

# Inclusionary Education: Counselling and Guidance

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## Abstract

*Education, regarded as a fundamental human right and a key driver of individual, community, and national development, serves the purpose of equipping young individuals with accurate information, fostering positive attitudes, and cultivating skills to navigate real-life situations responsibly. Additionally, education aims to instill awareness and positive attitudes toward population and development issues, fostering responsible behavior among students and the broader community (UNICEF, 2010). According to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005), guidance and counselling are essential components of the school curriculum that support children’s personal, social, and professional development in a stress-free learning environment. The suggestions of the Kothari Education Commission and the Mudaliar Secondary Education Commission are where guidance and counselling services in India first emerged. The report points out current limitations in inclusive education, such as a lack of skilled mentors and a lack of awareness among school officials. The study clarifies practical concerns with inclusive education despite the growing focus on its significance by using Padang city as a case study. The research highlights the critical function that counselors do in fostering a friendly and inclusive learning environment. However, it also highlights the deficiency of mentors in inclusive schools, which impedes the academic progress of children with special needs. The goals encompass elucidating the notion of education, deliberating about counselling and advice, characterizing guidance within the framework of inclusive education, analysing educational data, and distinguishing between the two. The study concludes by highlighting the critical role that involvement and guidance play in developing an inclusive education system and suggesting a quantitative exploratory approach to determine the proportion of kids in a given school that do not have special needs. The results are intended to serve as a starting point for additional research on issues related to inclusive education.*

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education, Guidance and Counselling, Counsellor.

## Inclusionary Education: Counselling and Guidance

Inclusive education, as a system, necessitates flexibility, while comprehensive education, as an ideology, also calls for adaptability. The fundamental principle should be to prioritize what is best for each individual child. The emphasis on inclusive education does not negate the importance of special schools or Centre, which remain essential for children facing profound challenges that require specialized assistance, such as many deaf children. However, the consideration of such alternatives should only arise if classroom

placement proves inadequate to meet their specific needs. Under the evolving policy of inclusive education, special schools are transitioning into supportive roles, participating in advanced programs that leverage their extensive experience and knowledge. They collaborate with regular schools, families, and communities to create a cohesive support system. Inclusive education services enable children with disabilities to reside with their families and attend the nearest school, mirroring the experiences of their peers. This aspect is crucial for their personal development, as impeding the normal development of a disabled child may have more severe consequences than the disability itself. Within this framework, the pivotal role of parents should be emphasized, as they deserve to be active participants in all decision-making processes concerning their child's education. When a partnership exists between parents and educational institutions, parents become valuable resources for teachers and schools. Despite the practical challenges associated with integrating children with special educational needs into school environments, coordinated regional initiatives can streamline the necessary arrangements. Additionally, recognizing the child's schoolmates as supportive allies who are willing and capable of helping overcome some of these challenges is essential. India declared its commitment to a broad range of objectives encompassing gender, early childhood care, primary education, youth and adolescent education, adult education, and educational quality. A UNESCO global education report commended India's progress after it developed a National Plan of Education (2002) that outlined numerous programs and strategies to achieve the Education for All (EFA, 2014) goals. This heightened national endeavours to expedite the provision of high-quality education for all within a specified time frame.

### **The Objectives of this Paper are**

To foster a welcoming and inclusive learning atmosphere, aiding all students, particularly those with special needs, in defining and pursuing their academic and professional goals.

- To facilitate the social and emotional growth of every student, particularly those facing challenges.
- Foster collaborative relationships with educators, caregivers, and other stakeholders to create an inclusive classroom environment.
- To advocate for inclusive teaching methods and policies ensuring equal access to education for all students. Provide immediate guidance and counselling in order to proactively identify and resolve any difficulties.
- To assist children in developing essential life skills, encompassing decision-making, communication, and problem-solving. Be prepared to offer crisis intervention and support to students undergoing significant difficulties.
- To provide guidance and instruction to instructors, contributing to the overall success of an inclusive educational environment.

### **Inclusive Education**

The integration of special education pupils into public schools is referred to as "inclusive" education. Selectively enrolling children with disabilities in normal education classrooms is the basis of inclusive programs, sometimes referred to as mainstreaming. The main concept is to integrate special needs kids into regular classroom settings with their classmates who do not have impairments. If special needs students receive enough help and support both within and outside of the classroom, they can succeed in mainstream settings. However, opposition to inclusive education still exists, especially with relation to academic subject groupings. Meaning of Inclusive Education

Students with and without impairments engage and study in the same classrooms in an inclusive learning environment. It is based on the idea that people with disabilities ought to have access to

the same educational materials, programs, and experiences as everyone else, rather than being just dependent on specialist services.

### **The Definition of Inclusive Education**

The definition of inclusive education is: inclusive education guarantees that all young children, with or without disabilities, can learn alongside one another in shared preschools and schools with the assistance of suitable networks of support services. When it comes to inclusion, four essential elements are always present:

#### **Inclusion is a Process**

It is an on-going effort to respond to diversity positively. Learning to live with and learn from differences is integral to this process.

#### **Inclusion Addresses Barriers**

It requires the identification and removal of barriers, involving the collection and evaluation of information from various sources to enhance policy and practice.

#### **Inclusion Encompasses Presence, Participation, and Achievement**

It involves where children are educated, their attendance, the quality of their experiences, and their achievements across the curriculum.

#### **Inclusion Focuses on At-Risk Groups**

The focus is on keeping an eye on and guaranteeing the accomplishments, involvement, and presence of groups who are susceptible to marginalization, exclusion, or under achievement.

### **Essential Elements of Inclusive Education**

#### **Equal Access to Education**

Inclusive education ensures equal access to quality education for persons with disabilities through physically accessible infrastructure, assistive technologies, and inclusive teaching methodologies.

#### **Human Rights Perspective**

Grounded in a human rights framework, it emphasizes the rights of persons with disabilities to education without discrimination and equal opportunity.

#### **Teacher Training**

Inclusive education highlights the pivotal role of teachers, necessitating training programs to equip educators with skills for teaching a diverse student population.

#### **Promotion of Positive Attitudes**

Inclusive education fosters a culture of acceptance, respect, and understanding, combating stigma and raising awareness about different abilities.

#### **Participation and Empowerment**

Engaging in decision-making processes, advocating for oneself, and guaranteeing that the voices of people with disabilities are heard are all stressed as aspects of empowerment and participation.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to determine the efficacy of policies and practices pertaining to enrolment, retention, academic performance, and general well-being, policies and practices implementing inclusive education must be continuously monitored and evaluated.

## Meaning of Disability

A disability is characterized as a state or function that is markedly reduced in comparison to the norm, impacting an individual's functioning in several domains such as physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, and mental health.

A disability, as defined by the Disability Act 2005, is an ongoing physical, sensory, mental health, or intellectual impairment that significantly limits an individual's ability to engage in social or cultural activities, carry on a profession, business, or occupation, or both. The Employment Equality Acts and the Equal Status Acts, which prohibit discrimination based on disability, offer a more comprehensive definition that takes into account both previous and present infirmities.

## Definitions of Counselling

Counselling is described by Webster's Dictionary as mutual opinion exchange, consultation, group deliberation, Counselling, according to Wren, is a dynamic and intentional partnership between two individuals who address a mutually defined problem with care for one another, with the goal of assisting the younger, less experienced, or more disturbed of the two in coming to a self-determined resolution of his situation."

Counselling, according to Arbuckle, is about assisting a person in realizing who he really is, what he has and does not have, what he can accomplish with ease, what he can do with difficulty, and what he cannot do at all. It is the intimate sharing of a human relationship with someone who holds great esteem for him and who is able to provide him unconditional acceptance.

## Guidance and Counselling

According to Nwachuku (2007), guidance and counselling is defined by Research on Humanities and Social Sciences as a methodical and structured educational assistance service that is professionally provided to learners of any age, both inside and outside of school walls, at the appropriate level by a professionally trained counselor or therapists. Positive or unpleasant life events do have an influence on people. People who are trusted and believed upon offer advice or assistance, whether requested or not, in an effort to help the individual overcome the terrible experience. However, because it is being provided by someone lacking in professional expertise, their help and counsel can be inadequate and unsuitable. Instructed experts can successfully meet an individual's proper solutions when they offer such assistance through coordinated interventions. Bark (2003) states that a guidance and counselling service is an aid provided by suitably skilled and trained specialists to a person of any age to help them manage their life activities, form their own opinion, make their own decisions, and bear their own burdens. Additionally, according to the American Counselling Association [ACA] (2010), it is a professional partnership that enables various individuals, families, and groups to achieve their objectives for mental health, wellness, education, and livelihood. When one finds himself angry and unable to comprehend their own problem and how to solve it. The greatest approaches are counselling and guidance, as a person will be guided to determine the most effective strategy to comprehend and address the issue with the assistance of a counselor.

- The process of helping a teenager choose the best answer to his issues and seek expert help to address them is known as guidance and counselling.
- A vital component of schooling is guidance and counselling.

- The process of counselling involves bipolarity. It takes two people: one who is experiencing an issue and the other who can provide solutions.
- It helps teenagers develop self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-understanding as it is centred on interactions between people.
- It promotes happiness, creativity, and improved social, familial, and academic adjustment in a person.
- It places a strong emphasis on the concept of the professional relationship and the need of setting oneself objectives.

### **Empirical Evidences**

The topic of guidance and counselling in inclusive education has been the subject of several research projects. Adrien, (2018). research delves into the distinct roles and qualifications of counselors and guidance and counselling teachers within the educational landscape. The study establishes that counselors, as professional educators, undergo specialized counselor education and hold undergraduate degrees specifically in guidance and counselling. In contrast, guidance and counselling teachers are defined by a minimum academic qualification of a Bachelor's degree in guidance and counselling, as mandated by Permendikbud No. 111 Tahun 2014. This literature review underscores the crucial need for tailored guidance and counselling programs in inclusive education to foster the comprehensive development of academic and social skills in students with special needs. Adapting to the unique challenges faced by these students is identified as a key objective of inclusive education guidance and counselling initiatives.

Cicy Joseph sought to evaluate the efficacy of therapy in conjunction with guided imagery for treating behavioural issues in teenagers in her 2019 literature study. This review aimed to assess the frequency of behavioural problems in teenagers, compare the efficacy of guided imagery with counselling to a control group, and investigate possible correlations between certain background characteristics and behavioural disorders. A real experimental study design with a quantitative approach was applied in schools in the Pathanamthitta district of Kerala. The sample consisted of 320 people who met predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria and were split evenly between the experimental group (160) and the control group (160). The Youth Self-Report (YSR; Achenbach, 2001) was included in data collecting tools to assess behavioural issues. Under the researcher's supervision, guided imagery combined with counselling produced notable improvements in the experimental group's competency scores in the post-tests compared to the pretests ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) as well as in the areas of anxiety and depression, withdrawal and depression, social problems, cognitive difficulties, trouble paying attention, aggressive behaviour, and rule-breaking behaviour. The findings also revealed significant differences in competency scores, ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between the experimental and control groups. This demonstrates how improving competence scores and decreasing behavioural issues in teenagers may be achieved via the use of guided imagery in conjunction with therapy.

### **Need and Importance of Guidance and Counselling in Inclusive Education**

Education is a fundamental entitlement for every young person. In order to advance humankind, civilization need a diverse population. In order to achieve the following, guidance and counselling in inclusive education become crucial:

- Addressing the emotional, social, and behavioural needs of kids is the main goal of counselling in schools.
- Make sure to provide a welcoming and easy-going atmosphere to assist each individual using various methods.

- It should be noted that specialists working in schools offer counselling services rather than psychotherapy.
- It fosters sufficient discipline in students as well as assists to mold their behaviour.
- Precise direction aids in their accomplishment; pupils who receive good advice and counselling know what to do and how to do it in the most effective manner.

### **Suggestions**

- Encourage counselors' professional development.
- Make certain that counselors have specific training designed for inclusive education.
- Encourage a cooperative team approach that includes parents, teachers, counselors, and special education specialists.
- Provide individualized counselling programs that take into account the strengths, difficulties, and personal objectives of kids with varying needs.
- Publish easily readable information on counselling services available to parents and students.
- Give priority to counselling approaches that are culturally sensitive, taking into account the identities and cultural backgrounds of students.
- Incorporate life skills development into counselling sessions to provide kids with the tools they need for self-advocacy, social interactions, and independent living.
- Develop all-inclusive transition strategies for students moving from one educational level to another.
- Use adaptable counselling techniques that may be tailored to different communication preferences and learning styles. Encourage caregivers and parents to actively participate in the therapy process.
- Enhance counselling services by utilizing technology.
- Develop an organized evaluation process to determine the efficacy of counselling services and obtain input from instructors, parents, and students.
- Enable students to speak out for themselves by giving them the abilities and information to communicate their needs and preferences in a classroom setting.

### **Conclusion**

Guidance services are essential for students to learn about themselves, comprehend their environment, and make future plans. In order to promote personal growth in a variety of contexts, including the home, school, and social settings, the program aims to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses. Counselors strive to help students with special needs feel more confident in themselves, taking into account the distinct qualities that come with disabilities. In the context of inclusive education, counselling and guidance play a critical role in ensuring the overall growth and welfare of all students. These services offer individualized support designed to meet the various needs of students and address their emotional, social, and academic difficulties. It is crucial that guidance and education programs be adjusted to each student's unique needs while creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

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