STATUS OF INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF ODISHA: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. At present Indian higher education system confronted with many problems like: low rate of enrolment, unequal access, poor quality of infrastructure, traditional method of teaching, inadequate facilities, and low standard of academic research (Research Gate, 2019). In this paper the author intends to analyse the status of inclusion in higher education system of Odisha with reference to Agarpara College, Agarpara through a case study approach. The study was conducted with the objectives like: (i) To study the status of inclusion in higher education with reference to enrolment, academic achievement, and participation in academics; (ii) To study the problems in the process of inclusion; (iii) To provide suggestions for improving inclusion in higher education. College Observation Schedule, Interview Schedule for students and teachers were used for data collection. The data was analyzed through content analysis, documentary analysis techniques. In this study it was found that: (i) The differently abled (PH) and minority community (Muslim) students are getting equitable chances to take admission but due to lack of awareness among the parents the minority community learners number is poor in enrolment; (ii) The differently abled (PH) and minority community (Muslim) students academic achievement score is up to the mark but the ST category students achievement and participation in classroom discussion is less due to their low attendance; (iii) The ST students are irregular as they assist their parents in household activities and earning their livelihood; (iv) The physically disabled learners should be provided conducive environment in the campus like: accessible toilets, more ramps, classrooms with advanced audio-visual system etc.

Key Words: Inclusion, Higher Education, Sustainable Development Goal, Case Study

Introduction

Higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skill (NPE, 1986). The Sustainable Development Goals or Millennium Development Goals 2030 are the blueprints to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Among 17 numbers of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG-4 aims at “ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting lifelong
opportunities for all by 2030” (Education, 2030 Framework for Action). In India, hierarchies of castes, economic status, gender relations and cultural diversities deeply influence issues related to access and equity in education (MHRD, 2008, p. 9). It is otherwise termed as exclusion in education. Exclusion in education has mainly 5 forms, such as: (i) Exclusion from having the life prospects needed for learning (i.e. inadequate housing, food, clothing; living under limited security and safety); (ii) Exclusion from entry into an educational programme (i.e. unable to pay entrance fees and tuition fees; being outside the eligibility criteria for entry); (iii) Exclusion from regular and continuing participation in an educational programme due to lack of time, distance of institution, illness or injuries etc. ; (iv) Exclusion from gaining meaningful learning experiences (i.e. teaching and learning process not meeting the learning needs of the learners, the language of instruction and learning materials are not comprehensible etc.); and (v) Exclusion from contributing the acquired knowledge to the development of community and society (i.e. limited work opportunities that correspond to the area of learning acquired or limited work opportunities in general). So in the changing world inclusion in educational set up is inevitable for success in education as well as wellbeing of the human beings. Inclusive Education is an engine of social cohesion (FEFC, 1997, pp. 8-9) as widespread alienation poses a threat to the stability of society (Fryer, 1997).

Rationale of the Study

Higher Education enhances career, financial security and improves quality of life (Elka Torpey, 2018). The United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that “higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the introduction of free education. It is essential in imparting knowledge, values; and developing skills and in the due process increases the growth and productivity of the nation (Chakrabarty, 2011). In spite of so many benefits of higher education system, Indian higher education system confronted with many problems like: low rate of enrolment, unequal access, poor quality of infrastructure, traditional method of teaching, inadequate facilities, and low standard of academic research etc. (Research Gate, 2019). Diversity has a positive impact on all students (Smith et.al., 1997). In fact, when students identify their college campus as a non-discriminatory environment, under-represented students feel a greater sense of belonging and major students show greater support for the university’s diversity effort (Witt et.al., 2001). Realising the importance of inclusive higher education system, Green Passage Scheme has been implemented by Govt. of Odisha from 2016-2017 for inclusion of Orphan students in higher education system. Hence, in this paper the author intends to analyse the status of inclusion in higher education system of Odisha through a case study approach.
Context of the Case Study

In this study Agarpara College, Agarara, Bhadrak is considered to be the ‘case’ or ‘unit’ for the study. Students, staff, physical environment, academic environment and other resources are the elements/components of the study. This college is a government aided college which stands on the bank of river “Salandi” in the village Berhampur. It has both +2 and +3 wing with Arts and Science stream.

Figure 1: College Gate

Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the status of inclusion in higher education with reference to enrolment, academic achievement, and participation in academics (both curricular and other curricular areas).
2. To study the problems in the process of inclusion.
3. To provide suggestions for improving inclusion in higher education.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study was conducted on Agarpara College, Agarara, Bhadrak to illicit detailed information about equitable quality education modalities.

Methodology of the Study

The present study was undertaken through a case study approach. The human and material resources of Agarpara College, Agarpara constitute sample for the study. Through purposive sampling technique this institution was selected. Three self-made tools were used in this study viz. College Observation Schedule, Interview Schedule for students and Interview Schedule for teachers. College Observation Schedule was used to collect information about the resources available, enrolment status and achievement level of the learners. Through Interview Schedule for teachers and students, the information like: students classroom participation, their problems and suggestions for inclusion etc. were collected. The data collected through College Observation Schedule was triangulated with the data collected through Interview Schedule for students and Interview Schedule for teachers. The data was analyzed through content analysis and documentary analysis technique. Likewise, the statistical techniques like mean, percentage analysis etc. were used for analysis and interpretation of the data.
Discussion of the result

The result of the study stated under four heads as follows:

1. Year wise Enrolment Status

Table-1 (Year wise Enrolment Status)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>SEBC/OBC</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>PH</th>
<th>MINORITY</th>
<th>TOTAL Male</th>
<th>TOTAL Female</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+3</td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: College Admission Register)

Table-1 shows that, the proportion of SC, ST, PH and Minority students enrolment at +2 level has been gradually increased year wise. In the academic year 2018-19 and 2019-20 the PH and Minority students get admitted in this college, but their ratio is more in Arts stream in comparison to science. Similarly, as per the reservation policy in admission process the SC, ST, PH and Minority students get equal chance to take admission as this college comes under Student Academic Management System (SAMs), Govt. of Odisha.

Though the enrolment ratio of SC, ST, PH and Minority students at +2 level is up to the mark, but in case of science their ratio is less. Similarly, both at +2 and +3 level science seats are not filled up due to paucity of teachers. The proportion of female students are more than their male counterparts.

So, it is concluded that from the enrolment point of view no students are denied to take admission in this college as it is comes under SAMs, Govt. of Odisha. Though 4 villages having Muslim population are situated near this college but less number of minority students are being admitted to this college due to lack of awareness among the...
parents. For inclusion of more minority students, there is a need of an awareness campaign during the admission process.

2. Status of Academic Achievement and Participation

Table-2(Mean achievement score % at +2 level admission session 2019-2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>SEBC/OBC</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>PH</th>
<th>MINORITY</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>52.40%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>48.78%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>46.53%</td>
<td>59.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>47.33%</td>
<td>41.24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reveals that the mean achievement score percentage of +2 1st year Gen, SEBC/OBC, SC, PH, Minority Male and Female students are up to the mark but the ST students mean achievement score is 29% which indicates their poor performance. It happens due to their low attendance. So they must be given extra care in the academic process and motivation to attend the classes regularly.

Table-3(Mean achievement score % at +3 level admission session 2018-19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Gen</th>
<th>SEBC/OBC</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>PH</th>
<th>MINORITY</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49.11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reveals that the mean achievement score percentage of +3 2nd year Gen, SEBC/OBC, SC, PH, Minority Male and Female students are up to the mark but the ST students mean achievement score is 36% which indicates their poor performance. It happens due to their low attendance. So they must be given extra care in the academic process and motivation to attend the classes regularly.
3. Status of Non-Academic Achievement

**Case-1 (Interaction with a differently abled learner)**

An Orthopedically handicapped student of +2 2nd year Arts named Chandan kumar Panda reveals that he has lost his left leg by road accident when he was 6 years and a half. Now with a plastic leg he is capable to move. His native is Kusun nagar but he stays in a nearby mess and comes to college on foot. But he has shown his potentialities in high jump and stood first in college level competition. It is possible due to the empathetic attitude of the college PET and other teaching staff. The college has ramps for their smooth movement. Due to inclusion policy in higher education system he was able to achieve this. No fee has been collected from him yet and now he gets Rs 500/- as stipend from panchayat every month. Moreover, these students also need accessible toilets in the campus.

![Figure 2: Researcher with a differently abled learner](image2)

**Case-2 (Interaction with a Mulsim community Learner)**

An informal discussion was made with Alsa Begum, a student of +3 1st year arts Education Hons. Her father has a chicken center at Agarpara market. She is well versed in Odia along with Urdu and Hindi. She stood first in GK and Odia essay competition. She said that she has never been de-recognized by her friends and teachers. But only her family environment (i.e single room in her family) stands as an obstacle for her educational achievement.

![Figure 3: Researcher interacting with a muslim girl](image3)
3. Problems and Suggestions for inclusion

From the case study the author founds the following problems and suggestions for inclusion:

- From enrolment point of view, the differently abled (PH) and minority community (Muslim) students get equitable chance to take admission, as this college comes under SAMs, Govt. of Odisha. Though 4 villages having Muslim population are situated near this college but less number of minority students are being admitted to this college due to lack of awareness among their parents. For inclusion of more minority students, awareness campaign during admission process is needed.

- From academic achievement point of view, the differently abled (PH) and minority community (Muslim) students’ academic achievement score is up to the mark but the ST category students achievement and participation in classroom discussion is less due to their low attendance.

- The ST students are irregular as they assist their parents in household activities and earning their livelihood. This creates a gap in their learning process as they skip classes to support their family. When they come after a few days, they face problems to cope with the learning process. Hence, they are encouraged to attend the classes regularly and extra classes should be taken by the faculties to enable them to cope with their peers and to bridge their learning gaps.

- The physically disabled learners should be provided with conducive environment in the campus like accessible toilets, more ramps, and classrooms with audio-visual system etc.

Conclusion

Inclusion is an involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized. An inclusive institution promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; its value and practices respect the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and way of living of its members. From the recent study it is found that, Agarpara College Agarpara, Bhadrak more or less practised the concept of inclusion in higher education system in terms of equal and equitable access of educational facilities, quality teaching learning environment, good achievement level etc. It is possible due to the inclusive higher education policy of the government; consistent efforts, favorable attitude and flexible mindset of its employees.
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