



JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL LAUREATES ACADEMY

www.rlaindia.org

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ASPECTS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive schooling emphasizes the education of all learners, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, or linguistic differences, within a common learning environment. Teachers play a crucial role in translating inclusive policies into classroom practices, particularly in the curricular and co-curricular domains. This theoretical paper explores teachers' perspectives on curricular and co-curricular aspects of inclusive schooling by synthesizing existing educational theories, inclusive education frameworks, and pedagogical practices. The study highlights how curriculum adaptation, flexible teaching strategies, and inclusive co-curricular activities foster participation, social integration, and holistic development of learners with diverse needs. It further discusses the challenges teachers face, such as lack of training, limited resources, and rigid curriculum structures, which affect effective implementation. The paper concludes that positive teacher attitudes and supportive institutional structures are essential for creating inclusive learning environments that promote equity, collaboration, and meaningful participation for all students.

Keywords: Inclusive Schooling, Teachers' Perspectives, Curriculum Adaptation, Co-Curricular Activities, Holistic Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive schooling has emerged as a global educational priority aimed at ensuring equal learning opportunities for all children, irrespective of their abilities, disabilities, gender, socioeconomic background, or cultural identity. Rooted in the principles of human rights and social justice, inclusive education seeks to move beyond mere physical placement of students with special needs into regular schools and toward meaningful participation in academic and social life. Teachers stand at the center of this transformation, as they are responsible for designing and implementing curricular and co-curricular experiences that respond to diverse learner needs. Their perspectives significantly influence how inclusion is interpreted and practiced in everyday school contexts. Understanding teachers' views on curricular and co-curricular aspects of inclusive schooling is therefore vital for the development of effective inclusive practices.

Curricular aspects of inclusive schooling focus on what is taught and how it is taught. A rigid and standardized curriculum often fails to address the varied learning styles and abilities present in an inclusive classroom. Teachers are required to modify content, adopt differentiated instruction, and use flexible assessment strategies so that every learner can access the curriculum meaningfully. From a theoretical standpoint, constructivist learning theory and multiple intelligences theory emphasize that learners construct knowledge in different ways and at different paces. Teachers who embrace these perspectives tend to view curriculum not as a fixed framework but as a dynamic tool that can be adapted to suit individual learner needs. Their attitudes toward curriculum adaptation determine whether inclusive education remains a policy concept or becomes a classroom reality.

Co-curricular aspects, including sports, arts, cultural programs, and social activities, play an equally significant role in inclusive schooling. These activities promote social interaction, emotional development, and a sense of belonging among students. For learners with special needs, co-curricular participation provides opportunities to develop confidence, communication skills, and peer relationships. Teachers' perspectives on co-curricular inclusion shape the extent to which these activities become accessible and meaningful for all students. When teachers value diversity and view co-curricular activities as tools for social integration, they are more likely to design inclusive events and encourage participation from every learner. Conversely, negative or indifferent attitudes may result in exclusion or token participation of

students with disabilities.

The theoretical foundations of inclusive education highlight the importance of teacher agency and reflective practice. Social learning theory emphasizes that students learn not only through instruction but also through observation and interaction. In inclusive settings, teachers model acceptance, empathy, and cooperation, thereby shaping the social climate of the classroom and school. Teachers who hold positive beliefs about inclusion tend to create learning environments that support collaboration, peer tutoring, and mutual respect. Their perspectives on curriculum and co-curriculum thus directly influence students' academic achievement as well as their social and emotional development.

Despite the recognized importance of inclusive schooling, teachers often face significant challenges in implementing curricular and co-curricular adaptations. Lack of professional training, inadequate infrastructure, large class sizes, and limited teaching resources hinder their ability to address diverse learner needs effectively. The theoretical gap between inclusive policy and classroom practice remains a persistent concern. Teachers' perspectives are shaped by these contextual realities, which may lead to stress, resistance, or uncertainty regarding inclusive practices. Therefore, examining teachers' views from a theoretical lens allows for a deeper understanding of both their commitment to inclusion and the structural barriers they encounter.

This theoretical paper aims to analyze teachers' perspectives on curricular and co-curricular aspects of inclusive schooling by integrating educational theories and inclusive education principles. It seeks to emphasize the role of curriculum flexibility, inclusive pedagogy, and co-curricular participation in fostering holistic development. By focusing on teachers' viewpoints, the paper underscores the need for professional development, institutional support, and policy alignment to strengthen inclusive practices. Ultimately, inclusive schooling can only succeed when teachers are empowered to adapt curriculum and co-curricular activities in ways that recognize and celebrate learner diversity.

II. TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULAR ASPECTS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING

Teachers' perspectives on the curricular aspects of inclusive schooling are shaped by their beliefs about learner diversity, instructional flexibility, and academic equity. In an inclusive

classroom, the curriculum must address the varied intellectual abilities, learning styles, and developmental needs of students, including those with disabilities and learning difficulties. Teachers who hold positive attitudes toward inclusion view the curriculum as a flexible framework rather than a rigid syllabus. They recognize the importance of adapting lesson content, learning objectives, and teaching methods to ensure meaningful participation for all learners. From a theoretical standpoint, inclusive pedagogy aligns with constructivist and learner-centered approaches, which emphasize that students construct knowledge at different paces and through varied experiences. Teachers who adopt these perspectives integrate strategies such as differentiated instruction, individualized learning plans, and the use of multiple instructional resources to support diverse learners.

Curriculum adaptation is a central concern in teachers' perspectives on inclusive schooling. Teachers often acknowledge that a uniform curriculum cannot effectively serve a heterogeneous classroom. Therefore, they emphasize the need for modifications in content presentation, instructional methods, and assessment procedures. These adaptations may include simplifying complex concepts, using visual and auditory aids, providing additional time for task completion, and offering alternative forms of assessment such as oral presentations or project-based learning. Teachers believe that such flexibility allows students with special educational needs to demonstrate their understanding without being disadvantaged by traditional evaluation systems. Moreover, teachers perceive that curriculum adaptation benefits not only students with disabilities but also those who learn differently or struggle academically, thereby promoting overall classroom effectiveness and academic engagement.

Another important dimension of teachers' perspectives relates to the balance between academic standards and inclusivity. Many teachers express concern about meeting prescribed curriculum objectives while simultaneously addressing individual learner needs. They often feel pressure to complete the syllabus within limited time frames, which may restrict opportunities for personalized instruction. Despite these constraints, teachers who support inclusive education attempt to reconcile curriculum requirements with inclusive practices by prioritizing essential learning outcomes and using cooperative learning strategies. Peer tutoring, group discussions, and activity-based learning are viewed as effective tools for fostering understanding among students with varying abilities. These approaches not only enhance academic learning but also encourage social interaction and mutual support within the classroom.

Teachers also recognize the importance of assessment practices as part of the curricular dimension of inclusive schooling. Traditional standardized testing methods are often perceived as inadequate for evaluating the progress of diverse learners. From teachers' perspectives, inclusive assessment should focus on continuous and formative evaluation rather than solely on summative examinations. They value assessment methods that consider individual progress, effort, and improvement over time. Portfolio assessment, observational records, and performance-based tasks are seen as more reflective of students' actual learning experiences. Such practices enable teachers to identify learning gaps and adjust instruction accordingly, reinforcing the principle that curriculum should be responsive to learner needs rather than fixed and uniform.

However, teachers' perspectives also highlight several challenges in implementing inclusive curricular practices. Many teachers report insufficient training in curriculum adaptation and inclusive instructional strategies. A lack of teaching materials, assistive technologies, and professional guidance further complicates their efforts to address learner diversity effectively. Large class sizes and limited time for planning also hinder the application of individualized instructional approaches. These challenges often lead to feelings of frustration and uncertainty among teachers, even when they hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education. Consequently, teachers emphasize the need for continuous professional development programs, collaborative planning opportunities, and institutional support to strengthen their capacity to implement inclusive curriculum practices successfully.

In teachers' perspectives on the curricular aspects of inclusive schooling underscore the importance of flexibility, learner-centered instruction, and inclusive assessment practices. Teachers view curriculum adaptation as essential for ensuring equal learning opportunities and promoting academic engagement among diverse learners. While they recognize the theoretical value of inclusive pedagogy, practical challenges related to training, resources, and structural constraints continue to influence their ability to translate inclusive ideals into classroom practice. Addressing these concerns through policy reforms and supportive school environments is crucial for enabling teachers to implement an inclusive curriculum that fosters equity, participation, and holistic development for all students.

III. TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON CO-CURRICULAR ASPECTS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING

Teachers' perspectives on the co-curricular aspects of inclusive schooling emphasize the importance of providing equal opportunities for participation beyond academic instruction. Co-curricular activities such as sports, arts, cultural programs, debates, clubs, and community service play a vital role in fostering social integration, emotional development, and self-confidence among students. Teachers who support inclusive education view these activities as powerful tools for promoting interaction between students with and without disabilities. From their perspective, co-curricular participation helps reduce social stigma and encourages mutual respect and understanding among learners. The theoretical foundation of social learning and social integration theories suggests that students develop positive attitudes and social skills through shared experiences, and teachers often acknowledge that inclusive co-curricular environments create a sense of belonging and collective identity within the school community.

Adaptation and flexibility are central to teachers' perspectives on inclusive co-curricular practices. Teachers recognize that traditional co-curricular programs are often designed for students without disabilities and may unintentionally exclude those with special needs. As a result, they stress the necessity of modifying activities to suit different abilities and interests. This may include adjusting rules in sports, providing alternative roles in group performances, using adaptive equipment, or designing activities that focus on participation rather than competition. Teachers believe that such modifications allow students with diverse needs to experience success and enjoyment, thereby strengthening their motivation and self-esteem. Inclusive co-curricular practices are thus perceived not merely as extracurricular engagement but as essential components of holistic education that nurture creativity, teamwork, and emotional resilience.

Teachers also highlight the role of co-curricular activities in developing social and communication skills among learners with diverse needs. Participation in group activities enables students to practice cooperation, leadership, and problem-solving in real-life contexts. Teachers observe that students with disabilities often demonstrate increased confidence and improved peer relationships when they are actively included in school events. Co-curricular activities provide informal settings where students interact naturally, which helps break down barriers created by academic labels or performance differences. From teachers' perspectives,

these experiences contribute significantly to students' emotional well-being and promote positive school culture characterized by empathy and inclusiveness.

Despite their positive outlook, teachers' perspectives also reflect several challenges in implementing inclusive co-curricular programs. Limited resources, lack of adaptive sports equipment, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient training in inclusive activity planning often restrict teachers' ability to include all learners effectively. Safety concerns and time constraints further complicate the organization of inclusive activities. Teachers sometimes express uncertainty about how to balance the needs of students with disabilities with those of the larger student population. These challenges can lead to partial or inconsistent inclusion in co-curricular programs, even when teachers strongly support inclusive principles. Therefore, teachers emphasize the need for administrative support, specialized training, and collaborative planning among staff to ensure that co-curricular activities are accessible and meaningful for all students.

Teachers also recognize the importance of parental and community involvement in strengthening inclusive co-curricular practices. Collaboration with parents helps teachers understand students' individual abilities, interests, and limitations, enabling better planning of activities. Community partnerships with sports organizations, cultural institutions, and non-governmental agencies can provide additional resources and expertise to support inclusive initiatives. Teachers believe that such cooperation expands learning opportunities and reinforces the values of inclusion beyond the classroom. Co-curricular activities thus become a shared responsibility of schools, families, and communities in promoting the social and emotional development of learners.

In teachers' perspectives on the co-curricular aspects of inclusive schooling underscore the significance of participation, adaptation, and social integration. Teachers view inclusive co-curricular activities as essential for fostering confidence, cooperation, and a sense of belonging among students with diverse needs. While they acknowledge the benefits of such practices, they also identify challenges related to resources, training, and institutional support. Addressing these issues through professional development programs and policy initiatives is necessary to ensure that co-curricular inclusion becomes an integral and sustainable part of inclusive schooling. Ultimately, inclusive co-curricular practices contribute to the holistic development of learners and the creation of a supportive and equitable school environment.

IV. CONCLUSION

Teachers' perspectives on curricular and co-curricular aspects of inclusive schooling play a decisive role in shaping inclusive educational environments. A positive and informed outlook enables teachers to adapt curriculum content, implement flexible teaching strategies, and promote participation in co-curricular activities for all learners. Theoretical insights reveal that inclusive schooling is not merely a structural change but a pedagogical and attitudinal transformation. While teachers recognize the value of inclusion, they also face challenges related to training, resources, and institutional constraints. Addressing these challenges through continuous professional development and supportive policies is essential for strengthening inclusive practices. Ultimately, inclusive schooling can achieve its goal of equity and holistic development only when teachers are empowered to integrate curricular and co-curricular dimensions in ways that respect and respond to learner diversity.

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