the skills of both general and special educators

- They benefit from develop Developing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving skills to creatively address challenges regarding student learning

- Develop positive attitude that help them promoting the recognition and appreciation that all students have strengths and are contributing members of the school community as well as the society

- Experience positive attitude about themselves and their children by seeing their children accepted by others, successful in the inclusive setting, and belonging to the community where they live

2.5. Benefits for Society

- Inclusion goes beyond education and should involve consideration of employment, recreation, health and living conditions. It should therefore involve transformations across all government and other agencies at all levels of society.

When students with special needs and without special needs are educated through quality inclusive education, it not only benefits students, teachers and parents it also benefits the society. Some of the major benefits may include:

Introduction of students with disabilities and vulnerabilities into mainstream schools bring in the students into local communities and neighborhoods and helps break down barriers and prejudice that prevail in the society towards persons with disability.

Communities become more accepting of difference, and everyone benefits from a friendlier, open environment that values and appreciates differences in human beings.

Meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of communities own cost effective non-segregated schooling system that services both students with and without special needs education.

Ultimate Goal of Inclusion

- The goal of inclusive education is to create schools where everyone belongs. By creating inclusive schools, we ensure that there‘s a welcoming place in the community for everyone after their school year‘s end. Students educated together have a greater understanding of difference and diversity. Students educated together have fewer fears about difference and disability. An inclusive school culture creates better long-term outcomes for all students.

Typical students who are educated alongside peers with developmental disabilities understand more about the ways that they’re all alike.

Inclusive society is a necessary precondition for inclusive growth is a society which does not exclude or discriminate against its citizens on the basis of disability, caste, race, gender, family or community, a society which _levels the playing field for investment‘ and leaves no one behind. Thus, Inclusive growth which is equitable that offers equality of opportunity to all as well as protection in market and employment transitions results from inclusive society.

5. Features of Inclusive Environment

- What could be the major components of inclusive environment in terms of inclusive education?

An inclusive environment is one in which members feel respected by and connected to one another. An inclusive environment is an environment that welcomes all people, regardless of their disability and other vulnerabilities. It recognizes and uses their skills and strengthens their abilities. An inclusive service environment is respectful, supportive, and equalizing. An inclusive environment reaches out to and includes individuals with disabilities and vulnerabilities at all levels — from first time participants to board members.

It has the following major characteristics:

- it ensures the respect and dignity of individuals with disabilities
- it meets current accessibility standards to the greatest extent possible to all people with special needs
- provides accommodations willingly and proactively

Persons with disabilities are welcomed and are valued for their contributions as individuals.

2.6. Inclusive Environments

- An inclusive environment is a place that is adjusted to individuals‘ needs and not vice versa – that individuals are adjusted to the environmental needs. It acknowledges that individual differences among individuals are a source of richness and diversity, and not a problem, and that various needs and the individual pace of learning and development can be met successfully with a wide range of flexible approaches. Besides, the environment should involve continuous process of changes directed towards strengthening and encouraging different ways of participation of all members of the community.

An inclusive environment is also directed towards developing culture, policy and practice which meet pupils‘ diversities, towards identifying and removing obstacles in learning and participating, towards developing a suitable provisions and supporting individuals.

Therefore, successful environment has the following characteristics:

¬ It develops whole-school/environment processes that promote inclusiveness and quality provisions and practice that are responsive to the individual needs and diversities

¬ It recognizes and responds to the diverse needs of their individuals and ensuring quality provisions for all through appropriate accommodations, organizational arrangements, resource use and partnerships with their community.

¬ It is committed to serve all individuals together regardless of differences. It is also deeply committed to the belief that all persons can learn, work and be productive.

¬ It involves restructuring environment, culture, policy, and practice.

¬ It promoting pro-social activities

¬ It makes provides services and facilities equally accessible to all people

¬ It involves mobilizing resources within the community

¬ It is alert to and uses a range of multi-skilled personnel to assist people in their learning and working environment.

¬ It strives to create strong links with, clinicians, caregivers, and staff in local schools, work place, disability services providers and relevant support agencies within the wider community.

¬ It develops social relationships as an equal member of the class. It is also the classroom responsive to the diversity of individuals‘ academic, social and personal learning needs.

Barriers to Inclusion

¬ Though many countries seem committed to inclusion their rhetoric, and even in their legislation and policies, practices often fall short. Reasons for the policy-practice gap in inclusion are diverse. The major barriers include:

¬ Problems related with societal values and beliefs- particularly the community and policy makers negative attitude towards students with disability and vulnerabilities.

Inclusion cannot flourish in a society that has prejudice and negative attitude towards persons with disability.

¬ Economic factors- this is mainly related with poverty of family, community and society at large

¬ Lack of taking measures to ensure conformity of implementation of inclusion practice with policies

¬ Lack of stakeholders taking responsibility in their cooperation as well as collaboration for inclusion

¬ Conservative traditions among the community members about inclusion

¬ Lack of knowledge and skills among teachers regarding inclusive education

¬ Rigid curricula, teaching method and examination systems that do not consider students with dives needs and ability differences.

¬ Fragile democratic institutions that could not promote inclusion

¬ Inadequate resources and inaccessibility of social and physical environments

¬ Large class sizes that make teachers and stakeholders meet students‘ diverse needs

¬ Globalization and free market policy that make students engage in fierce completion, individualism and individuals‘ excellence rather than teaching through cooperation, collaboration and group excellence.

¬ Using inclusive models that may be imported from other countries.

Chapter summary

- Inclusion is defined from the concept of education process of education that is aimed at meeting students‘ diverse needs in regular classrooms. It focuses not only students with special educational needs but also students without special needs. It is based on the concept respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities and eliminating all forms of discrimination in educational, social, economic and other aspects o f life.
- The concept of inclusive education originated from three major ideas. These include: inclusive education is a basic human right; quality education results from inclusion of students with diverse needs and ability differences, and there is no clear demarcation between the characteristics of students with and without disabilities and vulnerabilities. Its philosophy centers on enabling communities, systems and structures in all cultures and contexts to fight discrimination, celebrate diversity, promote participation and overcome barriers to learning and participation for all people (persons with and without special educational needs).
- It is part of a wider strategy promoting inclusive development, with the goal of creating a world where there is peace, tolerance, and sustainable use of resources, social justice, and where the basic needs and rights of all persons are met.
- Inclusion concept evolved from special and integrated education based on the notion that both special needs and integrated/mainstreaming education do not address unique needs, characteristics of students with in regular schools classrooms.
- The concept of inclusion has a number of rationales: educational, social, economic, legal and foundations or inclusive society. Specifically, it has also benefits to students with and without special educational needs, parents, teachers and society at large. Inclusion is implemented as on its ultimate goal which is aimed building an inclusive society.
- The concept of inclusion development is influenced by different factors: communities, activists and advocates, the quality education and school improvement movement, special educational needs movement, involvement of international agencies, involvement of NGOs movements, networks and campaigns, and other factors such as current world situation and demand or quality education.

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- Inclusive education implementation needs adjusting schools and classrooms environments to address unique needs of students with diverse needs and ability differences. These environments should be adjusted address factors that address the students‘ rights, respecting and valuing differences, foster team work, and improve academic achievement, promote healthy psychosocial development.
- Implementation inclusion in education aces number of barriers. The barriers are related with lack of teachers knowledge and skills, their negative attitude; rigid curriculum and teaching and learning methods; lack of active participation of relevant stakeholders; lack of resources and facilities; globalization and free market economic policy; and lack of considering local indigenous values, ideologies and culture and other related factors.