

2nd AFRICE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THEME

“EDUCATION IN AFRICA: REFLECTIONS BEYOND 2015 MDGs- COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES”

SUBTHEME: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy with special reference to South Africa and India—A Comparative perspective

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ABSTRACT

Education is, however, a much broader concept than the acquisition of skills. Inclusive education aims to promote democratic principles and a set of values and beliefs relating to equality and social justice so that all children can participate in teaching and learning. Through its championing of marginalised groups, inclusive education has the potential to promote such values and beliefs, and so has a great deal to offer the current Education for All debate. Education for all and the attempts of countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set at important international meetings of the global education community at Jomtien, Thailand (1990) and Dakar, Senegal (2000), it is of fundamental importance that an understanding is developed of why inclusion of ‘all’ children remains difficult to attain in many countries . Attention has to be paid to those who are excluded from schooling and those who fail to complete a full cycle of primary schooling and, critically, the processes behind these phenomena. School and educational exclusion – the denial or restriction of access to and meaningful participation in educational institutions and processes – has a number of implications for the societies in which they occur. First, they present these countries with great human rights challenges. Second they deny countries the opportunity to capitalise on the individual and social talents and contributions that excluded young people can make to social and economic development. This paper is concerned with the experience of inclusion and exclusion in education and the policies, mechanisms and processes that India and South Africa have put in place to address the challenges that come with exclusion in education.

To place the situations in India and South Africa against a larger backdrop, it is evident that persistent inequalities of gender, class, race, caste and ethnicity exist in education systems worldwide, whether at the stage of enrolment and attendance, in outcomes and achievement or in terms of the consequent opportunities to which education is expected to give rise. The reports for India and South Africa were consistent with these global developments. Patterns of inequality in education in both countries correlate consistently and significantly with caste and race respectively, and deepen further, with gender and poverty. These factors, however, come together in complex ways to give the production of inequality and exclusion in education in these two countries very specific characters. South Africa and India has adopted an inclusive education policy in order to address barriers to learning in the inclusive education system. However, the implementation of this policy is hampered by the lack of teachers' skills and knowledge in differentiating the curriculum to address a wide range of learning needs. In this paper, background to inclusive education policy in South Africa as well as in India will be comparatively examined and a brief exposition of an instructional design approach, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) that addresses a wide range of learning needs in a single classroom will be considered.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, India, South Africa, Instructional Design and Universal Design for Learning