

Academic Resilience

Issues, Challenges
and
Strategies



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Dr. Geetika Nidhi
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Chapter 10

Barriers to Academic resilience in Persons with Special Needs

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Abstract

Inclusion refers to the practice of removing barriers to learning and participation, such as exclusion, discrimination, and other impediments, while simultaneously expanding opportunities for involvement for all the students. Through the lens of inclusion, differences between children and adults are seen as a resource for educational growth. It is about aiding schools so that they can become more sensitive to the varied histories, interests, experiences, knowledge, and abilities of students.

Keywords: Persons with Special Needs, Academic Resilience

Introduction

In an era where 'Inclusive Education' has been emphasized as the right path towards sustainable development, focused initiatives for the welfare of Divyangjan (persons with Special Needs) are essential. Persons with Special Needs, Divyangjan and person with disability are three terms which are being used interchangeably in various literatures and common practices in India, however there is a difference between these three terms, as, person with Special Needs are specifically used for their special educational needs. People with any kind of disabilities are pre exposed because of the many barriers they face like social, economic, infrastructural, attitudinal, physical, and financial barriers. Addressing these barriers will unlock the potential of so many people who can contribute to the world in very tremendous ways as they are an important part of the society and human resource for a nation and here the academic resilience is required.

Inclusion refers to the practice of removing barriers to learning and participation, such as exclusion, discrimination, and other impediments, while simultaneously expanding opportunities for involvement for all the students. Through the lens of inclusion, differences between children and adults are seen as a resource for educational growth. It is about aiding schools so that they can become more sensitive to the varied histories, interests, experiences, knowledge, and abilities of students. When most of the

children first start attending school, they are met with a variety of challenges. When youngsters are confronted with obstacles, their capacity for learning and involvement is diminished. Because of these obstacles, they find themselves in a position where they are at a disadvantage. They are completely unprepared to deal with the circumstances at hand. Children's decisions to stop attending school are frequently influenced by factors such as these hurdles. There are also potential obstacles to be discovered outside of the school, such as within families and communities. For all children who are oppressed, marginalized, discriminated against, and excluded from educational opportunities and school accessibility, there is a pressing need to create an inclusive environment by determining the educational needs of each child and instituting systemic reforms both inside and outside of the classrooms. This must be done in order to bring about an inclusive environment. In the field of education, inclusion refers to the process of cultivating partnerships that are mutually supportive between schools and the communities that surround them. It leads to an awareness of how people can make progress when they link their actions together in a collective effort.

To ensure their equal participation and sustainable development along with academic resilience, several models were used from recent times till today. Several models of defining disability have been developed to try to address the many types of disabilities. Models of disability provide a basic framework for society to formulate the programs and services, laws, regulations and structures are developed, which affect the lives of people living with a disability. The primary models of disability used are the Medical Model, Functional Model, and Social Model, etc.

MODELS OF DISABILITY

Traditional Model: The traditional model describes Disabilities as Will of God/test from God or a method of Divine punishment.

Charity Model: People with disabilities are often considered inferior, useless, dependent, a burden to society, live on charity and burden to society etc. Lower social status families hide them out of shame. They were objects of pity, and were humiliated in relationships with others.

Medical Model: The medical model describes disability as a repercussion of a health condition, disease or caused by a trauma that can disrupt the functioning of a person in a physiological or cognitive way. This model is a conceptualization of disability as a condition a person has and focuses on the prevention, elimination treatment or curing of the disabling condition. It includes pre-natal genetic testing & selective abortion.

Functional Model - This model is similar to the medical model in that it conceives disability as an impairment or deficit. Disability is caused by

physical, medical or cognitive deficits. The disability itself limits a person's functioning or the ability to perform functional activities.

Social Model – The social model of disability sees the issue of "disability" as a socially created problem and a matter of the full integration of individuals into society. In this model, disability is not an attribute of an individual, but rather a complex collection of conditions, many of which are created by the social environment. Hence, the management of the problem requires social action and collective responsibility of society at large to make the environmental modifications necessary for the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of social life. The issue is both cultural and ideological, requiring individual, community, and large-scale social change. From this perspective, equal access for someone with an impairment/disability is a human Rights issue of major concern. This model focuses on barriers facing people with disabilities instead of concentrating on impairments and deficits of the person with a disability. In this model a person's activities are limited not by the impairment or condition but by environment, and barriers are consequences of a lack of social organization.

Human Rights Model:

This model recognizes that people with disability are also a part of the society. In present context, this model is more comprehensive and global. It considers that persons with disability do have '**civil and political Rights**' (voting, freedom of expression, economic, social and cultural Rights health, Education). This ensures the persons with disability and their families to reclaim their place as '**PERSONS**', with Rights and duties.

Academic resilience refers to students' capacity to perform high despite of a disadvantaged background. Academic resilience has been defined as a capacity to overcome acute and/or chronic adversity that is seen as a major threat to a student's educational development. Accomplishing equity in education, a better understanding of academic resilience may help policymakers and educators to support students from a disadvantaged background in improving their academic performance. However, different conceptualizations of academic resilience may result in conflicting conclusions. It is therefore crucial to ensure the validity of a definition. Studies on academic resilience typically employ some operationalization of socioeconomic status (SES) as an indicator of students' risk or adversity, and they use some type of educational outcome as an indicator of positive adaptation (Tudor and Spray 2017). Thresholds are usually used to combine continuous SES and outcome measures into a binary variable that indicates academic resilience or non-resilience

The theoretical development about resilience has gone through four waves: (1) identifying resilient qualities, (2) uncovering the resilience process, (3)

promoting resilience through prevention and intervention, and (4) focusing on the dynamics of adaptation and change (Masten 2007). The latter means that resilience may vary across contexts and over time (Tudor and Spray 2017). It is based around two core concepts: adversity and positive adaptation (Windle 2011). Correspondingly, in the context of schooling, academic resilience is defined by some measure of adversity in terms of early traits, conditions and experiences and by some measure of increased likelihood to succeed in school (Wang et al. 1994).

Barriers to inclusion

These barriers refer to:

1. **Attitude** is the source of many barriers that people with disabilities face. Attitude relates to stereotyping and prejudice and directly correlates with how we deal with the problem overall. Many regard a disability as a tragic shortcoming of someone instead of proactively seeing the problem. Being proactive means considering a disability as a social responsibility to proactively accommodate disabled people to live a fulfilling life.

2. **Communication barriers** are common with people who are having trouble hearing, speaking or understanding in general. For example, not many products have provisions for vision-impaired people like a description in Braille. Alternatively, only a few people learn sign language that creates a significant communication barrier for many.

3. **Physical barriers** are everywhere. From the moment a disabled person steps out of home must deal with many obstacles. From walking on the pavement to coming down or climbing up the stairs, people with disabilities face various obstacles.

4. **Policy barriers** are due to a lack of awareness of disability inclusion. Policy needs to ensure enforceable laws that guarantee equal participation to our fellow impaired citizens' walks of life. Also, wherever this is impossible, the state should give benefits that guarantee decent living conditions. However, this should not be regarded as a charity (see attitude above) but rather as compensation for the State's inability to provide equal opportunities to equal citizens under the law.

5. **Social barriers** are everywhere and follow a person with a disability for life. These barriers have to do with how they grow, learn, work, live and age. For instance, people with disabilities are less likely to graduate high school, find work or have a good income.

6. **Transportation barriers** make disabled persons dependent on others for everyday things. Either they cannot drive or do not have access to convenient private or public transportation means. This dependence on others hinders their ability to travel and, therefore, to maintain a stable job.

Legislations to support resilience

By taking some serious steps from THE UNITED NATIONS and the governments of all countries everywhere, the millions of people with disabilities who are denied access to health, Rehabilitation, support, Education, and employment are getting the chance to live their life with dignity.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities protects all persons with disabilities, who are defined in Article 1 as including " ... those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others." This broad definition explains and incorporates what is known as the social model of disability. It recognizes that disability is an evolving concept, and that we are often prevented from exercising all of our human Rights and fundamental freedoms by barriers of attitude and environment which have been placed in our mind. In other words, the Convention seeks to alter social attitudes by ensuring that governments, individuals and organizations recognize that they have the same human Rights and fundamental freedoms as all other persons including disabled (Divyangjan).

On this notion, In India, The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2006 recognizes disabled persons as valuable human resources. It seeks to create an environment that provides those equal opportunities, protection of their Rights, and full participation in society along with equal entitlement for Education and Rehabilitation.

Disabilities covered under Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in India are based on an evolving and dynamic concept. The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities. The 21 disabilities are Blindness, Low-vision, Leprosy Cured persons, Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing), Locomotors Disability, Dwarfism, Intellectual Disability, Mental Illness, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Chronic Neurological conditions, Specific Learning Disabilities, Multiple Sclerosis, Speech and Language, Thalassemia, Haemophilia, Sickle Cell disease, Multiple Disabilities including deaf blindness, Parkinson's disease and Acid Attack victims.

ACTS AND LEGISLATIONS

Working on the model of human Rights, the Constitution of India through its Preamble, inter-alia seeks to secure to all its citizens; Justice (social, economic and political); Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity.

Part-III of the Constitution provides for a set of six Fundamental Rights to all the citizens (and in a few cases to non-citizens also), like

- Right to Equality;
- Right to Freedom of Religion
- Cultural and Educational Rights
- Right to Freedom;
- Right against Exploitation;
- Right to Constitutional Remedies

All these Rights are also available to the Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) even though no specific mention of such persons appears in this part of the Constitution.

The Directive Principles of State Policy

This has been incorporated in Part - IV of the Constitution. These principles are intended to be the imperative basis of State policy. Article 41 of Constitution of India provides that the State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the Right to work, to Education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want.

Relief to the disabled is a state subject by virtue of entry No. 09 of list II of the Constitution of India. Besides, the following provisions of the Constitution take care of the issues pertaining to PwDs:

- (i) Eleventh Schedule to Article 243-G: "Social welfare, including welfare of the handicapped and mentally retarded." (Entry No. 26),
- (ii) Twelfth Schedule to Article 243-W: "Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded." (Entry 09).

The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992:

The Rehabilitation Council of India was set up under the abovementioned Act. The Council regulates and monitors the training of Rehabilitation professionals and personnel and promotes research in Rehabilitation and special Education. The Council has been entrusted with the following functions: -

Determining minimum standards of Education; (ii) Making recommendations to the Department regarding recognition of qualifications, granted by universities, etc., in India for Rehabilitation professionals/other personnel; (iii) Making recommendations to the Department regarding recognition of qualification of Institutes outside India; (iv) Conducting Inspections in examinations; (v) Registering Rehabilitation professionals/other personnel and (vi) Determining privileges and professional conduct of registered persons.

The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999

The Government has established the National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities to meet the following objective:

- (i) To enable and empower persons with disability to live as independently and as fully as possible within and as close to the community to which they belong.
- (ii) To strengthen facilities to provide support to persons with disability to live within their own families.
- (iii) To extend support to registered organizations to provide need-based services during period of crisis in the family of persons with disability.
- (iv) To deal with problems of persons with disability who do not have family support.
- (v) To promote measures for the care and protection of persons with disability in the event of death of their parent or guardian
- (vi) To evolve procedures for the appointment of guardians and trustees for persons with disability requiring such protection.
- (vii) To facilitate the realization of equal opportunities, protection of Rights and full participation of persons with disability.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

India was a signatory to the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region, adopted at the meeting to launch the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993-2002, convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific at Beijing from December 01-05, 1992. In order to give effect to the Proclamation, the Indian Government enacted The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. The Act provided for Education, Rehabilitation, employment, non-discrimination and social security to persons with disabilities. Now this act is replaced by the Rights of persons with disabilities act, 2016. This act has to give effect to the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The United Nations General Assembly adopted its convention, on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the 13th day of December, 2006, UNCRPD oblige the state to include full recognition of civil, political, social, economic, and cultural Rights to PWDs. The aforesaid Convention lays down the following principles for empowerment of

persons with disabilities;

(a) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons.

(b) Non-discrimination.

(c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society.

(d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity.

This law will increase the Rights and entitlements for persons with disabilities, protect them from discrimination, facilitate mainstreaming, access to care and treatment and also strengthen enforcement mechanisms.

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