

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES THROUGH THE INCLUSIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

The word inclusion means the act of combining two or more things to work together. In social science studies, inclusion refers to linking of related subjects, facts, concepts and knowledge while teaching and learning. Lecturing approach of teaching was not encouraging the students to identify themselves with their own historical, geographical and political traditions. It is indeed feeling to integrate the subjects like History, Civics and Geography to one that would also involve physical and manual activities. This study was to investigate the extent to which school teachers in Delhi apply the inclusive approach when teaching Social Studies. This study aims to know the extent to which teachers understand and apply the inclusive approach when teaching Social Studies during class learning. The study was guided by the questions to what extent does school teachers in Delhi apply the inclusive approach when teaching Social Studies?

Keywords: *Adolescents, Disability, Secondary Education, Inclusive Education, Social Participation*

INTRODUCTION

The inclusive approach was recommended because of the growing dissatisfaction with courses provided under the separate subjects that alienated students from their traditional culture and made them ashamed of their heritage. Furthermore, the inclusive approach is in line with Indian education. The above observations are consistent with Vygotsky's view that learning is socially constructed and that, it is the role of the society to provide a frame work for the child's development and a belief that much learning is a product of social interactions. On this note, it was observed that much as positive changes have been made towards proper teaching, the curriculum has remained organized. Its teaching has still remained teacher-centered and does not allow integrative methods of practical, active learning, and this could be the source of ineffective teaching of social science studies in our institutions.

INCLUSIVE APPROACH IN MODERN CLASSROOM

Inclusive knowledge helps students to make effective decisions about problems of living. It recognizes knowledge from the Social Sciences and humanities into new holistic perspectives and framework, which focuses on the development of effective and productive studentship. Inclusion also enables students to look at the world as an inclusive whole. The importance of the inclusive approach is that teaching Social

Studies demands integrating broad bodies of knowledge in a coherent and meaningful manner. For meaningful inclusion, social science studies teachers must think critically to find more facts, ideas, information and plan the material to be taught in a logical manner. Not all bodies of knowledge can be inclusive. There are facts, ideas, concepts and skills which can be borrowed from other disciplines and linked to enrich the social science studies content. However, all these should be relevant and appropriate. Where ideas are not relevant, inclusion is not possible. Social science studies teachers must understand how, when and what to integrate otherwise, they may find themselves teaching separate subjects instead of social science studies and this is the beginning of ineffective teaching which this study intended to correct. Inclusion cannot be done for the sake of it. It must be possible, purposeful and relevant to enable students understand things and issues better. The teacher can link experiences with in the school, and those outside the school, which may be past or current, known or unknown , Generally, Social Studies teachers need to understand that effective inclusion calls for linking and utilizing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from different learning experiences enhanced by various techniques, instructional materials and time schedules in the teaching-learning situation. Inclusion deals with knowledge as a whole. It structures the content in a sequence pattern from known to unknown, as student's progress from one level to the next. A topic, theme or concept is used, a relationship is made based on various subjects and the content is put together in a way that makes sense to students. When applying the inclusive approach, the teacher should:

- Using various techniques, methods and strategies
- Using relevant ideas, facts and opinions from other subjects to explain his points
- Using variety of teaching Aids
- Using local environment and resource persons
- Involving children in practical activities and develop the necessary behaviors, attitudes, skills and values among students.

Social Studies as a discipline derive its content from various sources these are: History, Geography and Civics, which are referred to as core subjects. Since social science studies is integrative and multi disciplinary in nature, it allows the inclusion of other subjects like Education, Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Music Dance and Drama, Law, Economics, Psychology, Philosophy, and other related subjects to enrich its content. This means that the content of social science studies is derived from Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences; hence the methodology borrows a lot from other disciplines. However all these are fundamentally transferred and linked to reflect inclusion, multi-media presentation, interdisciplinary, participatory active learning, use of students' environment, development of skills knowledge, attitudes and values. The Social Studies Methodology Social Studies methodology is based on the fundamental principles recommended for its teaching and learning. These principles include inclusion, guided problem-solving interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary and use of students' environment. Whereas various methods, approaches, techniques and

strategies are encouraged in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, specifically, child-centered methods are highly encouraged and recommended. This means that students should be actively engaged in their own learning under the teacher's guidance. For better understanding, it is necessary here to define the terms, approaches, techniques and strategies. In most cases, while observing school in Delhi it was found that methods, approaches, techniques and strategies are used to mean the same thing, but somehow, they differ. An Approach is a way of doing or going about a thing such as a task/problem. The term method refers to a teacher's overall approach to instruction of facts, concepts, and generalizations and it is either content transmission (teacher-centered) or problem-solving. (child-centered) Techniques are specific actions and processes a teacher chooses to implement a particular method in his way of teaching. For example, questioning, group discussion, field study, and others. A strategy refers to a general plan the teacher follows to achieve his/her objectives in the lesson, for instance, how a teacher arranges his lessons, teaching Aids, methods, activities, and assessment. For effective inclusion, the teachers of Social Studies need to integrate properly the various methods, approaches, techniques and strategies in their teaching without forgetting to develop desirable behavior, attitudes, skills, knowledge and values. All these are essential for producing knowledgeable, creative, responsible, self-reliant and all round students. Social Studies was to promote the development of an individual and society, the spirit of self reliance, national unity and international understanding. The philosophy and programs of Social Studies emphasize inclusion or unity of knowledge, so as to suit the present situation and demands in our daily experiences from what has been discussed above, it can be noted that proper application of the inclusive approach requires thorough understanding of the nature and philosophy of Social Studies by the teachers concerned.

INCLUSIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES IN CLASSROOM

Teaching and learning Social Studies can only be successful if teachers teaching it follow the guiding principles, such as the use of the inclusive approach. This study involves and help to enable teachers teach Social Studies efficiently through proper application of the inclusive approach. Contribute in developing deeper insights into the discipline of Social Studies. Assist teacher educators in an effort to improve their techniques of interpreting and applying appropriate approaches to teaching and learning Social Studies. Encouraging teacher educators develop or structure new strategies to implement the Social Studies curriculum more appropriately is must. It is important to enhance the need for continuous teaching of Social Studies as a discipline through secondary education in order to widen the horizons of its conceptualization and application among students. Observations of school reflect upon how teachers in schools apply the inclusive approach to teach Social Studies effectively as it is recommended? The application of the inclusive approach revolves around some of the following techniques as opposed to the traditional style of teaching:

- The ability to link facts, ideas, knowledge and concepts from different disciplines so as to teach them as a single subject.
- The use of various methods, techniques, approaches and strategies in teaching Social Studies.
- The use of resource materials, resource persons and the environment.
- The ability to develop desirable behaviors, attitudes, skills, knowledge and values
- The ability to involve students in practical activities so that they learn by doing.
- The ability of the teacher to follow the scope and sequence of social studies.

Teacher-educators' school practice is a period when the students are given a chance to put theory into practice by going physically to teach in schools under the supervision of teachers. Essentially, the teacher-educators is expected to do three things, Interpreting the syllabus and planning what to teach, Delivery of content material, Applying the learnt methods, techniques and approaches to teach the content. Pedagogical view of handling a discipline or subject is relevant and recommends provision of a variety of ways of introducing, presenting, and recapitulating lessons. Reported interactions between students and students teacher shows the positivity in class interactions. According to them, cooperating teachers seem to rely mostly on their own wisdom of practice and tend to transmit traditions of successful teaching modes. They noted that such a strategy renders the practicing teachers mostly passive and their modes of interaction as authoritative. Consequently, these habits gradually develop during instruction. It has to be noted that the inclusive approach does not start immediately the teacher enters the classroom. It should be a process, which starts from the teacher's mental preparation. The teacher himself must be aware of the whole concept of inclusion, what should be inclusive, how to integrate, when to integrate and why? This means that the inclusive techniques should be reflected in the schemes of work and lesson plans made. The schemes of work themselves should indicate various sources of information like reference books, resource persons, use of environment, and use of a variety of instructional materials. The objectives, content, methods and activities stated should indicate that the general preparation and teaching will reflect the integrative nature of how Social Studies should be learnt In the classroom situation, the teacher should apply a variety of techniques, methods and strategies. These have to be reflected in the statement of objectives, the various activities to be done and the instructional materials to be used or developed. Very often, student teachers are found with notes that reflect teacher-centeredness .It follows therefore, that the teacher teaches according to the way he/s/he plans the lesson. As lessons progress, inclusive techniques should be noticed in how the teacher presents facts by linking ideas and concepts from various disciplines to enrich or explain better his/her teaching points. Students are expected to do a variety of activities as individuals, pairs, or in groups. Tasks given to them should be at their level and ability. These tasks or activities should be planned in such a way that they provoke the child to think critically and reflectively to inquire and solve problems. All

these will encourage the child to develop sustained interest and to learn by doing, which is what the inclusive approach stands for. Social Studies is successively taken more seriously as an area of curriculum with unique attributes and goals. Teachers of Social Studies must be enthusiastic as they have to structure the content to enable students understand it as an inclusive whole. Teachers should formulate and provide questions that stimulate the students' imagination and an inquiry mind. To fulfill the tasks mentioned above, teachers of Social Studies in primary schools and other institutions need to be highly committed, creative, motivated, focused and with sustained interest. Some teachers and Students have therefore kept to what they know best and that is the use of traditional methods, besides, the concept of Social Studies itself has not been clearly understood and interpreted in its proper perspective. Furthermore, effective inclusion requires the use of a variety of instructional materials, and yet there is shortage of relevant texts or of social studies reference books. Where some books are available, some teachers rely totally on these textbooks and therefore, the type of learning environment teachers provide is usually inadequate for students. This leads to the type of learning where copying notes directly from the book becomes normal. Teachers need to use teaching materials like books, pictures, stories, work cards, songs, data collected, charts, radio, television, films and many others. Some of these should be developed, adapted or utilized by teachers working with children either in or out of the classroom. They need to utilize materials that are readily available in their own environment. Teachers are expected to be knowledgeable in the context of the subject they teach. Therefore, Social Studies teachers need to be creative and innovative to ensure that what they teach is well understood for the benefit of the child and the nation. Social science disciplines should predominate when teaching Social Studies. What pupils gain in subject matter knowledge in Social Studies, should be used in school and society. To do this properly, the teachers of Social Studies should strive hard and maintain pupils' interest in each lesson. They need to use different teaching strategies and instructional materials to engage students entirely in the instruction process. This calls for teachers to have good knowledge of Social Studies curriculum development. In conclusion, it can be said that effective inclusion is not done in isolation. The teacher of Social Studies should take into consideration other principles when teaching this subject. Teachers should be encouraged to teach Social Studies practically not theoretically. Let students be given individual and group tasks, questions to think about that need inquiry and problem solving skills so that the teacher assists them to reach meaningful decisions and conclusions. Institutions of learning should provide all the necessary instructional materials for teaching and learning social studies such as maps, globes, video vignettes, adequate text books, Newspapers, charts and many other Audio visual Aids to encourage multi-media presentation. There is need for social science studies specialists and experts from India to carry out exchange visits India is part of a progressive modern world. We cannot be left behind in the old systems. Finally, examinations set for students should not only be theoretical but should also encourage students to be practical. This will

encourage teachers to teach Social Studies practically in an inclusive manner. In the classroom situation, the teacher should apply a variety of techniques, methods and strategies. These have to be reflected in the statement of objectives, the various activities to be done and the instructional materials to be used or developed. Very often, student teachers are found with notes that reflect teacher's assertiveness. It follows therefore, that the teacher teaches according to the way he/s/he plans the lesson. As lessons progress, inclusive techniques should be noticed in how the teacher presents facts by linking ideas and concepts from various disciplines to enrich or explain better teaching points. Students are expected to do a variety of activities as individuals, pairs, or in groups. Tasks given to them should be at their level and ability. These tasks or activities should be planned in such a way that they provoke the child to think critically and reflectively to inquire and solve problems. All these will encourage the child to develop sustained interest and to learn by doing, which is what the inclusive approach stands for.

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