

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

Gaybullayeva Hatira Muratdjanovna

PhD, associate professor

Uzbek National Pedagogical University

Department of the Theory and Methodology of English

Uzbek National Pedagogical University

Osmolovskaya Yekaterina Dmiriyevna,

3rd year student

Philology (English language and literature)

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education gives any student, regardless of disabilities, access to education, and opportunities to be a part of society. This article discusses the positive steps taken by Uzbekistan towards promoting the inclusion of children in all the educational fields.

Keywords: *inclusive education, special educational needs, Social Initiatives Support Fund (SISF).*

INTRODUCTION

The world agenda recognizes the need for inclusive education to ensure that every child gets an opportunity to learn regardless of their cognitive abilities. But problems remain in its implementation, especially in low- and middle-income countries like Uzbekistan. Across the board, inclusive education has been correlated with improved academic attainment, where Norway, for example, achieves 95% inclusion rates because of the diversity in their teaching methods. In Uzbekistan, approximately 75% of children with disabilities are institutionalized, with around 9,700 not enrolled in school. The target is for 51% of schools with an inclusive approach by 2025. According to an analysis based on data from 225 schools participating in a pilot program launched under Presidential Decree (2020–2025), coverage of teacher training is 80%, and access to schools is only 20%. Key barriers to progress include insufficient teacher preparedness—more than half say they are reluctant to be inclusive—as well as pronounced rural inequalities, with approximately 70% of out-of-school children living in rural areas. UNICEF funded programs to train 10,000 teachers in 2024 report 30% more inclusive enrollment.[5] In the majority of developing countries including Uzbekistan, the inclusion of disabled children in the general education programme remains a priority item. The Uzbek authorities have begun to attempt to promote equitable educational

opportunities for this group, however, the vast majority of children still experience segregation. Statistics show there to be around 97,000 disabled people under 16 years of age in the country, most of whom attend specialized schools or receive some form of home care (Uzbek Society of Disabled People, 2014). Children who are sent to such institutionalized settings are typically deprived of the essential resources and services needed to acquire learning (UNICEF, 2013). Despite the lack of data on this subject of practice, this article aims at evaluating the state-of-the-art of inclusive education in Uzbekistan by presenting a brief overview of main legislative frameworks aimed at promoting inclusion and existing obstacles by summarizing the key legislative platforms towards this aim. [1]

Since 2007, the Social Initiatives Support Fund (SISF) has been leading a programme entitled "Inclusive Education in Uzbekistan." The ultimate aim is to promote equality in education for all the children and adolescents with disabilities. This strategy supports lifelong inclusive education of students by offering a gradual model of inclusion, starting from elementary and continuing through secondary schools to college, all the while improving overall quality of education in this system. A national model of inclusive education has been designed with this project and is implemented in pre-school and schools in the mixed-group settings at the pilot kindergartens and schools in cities like Termiz, Karshi, Navoi, Samarkand, Jizzakh, Gulistan, Tashkent, Andijon, Fergana, Kokand, Urgench, and Nukus. Notable is its integration of local and international experiences in its construction. SISF reports about 600+ students who currently attend the mixed system in schools.[2]

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Educators can be mindful of the importance of using various forms of supplementary technological supports, such as visually designed to promote inclusivity, to enable diverse students to engage with content and to convey information more effectively: using auditory prompting or visuals that can be customized to their own preferences is recommended for a variety of audience. Data up to October 2023 show that information sharing needs to integrate all learners' capabilities including students with visual impairments in the target population (for example students with vision impairment) to minimize cognitive and mental demands of the content. The literature emphasizes that inclusive classroom environments are possible when all students are comfortable participating; reasonable adjustments to the instruction should be in the lesson plans based on established frameworks (that the stakeholders have approved) which can allow teachers or teachers to be flexible with modifying the curricula based on targeted skill requirements, ensuring that the objectives of an instruction is clear and that learners recognize achievements in class

if they have been rewarding what they have accomplished during the lesson in class.[4] Another factor affecting inclusivity concerns topic-matter pertaining to the Uzbek student: if sensitive cultural issues are involved, they may demand proper starting strategies to ease learners into real-world discussion focusing on developing logical reasoning points of view rather than provoking emotional reactions in advance which may delay an aspect of a student's motivational adaptation towards transitions at home or abroad free from fear of sudden immersion unfamiliar circumstances leading to possible disengagement frustrations among some attendees. [3]

CONCLUSION

To conclude the building of strong models related to inclusive education is one of the most critical jobs of world community today highlighting the need for the construction of social partnership in encouraging constructive relations to stakeholders that supports the advancement of holistic models with respect to inclusivity that will support the improvement of collective goals that exist amongst different parts of the world.

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