

## Chapter 54: A Comparison of Inclusion Education in Saudi Arabia and Scotland

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**Abstract:** We study inclusive education is crucial for all children, including those with special needs, to benefit from the education system. Teacher training programs should prioritize inclusion and provide teachers with the necessary skills to support diverse learners. This ensures that teachers can design appropriate learning tasks to meet the needs of students with various abilities and challenges. By prioritizing inclusive education, schools can create an environment that supports the success of all students.

### 1 Introduction

The inclusion of *special needs* students in public schools has become common practice in many countries. Leyser and Kirk (2004) assert that many countries' points of view of inclusive education *have been positively altered*. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) stated that normal schools should provide access for children with special needs. Therefore, all children have the right to be educated. In inclusive schools, disabled pupils face numerous difficulties related to society and identity (Xie et al., 2014). Growing consideration at the worldwide level with regard to the rights of disabled children has promoted radical alterations in legislation to protect their rights. UNESCO (2008) states that inclusive education is important for all learners. This supports disabled pupils to obtain education in their area's schools. These adjustments in realisation and legislation highlight the inclusion of disabled pupils with their regular peers in the same schools.

### 2 Literature Review

It is essential to present an accurate definition of inclusion. Most scholars acknowledge that inclusion is hard to define and many different definitions are given (Artiles et al., 2006). Several researchers have attempted to provide a clear definition of inclusion. For instance, inclusion refers to the involvement of a person in community procedures while valuing his or her dissimilarities, possibilities and wishes (Cummings et al., 2003). Jachova and Kovacevic (2010) define inclusion as a shift in the attitudes of an individual, the school system and community. Farrell (2000) sees the inclusion of special needs learners as allowing them to be active members in educational life, and respected and important members of the educational society. This expansion of the official meaning of inclusion has significant consequences for teaching and for training teaching students to consider inclusion and to integrate it into their practice (Essex et al, 2019). So, it can be seen that these diverse definitions of inclusion reflect the significance of inclusive education for students.

The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia provides all Saudi and non-Saudi citizens with free education and it tracks quality standards for private education (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 2013). Since the beginning of the new millennium, special education programmes in Saudi Arabia have experienced substantial development. In 2004, a 10-year plan for

developing special educational programmes compliant with current global standards and attitudes was laid down by the Saudi Ministry of Education (Gaad, 2011). The Saudi Ministry of Education encourages the placement of kids with learning disabilities in inclusive environments (Al-Mousa, 2010). The Saudi government has conducted diverse initiatives in the last ten years to address the educational needs of children, including restricting class sizes and enhancing of school staff training (Gaad, 2011).

The Regulations for Special Education Programmes and Institutes in Saudi Arabia control the procedures to identify and design programmes for special needs children. The integration of disabled students into regular classes is an objective to be attained by promoting and improving programmes of special education. Integration may not be accomplished if the classes are not a suitable educational environment for disabled learners (Alnahdi, 2020). Teachers are responsible for the practice of inclusion and for the creation and support of inclusive training facilities within regulated policies (Alquraini, 2012). In the school year 2007–2008, 96% of students with various disabilities obtained education in segregated schools (Haimour, 2013).

The majority of researches in Saudi Arabia have examined teachers' and students' perspectives of kids with special needs to be integrated in schools, but not in classrooms with their regular peers. Hence, many researchers have begun to explore inclusive education attitudes (Alnahdi, et al, 2019). For instance, Al-Faiz (2006) investigated attitudes towards inclusive education for autism students among 240 teachers working in Saudi elementary schools. It was concluded that the majority of the participants had a positive perspective of inclusive education.

On the other hand, Alquraini (2012) surveyed teachers' perspectives towards the disabled children inclusion and found that there was a statistically important distinction between female and male teachers, with male teachers maintaining a more positive attitude than female teachers. Alnahdi (2020) investigated the self-efficacy of teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms. The results showed a strong level of trust in teachers' ability to function in inclusive settings. Nonetheless, the teachers raised concerns about certain skills needed in inclusive settings. In contrast, they demonstrated a marginally optimistic response to the inclusion of autism spectrum disorder students without any variations in teacher attitudes (Haimour and Obaidat, 2013).

The integration of all children into traditional schools in Scotland and Europe has been adopted as a core education strategy (Allan, 2010). The Scottish Parliament has been granted powers relating to education (Barrett, 2015). In Scotland, radical policy innovations in integration have been implemented from the end of the 20th century to the present day. Reducing social inequality and encouraging integration in Scotland have been major public concerns (Riddell, 2009). One of the Scottish Government's key aims defined by the Skills Strategy (Scottish Government, 2007) is to ensure fair access and involvement in training and education for all (Riddell, 2009). In 2004, the publication of the Education Act (Scotland), which was later revised in 2009, further impacted school inclusion. The term 'additional needs of support' was introduced by the act and it expanded the list of those who may need extra help to address obstacles to learning that arise during their education (Scottish Government, 2009). The UK Equality Act 2010 informs and promotes inclusive education in Scotland. It gives public bodies the duty to give due consideration to eliminating discrimination, abuse and

victimisation, and to encourage justice by removing barriers to participation and addressing individual needs (Barrett, 2015).

Confronting dissimilarities and diversity is the biggest concern for schools in Europe and it presents the greatest obstacle to integration in terms of conduct, and social and emotional problems (The European Agency on the Development of Special Needs Education, 2006). It may be argued that the role of teachers is to ensure that there are appropriate curricula, policies and lesson differentiation to ensure that every child is provided with quality education and encouragement to reach his full potential in school. To address the obstacles to learning faced by students who have additional support needs, a programme needs to be in place that enables teachers to provide a curriculum and prepare lessons that are differentiated for the needs of every child in their class. Support should also be given to help each student eliminate any obstacles that still prevent learning (Education Scotland, 2016). Moreover, some teachers are concerned that they do not possess the skills required to deal with disabled students. Teaching staff should therefore be trained to work with different ages and/or special need classes of children (Florian and Rouse, 2009).

### **3 Discussions**

Previous studies provide a clear overview of inclusive education and the differences between countries related to inclusion. In order to discuss the inclusion policy in Saudi Arabia, it is useful to have a look at the education system in our country, as it is totally different from that of the United Kingdom. The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia allows children with learning difficulties to be placed in inclusive environments (Alnahdi, 2014). It could be argued that the teaching of disabled students in school should be restricted to teachers with a special qualification in education. Special education teachers, in Saudi schools, are eligible by completing a four-year programme specialising in a particular form of disability. Furthermore, specialist teachers who deal with special needs students earn 30% more (Alnahdi et al., 2019). This increase in salary will negatively affect other teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of special needs children in regular classrooms, as reported by Alquraini (2012). However, it can also be said that teachers have a positive perspective of integrating disabled students within schools in separate classes, as revealed by Al-Faiz (2006) and Alnahdi et al. (2019).

In contrast, according to the literature, the United Kingdom's education system is different from that of other countries. There are no separate qualifications or accreditation criteria for teachers who are eligible to teach in special education as in many other nations, since an independent teacher is considered an obstacle to integration because they ignore all responsibility for the children learning from the standard education programme (Lani and Rouse, 2009). Consequently, this difference leads to a greater inclusion of special needs students in regular schools. There is an inclusive education policy that does not require a specially qualified teacher to teach disabled students, but rather it facilitates the integration of all children in the same schools. Statistics in Scotland show that the proportion of children with 'additional support needs' is steadily increasing, as is the number of children reported as having additional needs for assistance. Allan (2010) states that the number of children with additional support needs increased between 2004 and 2007.

### **4 Conclusions**

From the discussion above, it can be seen that the inclusion of all children in education is essential as it help children with special needs to benefit from the whole education system.

Many countries aim for greater integration in education. Saudi inclusive education is different from Scottish inclusive education. Therefore, it is important to include inclusion as part of teacher training programmes. Moreover, it is crucial for teachers to be trained to deal with different types of learners. Teachers need to be qualified to design different learning tasks to meet the needs of students with all sorts of skills and problems (Alnahdi, 2020).

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