

# Multidisciplinary Approach for Inclusive Education

## Abstract

Inclusive education plays into a paradigm shift in developing a culture of social inclusion that foster autonomy, self-determination and non-discrimination against people with a disability. With increase in population, the issue of universal access and inclusiveness is a challenging and complex one; this will require a coherent multi-disciplinary approach. Public policy, culture and society/ community affect children with special educational needs in different manner. For achieving the goal of inclusive education there is a need of multidisciplinary approach. Multidisciplinary approach has recently become of interest to government agencies and some enlightened professional bodies who recognize the advantages of system thinking for complex problem solving. For effective educational programme to help CWSN, the different multidisciplinary approaches used are: Skill training; Health Services; Social skill training; Assistive and Supportive devices; Teaching learning strategies and classroom mgt; Multi-sensory approach; Environmental approach; Economical approach; Home and Hospitalized based instruction; Special Educational services; Trans-disciplinary Team.

**Keywords:** Multidisciplinary approach, Inclusive Education

## Introduction

With increase in population, the issue of universal access and inclusiveness is a challenging and complex one; this will require a coherent multi-disciplinary approach. The quality of inclusive education not only depends upon implementation of inclusive policies, funding and infrastructure but also on the class room arrangement. In according to his interest, potential and to achieve the optimum, it is very essential for the teacher to fully understand the attitudinal, social, educational and infrastructural barriers of inclusive education. In the inclusive system of education, classroom environment is changing continuously. Therefore, the teacher should be properly trained. The teacher can support the learners in diverse classroom by differentiating instruction. Teachers are expected to manage the seating arrangement and apply best classroom practices as per the diverse needs of children with special educational needs (CWSN). The use of term 'Multidisciplinary' has in record years been overtaken by the term 'interdisciplinary'. The former term tends to relate a practitioner led working while the latter term tends to carry a more academic overtone. A Multidisciplinary Approach involves drawing appropriately from multiple disciplines to redefine problems outside the normal boundaries and reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex solutions. Multidisciplinary working is often seen as revolutionary by skill centre specialties but it is simple a fundamental expression of being guided by holism nature than reductionism. In Multi-disciplinary approach following points are considered: (i) Staffs will have to share knowledge and expertise and also to learn new skill and fresh approaches; (ii) Sometimes a number of professionals have direct input or provide advice and support; (iii) There is a need for training which will give staff the confidence and satisfaction; (iv) Possible change in expectations and in working system which can be a valuable stimulus and challenge to adults.

## Need of Multidisciplinary Approach

There is a need of multidisciplinary approach for classroom practices and management in inclusive education for effective teaching in inclusive set up e.g. different teaching methodology and strategies like seating arrangement in inclusive classroom, Collaborative teaching, Whole class teaching, Activity base learning, Co-operative learning, Multilevel instructions, Art based therapy, etc.

For the use of variety of co-teaching methods including Interactive teaching, Alternative teaching, parallel Teaching, Station teaching.



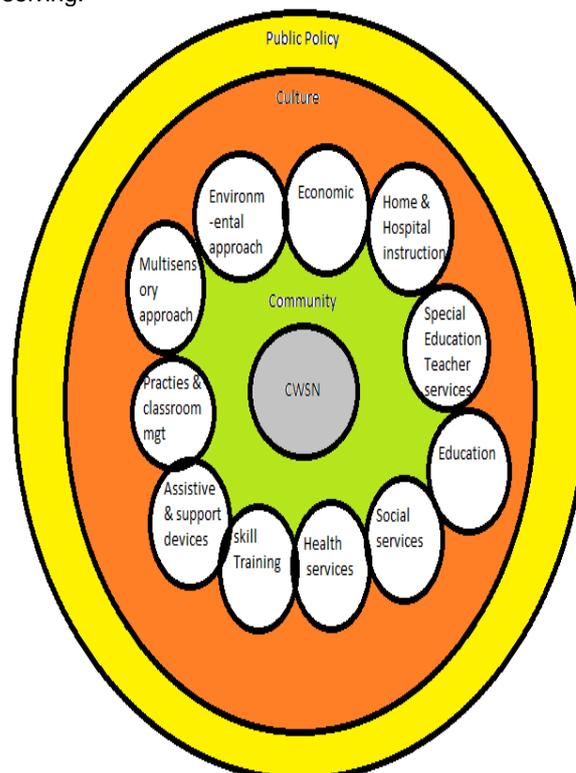
**Jitender Kumar**

Principal,  
Deptt.of Education,  
S.B.D. College of Education,  
Kurukshetra

1. Sailor and Skrtic (1995) recommended a multidisciplinary approach to staff development that focuses on common goals for all students. It provides the opportunity for general and special educators to share their expertise, thus enabling "more fluid information and resource exchanges to occur across all disciplines; to the benefit of all children at the school site.
2. Multidisciplinary approach is required to create structured classroom which may include: (a) Designing separate areas for group and individual work; (b) Centers for reading art as well as creating a daily class schedule; (c) Display classroom rules and the daily class schedule at a main place; (d) Provide opportunities for purposeful movements.
3. Traditionally, primary mainstream classroom have been staffed by a teacher, learning support assistant (LSA)/ teacher assistant. With the increase of CWSN into mainstream classroom there is a need for professionals from other agencies involved with the child to share in the planning, development and delivery of his education.
4. To collaborate regular teacher with special education teachers, related service providers and para-professionals on a regular basis.
5. To overcome barriers to learning which arise either within the education system or within the learner which prevent access to learning and development for learners? Multidisciplinary approach is required to overcome *system barriers* (i.e. overcrowded barriers, lack of basic and appropriate materials, exclusionary practices and policies, etc.); *Societal barriers* (safety and security, crime and violence, HIV/AIDS, poverty, child headed households, etc.); *Intrinsic barriers* (behavioural problems, psychosocial problems, emotional problems, etc.); and *Pedagogical barrier* (under qualified teachers, inappropriate teaching methodologies and inappropriate assessment procedures, etc.)
6. To help students to organize their material by using check lists, folder and containers to keep material organized in desks and to monitor student activity visually (bender 2002).
7. Universal designing for learning i.e. a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for individuals with different backgrounds learning styles, abilities and disabilities in widely learning contexts.
8. To incorporate three qualities of universal design when planning instructions:
  - a. Multiple means of representing content (visual and oral strategies);
  - b. Multiple means of student's expression of content (writing, illustrating, and speaking);
  - c. Flexible means of engagement as students learn (video, software and role playing).
9. To assess plan and provide early education services to an infant (or pre-scholar) and his or her family there is a need of trans-disciplinary team.

### Multidisciplinary Approach for Inclusive Education

One of the major barriers to multidisciplinary approach is the long established tradition of highly focused professional practitioners cultivating a protective boundary around their area of expertise. This tradition has sometimes been found not to work to the benefit of the wider public interest. Multidisciplinary Approach has recently become of interest to government agencies and some enlightened professional bodies who recognize the advantages of system thinking for complex problem solving.



### For Effective Educational Programme to Help CWSN, the Different Multidisciplinary Approaches are as given below

#### Skill Training

Skill training is required to implementing a trans-disciplinary team assessment model for additional staff training, reallocation of staff time and revision of schedule to conduct team assessment. These initial investment in staff training and time yield many benefits to the children and families served.

#### Health Services

To sort out the health problems of CWSN there is a need of health services e.g. (i) availability of doctors on time, speech therapist, physiotherapist, and (ii) special care facilities at school like medical room, rest room, etc.

#### Social Skill Training

CWSN have social problems. Some children don't have adequate social skills, other possesses the skills but do not use them at appropriate times, and some have a self control problem. Many approaches can be used for developing social skills in children with learning disabilities e.g. peer tutoring and

cooperative learning. These bring together both friendship and academics. Teacher can observe a student's inability to act in an appropriate manner and suggest changes.

#### **Assistive and Supportive Devices**

The SEN learners need special assistive and supportive devices to do their routine activities and for benefiting from educational opportunities in a better way. These assistive and supportive devices help them in their adjustment in the school and in society. For example, a blind child may need the laser cane, the physically crippled needs crutches or a wheel chair and a hard of hearing child may need hearing aids and so on. The other aids that may facilitate their mobility in the school also be provided such as a 'ramp' in the school building or a rod near the water cooler etc. Support services would include accommodations like availability and upgrading of aids and assistive devices according to individual needs, technological support in the form of augmentative and alternative communication tools, audio-visual material, communication board, computer access, universal design for school buildings, classrooms, transport/ escort facility, furniture and fixtures, resource room support, therapeutic support, text-books in accessible format, ICT support, vocational education and training, etc.

#### **Teaching Learning Strategies and Classroom Management**

Different teaching learning strategies used in inclusive set up are meta-cognitive strategy, reciprocal teaching, task analysis, structured lesson presentations, organized equipment and materials, content mastery classes. To provide barrier free access in the class room, teacher should have the capability to arrange the class room in this way that facilitates CWSN better learning. Good seating arrangement is a component for creating a supportive climate in all classrooms which emphasize the need for special seating for some students with disabilities. In an inclusive classroom especially, classroom seating arrangement serves as a challenge. The teachers must use the seating arrangements in this way that may benefit all CWSN. A number of good classroom practices that class room teacher/ resource teacher/ special educator can use in inclusive educational system are: Collaborative teaching; Whole class teaching; Activity base learning; Peer tutoring; Co-operative learning; Multilevel instructions; Art based therapy.

#### **Multi-Sensory Approach**

Multi-sensory approach is required to incorporate three qualities of universal design when planning instruction: (a) Multiple means of representing content (visual and oral strategies); (b) Multiple means of student's expression of content (writing, illustrating, and speaking); (c) Flexible means of engagement as students learn (video, software and role playing).

#### **Environmental Approach**

Architectural barriers in schools would have to be removed for easy access and to promote inclusion of CWSN. Efforts should be taken to provide all kinds of disabled-friendly facilities in schools and

educational institutions. The classroom environment may be modified by making the room sound proof, carpeting of windows, enclosed cup boards and book racks, limited use of bulletin boards, pictures, calendars and other hanging objects on the walls and by enhancing the use of the teaching materials in terms of color, size and vividness.

#### **Economical Approach**

To cater the diverse need of heterogeneous group of students and to implement special support for learners, there is a need of economic support during the education and after the education for the establishment of CWSN in society.

#### **Home and Hospitalized Based Instruction**

Students may require home based education or hospitalized based instructions depending upon the situation and health problems or disability.

#### **Special Educational Services**

To cater the diverse need of heterogeneous group of students and to implement special support for learners, there is a need of special educators. Special educator can benefit in curricular adaptation and modifications, research based literacy intervention, and the development and implementation of positive behavioral supports.

#### **Trans-Disciplinary Team**

Trans-disciplinary team is a group of professional, family members, student, teacher, special educator, NGO, physiotherapist, nurse, community service providers, medical specialist etc. Trans-disciplinary team may include interpreter/ translator; Adaptive physical education teacher; Occupational or physical therapist; orientation and mobility specialist; program specialist; assistive technology specialist.

In the trans-disciplinary approach team members become aware of each other's disciplines, yet areas of expert is remain in the discipline of training. Through trans-disciplinary team the quality of observations assessments and reports can be improved: (a) Teaming improves the accuracy of the observations, assists in the recall of specific behaviors, and provides validation of the observation and recommendations regarding the child function. (b) Team assessment provides an integrated picture of the whole class within family system and community. (c) The synthesis of information provides a much boarder and more accurate view of the child and family.

#### **Conclusion**

For creating an inclusive school single approach for special educational needs learners is not possible. There is a need of multidisciplinary approach to cope the need of SEN learners. Multidisciplinary approach involves drawing appropriately from multiple disciplines to redefine problems outside the normal boundaries and reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex solutions. For effective educational programme to help CWSN, the different multidisciplinary approaches used are: Skill training; Health Services; Social skill training; Assistive and Supportive devices; Teaching learning strategies and classroom mgt; Multi-sensory approach;

environmental approach; Economical approach; Home and Hospitalized based instruction; Special Educational services; Trans-disciplinary Team. So, to achieve the target of inclusive education role of inclusive education is very important.

**References**

1. Gillies, M. & Carrington, S. (2004). "Inclusion: Culture, Policy and Practice: A Queensland Perspective". *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 24(2), 117-128.
2. Kumar, J. (2013). *Inclusive Education: A Journey through challenge*. Twenty First Century Publication, Patiala.
3. Kumar, J. (2017). *Creating an Inclusive School*. Nirmal Publishing House, Kurukshetra.
4. Macdonald, A.S. (2004). *The Inclusive Challenge: A Multidisciplinary Educational Approach* retrieved from [http:// ec.europa.eu / progress](http://ec.europa.eu/progress).
5. Sailor, W., & Skrtic, T. (1995). "Modern & postmodern agendas in special education: Implication for teacher education, research, and policy development", pp. 418-433. Harcourt Brace, New York.