

ABSTRACT

Parent and Community Participation : The key to IE

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Children belong to parents and communities. Communities are as much places of learning as schools. An inclusive approach to education recognizes that parents and community have a real contribution to make to children's learning and they have the right to be involved in the decision making process. Schools and communities need to understand each other and reinforce each other's role. Communities and parents may not be aware of the difficulties schools face and to what extent certain children have education related problems that could be solved through their increased support. A great challenge is to get the parents and families of the most marginalized students involved. It becomes necessary to give them the confidence and self worth

Experience in the Asian region indicates that parents and other members of the community can help in building awareness and creating positive attitudes towards child rights by conducting sensitization programmes with active participation of people with disabilities. Inclusive practice shows that communities have played a crucial role in handling cultural differences, promoting girls education, ensuring birth registration and handling discrimination and stigmatization. They have been effective in handling fear of violence and controlling illness and hunger among children.

The underlying values of inclusive education can be found in many cultures, philosophies and religions in countries in the Asian region. It has been found to be useful to let community members share these underlying values, beliefs and to question them to see if they are the ones they want to uphold. In many countries national level debates on inclusive education have been initiated to begin the process of consensus building. Communities have also initiated discussions to find out the local myths and plan change for IE by mobilizing opinion. Promoting community involvement is the key to inclusive education.