



EDITAORIAL

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Special education gained momentum along the time when behaviourism was also being recognised and given a platform in the professional world as well as public acceptance. Behaviourism focuses on one particular view of learning namely change in behaviour through reinforcement and repetition. No doubt incorporation of behaviourism in the classroom facilitated the educators to assist their students towards academic and personal advancements. However, the teacher in this approach takes the complete control and is the dominant person in the classroom. The learner is passive and has no opportunity evaluate or reflect upon the education process or how they would like to learn or they learn best or to decide what is right or wrong. In the case of individuals with special needs, especially where their ability of information processing, constructing knowledge which is within the paradigm of the social constructs of society of which they are apart is limited, behaviourism actually reinforcement their inabilities and took away their rights to be a part of society on their terms.

No doubt learning requires a certain aspect of memorisation and behaviourism is able to cater to that effectively through the reinforcement and repetition. As the philosophy of behaviourism moved on to radical behaviourism a more functional view of behaviour was accepted. Radical behaviourism emphasised that study of behaviour should be as in natural sciences wherein there is no reference to the inner state of organism. This also led to the terminology behaviour modification which looked at the physically aspect of behaviour and not at the underlined philosophical and psycho-social factors determining how one behaved.

With the emergence of the cognitive and constructivism approaches, the term behaviour modification has become obsolete since the 1960's . It has now been replaced by the term, 'Applied behaviour analyses. Thus providing space for analysis of how a person behaves considering not only the visible stimuli and the response but also the complexities and intricacies' which enter due to cultural, cognition, diversity in brain functioning, past experiences and so on. This has facilitated a better understanding of the spread sheet which should be understood by the experts before any attempts at changing behaviour to socially accepted behaviour is attempted. This philosophy of applied behaviour analysis is well established in the area of developmental disabilities since the 1960's. From the limitations imposed from previous approaches emerged new approaches which were often more holistic in their approach

The constructivism approach when applied to education emphasis that the learner is an active participant and not an empty vessel into which information needs to be fed. The cognitive processes of the child will construct ones knowledge from the information provided by the environment and the innate capacities, diversities and previous experiences. Thus the teacher or the special educator can only facilitate or thwart the processes of meaning constructions in the learner. Thus as stated by O'Donnell et. Al (2012) constructivism states that the learner constructs knowledge by an interrelation

of different concepts, complex cognition, scaffolding, modelling, vicarious experiences, observational learning and many other ways. Hence as special educators it becomes essential to provide varied and diverse experience for every concept that we attempt to facilitate the child to learn. Hence for any learning to take place not only should the student be made an active participant through appropriate engagement and rapport formation, but the teachers and other stakeholders as well as the environment needs to be appropriately stimulating.

Hence there is no one approach which is the best for students with disabilities but a combination of mixes which would vary from child to child and situation to situations. Added to this complexity of providing the best possible learning environment to the children with special needs emerges the next debate of whether all children with special needs should be segregated or inclusion should be the buzz word??? Is it better to provide them education or rather is it training in excluded setups and then when they are mature to integrate them into the larger society or to continue to have them as a separate society of individuals. Secondly who is to make this decision???

If we look around us, society is like a mosaic, where every individual is different, which includes the identical twins who entered this world with exactly similar natural resources but even in the best of circumstances the nurture difference happen. So another question to reflect upon is , if we live with so much of diversities, is it actually difficult to add on some more diversities in society?

Another issue is the resources. Do resources which are applicable to the individual with special needs also not provide better resources and environment to individuals which so called no special needs. For example does an appropriated made ramp or disability friendly bathroom not help the non-disabled? Or in the classrooms do concrete objects to facilitate learning or the use of technology not facilitate the student who does not have specified special needs?

At present Indian classrooms can only visualise the inclusion of children with mild disabilities and at times with moderate disabilities. Some decades back the classrooms physical and pedagogical infrastructures did not provided spaces for their inclusion. Hence as the potential of the educational system to creatively utilise its tangible and non-tangible resources increases and also to draw upon resources which have not traditionally been used in the mainstream education processes increase, it is imperative the quantity as well as quality of the inclusion processes would increase.

It may appear a remote possibility as of now, however I do look forward to it being common to find children with special needs such as specific learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, emotional and behavioural disabilities and others in the same educational institutional classrooms and corridors along with the other children who are already found in mainstream inclusive environments.

Just as we have a blackboard which is common occurrences in majority of the classrooms at least in large cities and towns, least restrictive environments and universal design of learning would become a given.

One of the major means of this becoming possible also includes the documentation of best practices, researches, challenges and other concerns which are hampering the logistic development of each and every child with special needs. The **International E-Journal of Disability Studies, Special Education and Rehabilitation** of the **WE THE PEOPLE INDIA** is grateful for the documentation and researches which professionals have provided for publications and we look forward to on- going publications from the desks of researchers, administrators, policy makers, practitioner parents, individuals with special needs and all stakeholders.

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