

FROM INTEGRATION TO INCLUSION: THE CHALLENGING ROLE OF LEARNING SUPPORT TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The placement of students with special educational needs in general school is either termed as Integration or Inclusion, and we often use the words 'integration' and 'inclusion' as synonymous. In some countries, the idea of inclusive education is still perceived as serving children with disabilities within general education settings. This study explores the perceptions and beliefs associated with the contemporary practices of Integration model among general education teachers (in rural India), and suggests how it is contradicting with the actual conceptualisation of Inclusive model. Initially, this study is aimed at exploring the current beliefs and practices of integration model in order to identify the issues related within the model through case study approach. Results indicate that the integration model develops a kind of belief system among teachers that, students with severe learning difficulties may develop socialization skills but there is little or no scope of academic improvement in any case. Moreover, the integration model has no scope in encouraging the teachers to see far beyond the ability based practices. This study further extends itself in outlining the challenges on the role of learning support teacher in addressing the identified issues.

KEYWORDS: Students with Special Needs, Learning Support Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Integration Model, and Inclusive Education