

## **Learning together to live together: Implementation of the concept of inclusive education**

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Inclusive education (IE) is one method of achieving the concept of Education for All. There are two fold trends of research in the IE namely theoretical arguments on this concept and research on application. In this research the applicability of concept of IE in schools are explored. The objectives are to review the nature of implementation of the concept of inclusive education, to find out whether the principles of IE implemented in schools, to develop an intervention program to enhance IE, and to make suggestions to improve IE at school level.

Collaborative Action Research methodology was used. Two schools with Special Education Units in the Western Province were selected and the three special education teachers and the researcher collaboratively conducted the research. The participants (5 special education teachers, 2 deputy principals, 3 teachers, 25 children with special needs and parents of them) of the study are selected from Special Education Units. In depth observation in the teaching learning process, and interviews with participant were the data collection instruments. Diaries were maintained Study was conducted in three phases i.e. identification of prevailing situation and rapport building with the participant, planning strategies to include the children with special needs and implementing them while evaluating the out come. In the first phase programmes in Units were observed to understand the trends in IE. In the process it was identified the areas that can be improved through intervention to enhance IE at Units. In the second stage intervention was made in the fields of teaching learning process, partnership with parents, capacity building of special education teachers, and awareness building of principals. In the third phase the changes occurred were evaluated. The contents of diaries and transcribed data from interviews and observations were read and patterns were identified.

Due to intervention the activity of teachers, parents were positively changed towards Inclusive Education. The study suggests that the responsibility of developing inclusive education should not be a responsibility of individuals related to special education but to the whole school community. The curriculum should be developed to suit the IE concepts and school based teacher training programmes should be introduced to enhance the capability of teachers in handling children with behavioural problems.

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