

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS: CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS IN INDIA

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Abstract

Inclusive education aims to educate all children, including those with learning disabilities, in mainstream classrooms. This paper examines the challenges faced and innovative teaching strategies used in inclusive classrooms in India to support children with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder. A review of policy documents, research studies, and reports reveals that while India has made progress through laws and initiatives promoting inclusion, significant challenges remain in practice. Key barriers include lack of teacher training and awareness, resource constraints, large class sizes, and social stigma. The prevalence of specific learning disabilities in India is around 8% of children [1], yet many of these children are not adequately supported in regular schools. Innovative strategies are emerging to address these gaps. Effective approaches identified include multisensory and differentiated instruction tailored to individual needs, use of assistive technologies and accommodations (such as text-to-speech tools and extra time on tests), peer tutoring and cooperative learning to foster social inclusion, and the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in lesson planning. Capacity-building initiatives like in-service teacher training and collaboration with special educators are also critical. Early results from such interventions show improved academic skills and classroom engagement for students with learning difficulties. The paper concludes that achieving truly inclusive classrooms in India requires sustained teacher development, administrative support, community involvement, and policy enforcement to translate inclusive education ideals into everyday practice, thereby ensuring all learners can thrive together.

Keywords: Inclusive education; Learning disabilities; Dyslexia; ADHD; Autism; Teaching strategies; Inclusive classrooms; India

Introduction

Inclusive education denotes the practice of educating students with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers in mainstream classrooms, with appropriate supports to meet their learning needs. In India, this approach has gained momentum in recent years due to legal mandates and a growing recognition of the rights of children with disabilities to education. The Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 established free and compulsory education for all children aged 6-14 and emphasized inclusion of children with disabilities as a "disadvantaged group." Subsequently, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016 explicitly recognized specific learning disabilities (like dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia) and autism spectrum disorder as disabilities entitled to educational accommodations (Government of India, 2016). The recent National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reinforced these commitments, calling for "inclusive and equitable education" and recommending measures such as teacher training in inclusive pedagogy, recruitment of special educators, and the use of assistive technologies and alternative teaching-learning materials to support diverse learners (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Despite these policy advancements, translating inclusive education into effective classroom practice remains

challenging. A significant number of children with disabilities in India still do not attend or complete school. According to a UNESCO report, about one-fourth of children with disabilities aged 5-19 years have never attended any educational institution [2][3]. While enrollment has improved compared to past decades, children with learning disabilities often face unmet needs in mainstream settings, leading some to drop out or opt for non-formal education. For instance, many students with learning disabilities enroll in the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to pursue an adapted curriculum [4], indicating that regular schools are not always equipped to support them fully.

At the same time, there have been observable improvements in school infrastructure and resources for inclusion. Figure 1 below illustrates the upward trend in the percentage of schools with adaptations (such as ramps, handrails, accessible learning materials) for students with disabilities in India. This reflects government programs like Samagra Shiksha that fund inclusive education resources. However, having physical adaptations is only one aspect; the instructional strategies employed by teachers are crucial to ensuring children with learning disabilities can learn effectively in inclusive classrooms.

This paper focuses on learning disabilities in the context of inclusive classrooms at the elementary and secondary school

level in India. The term "learning disabilities" here encompasses specific learning disorders (like dyslexia, which affects reading; dysgraphia, writing; dyscalculia, math) as well as related neuro developmental disorders that impact learning, such as ADHD and autism spectrum disorder, given that these often co-occur or present similar challenges in classroom settings. Children with these conditions have average or above average intelligence but require specialized teaching approaches to achieve their potential.

The goal of the paper is to analyze the major challenges teachers and schools face in including children with learning disabilities, and to highlight innovative strategies and best practices that have been developed to overcome these challenges. The scope is centered on the Indian educational context, drawing on research findings, policy analyses, and case studies from India, while also referencing relevant global research for effective pedagogical approaches. By examining both challenges and innovations, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how inclusive education for learning disabilities can be strengthened, offering insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers working toward more inclusive classrooms.

Inclusive Education in India: Progress and Remaining Gaps

India's commitment to inclusive education is reflected in a robust policy framework. In addition to the RTE Act and RPWD Act mentioned earlier, various government schemes have aimed to operationalize inclusion. The integrated education program under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in the 2000s and its successor Samagra Shiksha (the national program for school education since 2018) provide funding to states for resources like special educators, resource rooms, teacher training, therapeutic services, and assistive devices for children with special needs (Grimes et al., 2021). Under these programs, thousands of teachers have received short-term

training in inclusive education and millions of children with disabilities have been identified and provided aids such as hearing aids, Braille kits, and wheelchairs (Grimes et al., 2021). The government has also introduced examination accommodations (e.g., extra time, scribes, alternative questions) for students with learning disabilities in many education boards (Karande, 2008). Furthermore, initiatives by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) and NGOs have increased awareness and early screening of learning disabilities in urban centers.

However, despite these efforts, significant gaps remain in practice:

- **Enrollment and Retention:** As noted, a sizeable portion of children with disabilities are still out of school. Even among those enrolled, many do not progress to higher grades. It was reported that fewer than 70% of children with disabilities aged 5-19 were attending an educational institution, compared to about 71% of all children [3]. Children with autism and multiple disabilities have especially low school completion rates (Singal, 2019). Girls with disabilities face a double disadvantage, with lower enrollment than boys (UNESCO, 2019). These gaps point to persisting barriers in the school system that prevent full participation of learners with special needs.
- **Teacher Preparedness:** A critical weakness in implementation is the lack of adequately trained teachers. Most regular classroom teachers in India have not received in-depth training on teaching children with learning disabilities. In a survey of teachers in Delhi, nearly 68% had no training in special education and over 85% had no access to a special educator or resource room support in their school (Das & Kuyini, 2013). Table 1 summarizes findings on teacher preparedness from that study:

Table 1: Teacher Training and Support in Delhi Schools (Das & Kuyini, 2013)

Indicator (Regular Teachers)	Primary Schools (% teachers)	Secondary Schools (% teachers)
Received any special education training	32.4% ($\approx$ 67.6% untrained)	32.3% ($\approx$ 67.7% untrained)
Had experience teaching CWD	22.1% (77.9% no experience)	36.9% (63.1% no experience)
Access to support services (special educators/resource room)	13.6% (86.4% without support)	12.3% (87.7% without support)

CWD = Children with disabilities. Data from regular school teachers in Delhi; primary N=223, secondary N=130.

These figures highlight that the majority of teachers lacked both training and experience in inclusive practices, and most schools did not have specialist support available. Without proper preparation, teachers often feel unconfident and

overwhelmed in managing learning-disabled students in addition to the regular curriculum demands (Sharma, Moore & Sonawane, 2009). This can lead to ineffective inclusion where the child is physically present in class but not fully

engaged or learning optimally.

- **Attitudinal Barriers:** Teacher attitudes and expectations significantly affect the success of inclusion. There are cases of teachers misunderstanding learning disabilities as laziness or low intelligence. For example, children with dyslexia in India have often been mislabeled as "slow" or "lazy" by educators who are unfamiliar with the condition [5]. Such misconceptions can result in inappropriate teaching responses (e.g., punishment for not writing correctly) that harm the student's self-esteem. Studies of teacher attitudes in India have yielded mixed findings - while many teachers express philosophically positive attitudes towards the idea of inclusion (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014), they also report practical concerns and stress about handling these students without sufficient support (Sharma et al., 2009). Some teachers fear that focusing on students with special needs will detract from the rest of the class or that they lack time to individualize lessons. These attitudinal challenges can lead to subtle forms of exclusion, such as giving a child with learning difficulties little attention or easy tasks, resulting in

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- **Resource and Infrastructure Constraints:** Inclusive classrooms in India often operate with limited resources. Many government schools have high student-to-teacher

ratios (often 30:1 or higher), making individualized attention difficult. Teaching materials and curricula are usually standardized, leaving few options for alternate formats (e.g., audiobooks or large-print text for those who need them). While physical accessibility has improved (for instance, more schools have ramps and accessible toilets now than a decade ago), there is still a shortage of assistive technology and specialized instructional materials in most classrooms. Access to simple aids like reading overlays, calculators, or phonetic reading programs is not widespread. Furthermore, special educator posts often remain unfilled or one itinerant special educator is shared across multiple schools, limiting the support available to teachers and students (Grimes et al., 2021).

- **Curriculum and Assessment Rigidities:** The mainstream Indian curriculum is relatively inflexible, with heavy content loads and a strong exam-oriented culture. Children with learning disabilities struggle with this one-size-fits-all curriculum - for example, a dyslexic child may grasp concepts orally but cannot read the textbook or write exams at the same pace as peers. Until recently, accommodations were not common. Although boards like CBSE and state boards now grant certain concessions (such as extra time or exemption from second language for dyslexic students), many teachers are unsure how to modify daily assessments or homework. There is also pressure to cover the syllabus, leaving little room to slow down or use alternative pedagogies. This can result in children with LD falling behind academically and feeling anxious in the classroom.
- **Identification and Early Intervention:** Identifying learning disabilities requires specialist assessment, which is scarce in many parts of India. Many children - especially in rural areas - remain undiagnosed or get diagnosed very late (e.g. middle school), by which time they have already faced years of academic failure. Teachers often lack the knowledge to recognize signs of dyslexia or ADHD; hence, these students might be mislabeled as "weak students" or disciplined for behavior problems rather than provided support. The RPWD Act 2016 mandates early identification of disabilities, but implementation on the ground is inconsistent. Without early intervention, the challenges exacerbate as curriculum difficulty increases in higher grades.
- In summary, India's journey toward inclusive education for children with learning disabilities has begun in earnest, but systemic challenges in teacher capacity, attitudes, resources, and pedagogy must be addressed to make inclusion meaningful. The next sections discuss how educators and schools are responding to these challenges through innovative teaching strategies and interventions that aim to provide better learning experiences for children with learning disabilities in inclusive settings.

Effective Teaching Strategies for Inclusive

Classrooms

- Research and practice have yielded a variety of strategies that can significantly improve learning outcomes for students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. These strategies are often beneficial not only for students with identified disabilities but for all students, aligning with the principle that good inclusive teaching is simply good teaching. Below are key evidence-based teaching strategies and supports being utilized or recommended in India's inclusive classrooms, along with their benefits:
- **Differentiated and Multisensory Instruction:** Teachers are encouraged to differentiate instruction by modifying content, process, and products according to student needs. For children with learning disabilities, lessons that engage multiple senses have proven especially effective. A multisensory approach integrates visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile activities to reinforce learning of concepts (Gulati, Kakkar & Chauhan, 2024). For example, when teaching spelling, a teacher might have students say the word aloud (auditory), trace it in sand (tactile/kinesthetic), and look at a colored outline of the word (visual). Such techniques are shown to improve the reading and writing skills of dyslexic students markedly. A recent comprehensive review found that multisensory learning strategies led to significant gains in reading, writing, and math performance for students with learning disabilities, along with improved engagement and motivation (Gulati et al., 2024). In fact, using a structured multisensory phonics program (like the Orton-Gillingham method) can help many struggling readers learn to decode effectively, closing gaps with peers (Hada, 2022). Differentiation also means adjusting difficulty level; for instance, providing simplified texts or extra examples for a student who needs them, or allowing alternative ways to demonstrate understanding (like oral presentations or projects instead of written tests). By planning lessons with multiple representations and pathways, teachers make the curriculum accessible to a diverse range of learners.
- **Use of Assistive Technology and**
- **Accommodations:** Assistive technologies have become game-changers for inclusive education. These range from low-tech tools (colored overlays for reading, graphic organizers) to high-tech solutions (text-to-speech software, educational apps, tablets with special programs). For students with dyslexia, text-to-speech and audiobooks can help them access grade-level content without being limited by decoding difficulties. For instance, a student can listen to a history chapter using a screen reader while following the text visually, reinforcing comprehension. Speech-to-text software assists those with dysgraphia in writing assignments by allowing them to dictate their answers. Other examples include digital recorders for capturing lessons (useful for students who have memory/attention deficits), and applications that teach maths with visual step-by-step cues for those with dyscalculia. In India, the NEP 2020 emphasizes leveraging technology for inclusion, and schools are gradually introducing tools like tablets loaded with special learning apps, or installing software such as Jaws or Kurzweil 3000 in resource centers for print-disabled learners (Ministry of Education, 2020). Additionally, academic accommodations support learning: giving a student with ADHD a shorter assignment with more frequent breaks, or providing a structured template for note-taking, or allowing a student with dyslexia to respond orally rather than in writing. These adjustments enable students to demonstrate their knowledge without the format of assessment becoming a barrier. It is important that teachers implement such accommodations consistently in class and not only during exams. Simple adjustments - like preferential seating (e.g., placing a child with attention issues at the front, away from distractions), using larger font printouts for a child with visual processing difficulties, or giving extra time to complete assignments - can significantly reduce the frustration of children with learning difficulties and help them succeed alongside peers.
- **Peer Tutoring and Cooperative Learning:** Peers can be a powerful resource in an inclusive classroom. Peer tutoring involves pairing students so that one student (often a classmate of the same age) helps the other with practice and learning. This strategy has been effective for academic skills and also promotes social inclusion. For example, a student without disabilities might be paired with a student with a learning disability to work on reading; the peers read aloud to each other or the stronger reader assists the other with difficult words. Research indicates that structured peer tutoring can lead to improvements in reading fluency and math skills for tutees, while tutors also benefit by reinforcing their own skills and developing empathy (Bhatnagar & Das, 2014). Cooperative learning groups are another approach, where students work in small heterogeneous teams on a task (such as a science project or solving a set of problems). By assigning each student a role (recorder, time-keeper, presenter, etc.), teachers ensure that a student with a disability is an equal contributor. Cooperative learning activities encourage peer support – classmates naturally scaffold for one another by explaining concepts in simpler terms or modeling tasks, which can particularly help students with learning disabilities grasp material. Importantly, these interactions also improve social skills and friendships. Classmates learn to appreciate each other's strengths; for instance, a student with autism who might not speak much could excel at a computer-based task in the group, earning respect from peers. Schools in India have reported success with “buddy systems” where each child with special needs has a designated peer buddy to assist during the day – this reduces dependence on the teacher and fosters a sense of

responsibility and inclusion among students (Good Practice example from Goa; Infonomics Society, 2020).

- **Positive Behavioral Support and Classroom Management:** Children with learning disabilities, especially conditions like ADHD or autism, may exhibit behavioral or attention challenges in class. Rather than punitive measures, positive behavior support strategies are recommended. Teachers are trained to use techniques like positive reinforcement (praising and rewarding desired behaviors), setting clear routines and expectations, and providing subtle cues or signals to help a child stay on task. For instance, a teacher might quietly tap on a child's desk as a reminder to focus, rather than scolding them for distraction. In the case of ADHD, breaking tasks into shorter, manageable chunks and interspersing brief physical movement breaks can channel the student's excess energy productively. Some inclusive classrooms have introduced a "movement corner" or allow a quick stretching routine for the whole class periodically – benefiting the ADHD student without singling them out. Visual schedules and transition warnings (e.g., "5 minutes left to finish your work") help students who need more structure (common for those on the autism spectrum) to cope with changes. In one intervention, incorporating sensory-friendly spaces in the classroom – such as a quiet corner with noise-cancelling headphones or stress balls – led to a reduction in hyperactivity-related incidents by 35%, as children could self-regulate when overwhelmed (Cadabams CDC, 2023 data). Overall, training teachers in behavior management techniques specific to special needs (like ignoring minor inappropriate behaviors that are not disruptive, and catching the child being good to reinforce appropriate behavior) has been shown to improve attention and class participation among students with ADHD (Chauhan et al., 2022). It also creates a calmer classroom environment for everyone.
- **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Remedial Instruction:** Best practices from special education emphasize the use of Individualized Education Plans, which are customized goals and strategies for each child with a disability. In India, formal IEPs are still mostly used in special schools, but some progressive inclusive schools and NGOs have started implementing IEPs or at least written individualized plans for students with learning difficulties. These plans involve assessing the child's current level in key areas and setting specific short-term goals (for example, a goal for a dyslexic student might be "increase reading accuracy by 20% after 6 months using phonics intervention"). Remedial instruction, often delivered by a special educator or learning support teacher, can happen in tandem with regular class instruction. For example, a child might spend a few hours a week in a resource room working on foundational reading skills or basic math with specialized methods, and then apply those

skills back in the general classroom. This dual approach ensures the child catches up on core difficulties while still learning the mainstream curriculum. The effectiveness of such targeted remediation is well documented. Karande et al. (2011) note that children with learning disabilities who receive early remedial intervention (especially in the lower primary grades) show significant improvement in academic performance and are far less likely to repeat grades. In inclusive settings, collaboration is key – the class teacher and special educator (if available) coordinate so that what is taught in the resource room aligns with class topics. Even when a special educator is not available, regular teachers can implement mini-IEPs by setting individualized goals and monitoring the child's progress on those, adjusting strategies as needed. This might include providing one-on-one reteaching on a topic the child didn't grasp, using concrete materials for a student struggling in math, or pre-teaching important vocabulary before a lesson so the student with a learning disorder can follow along better. Though it requires extra effort, individualized planning ensures that students with learning disabilities are not left behind or bored with content too easy for them; each is working toward attainable objectives.

- **Collaborative Teaching and Parental Involvement:** An emerging innovation in some Indian inclusive schools is co-teaching, where a general educator and a special educator share responsibility for the class. In a co-taught classroom, both teachers plan lessons together, and during instruction one might lead teaching while the other provides targeted support, or they might divide students into groups for more focused attention. This model has shown promise in managing diverse classrooms because it lowers the student-teacher ratio for part of the time and leverages the expertise of both teachers. For example, while the general teacher delivers the main lesson, the special educator can quietly assist a group of students with learning difficulties by simplifying instructions or giving examples. Later, they might swap roles or work in stations. Schools that have tried co-teaching report more individualized feedback for students and improved academic performance for those with special needs (Gale et al., 2022). However, co-teaching requires systemic support in terms of hiring sufficient staff and scheduling. Where bringing in a full-time special educator is not feasible, many schools are fostering collaboration through periodic consultations – mainstream teachers meet with visiting special educators or psychologists to discuss strategies for particular students (Grimes et al., 2021). Additionally, parental involvement is recognized as a crucial element of successful inclusion. Parents can reinforce strategies at home, provide consistency, and inform teachers about what works best for their child. Schools are increasingly conducting workshops for

parents of children with learning disabilities, guiding them on home strategies and study skills. Some innovative schools form parent support groups so families can share resources and advocacy tips. When parents, teachers, and specialists communicate openly, an integrated support system around the child is created. For instance, a teacher might send home a simple daily behavior report or reading log; the parent ensures it's filled and returns feedback. Such coordination ensures the child's learning does not stop at the classroom door and that any emerging issues are addressed collaboratively.

Implementing these strategies often requires a shift from traditional teaching methods. It calls for flexibility, creativity, and continuous learning on the part of educators. Encouragingly, many teachers who have adopted inclusive strategies report that these methods end up benefiting all students in the class. For example, using visuals and hands-on activities (a boon for those with learning difficulties) also tends to increase overall class engagement. Similarly, cooperative learning fosters a classroom community where students learn to help each other, creating a more positive learning atmosphere. The next section will discuss some of the innovations and systemic changes in India that are facilitating the adoption of such strategies, as well as highlight areas for further development.

Innovations and Recent Developments

In response to the challenges of inclusion, various innovations – in policy, training, technology, and practice – are underway in India to better support children with learning disabilities. This section outlines some notable developments and pilot initiatives that represent progress and potential models for scaling up:

- **Policy Innovations and Frameworks:** The National Education Policy 2020 can be considered a blueprint for innovation in inclusive education. It not only reiterates inclusive goals but also introduces specific measures. For instance, NEP 2020 calls for schools to develop “inclusion funds” to help implement accommodations and support services for children with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2020). It also advocates for school complexes – groups of schools that share resources like special educators, counselors, and assistive devices – thereby addressing the resource crunch in individual schools (Kurian, 2024). Additionally, curricula are to be made more flexible; the policy suggests competency-based learning and a reduction in high-stakes examinations, which could greatly benefit students who struggle with rote learning and timed tests. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has, following the RPWD Act, issued guidelines that mandate all schools to have a special educator and to allow various exam accommodations for certified learning disabilities (CBSE, 2019 circular). Enforcement of these rules is gradually improving awareness and compliance across urban

schools. Some state governments have also developed detailed inclusive education guidelines – for example, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have handbooks for teachers on identifying and teaching children with specific learning disabilities, which is an innovative step in disseminating practical knowledge at the grassroots.

- **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** Recognizing that teacher preparedness is the linchpin of successful inclusion, there have been innovations in how teachers are trained. Teacher education curricula in many Indian universities now include a module on inclusive education or special needs. The Rehabilitation Council of India offers a B.Ed. specialization in Special Education (Learning Disability), producing resource teachers with expertise. For in-service teachers, the government has leveraged technology through programs like NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement) which includes online training modules on inclusive classroom practices. More novel is the use of peer learning and mentoring models: in some districts, teachers who have undergone training or have experience in inclusive education act as master trainers or mentors to other teachers, conducting regular cluster-level workshops. A successful example is from Kerala, where groups of teachers formed “Inclusion Cells” to troubleshoot cases – teachers bring up difficulties they face with a particular child, and the group brainstorms strategies, guided by an expert (Gale et al., 2022). Another promising model is the ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) model, initially used in medicine: in 2022, a pilot ECHO program connected development pediatricians and psychologists with school teachers across rural areas via teleconferencing, to train them on managing ADHD and autism in the classroom (Srinivasan et al., 2023). This approach, essentially a virtual mentorship, was found feasible and led to improved teacher knowledge and confidence in handling neurodiverse students (Srinivasan et al., 2023). As internet connectivity improves in India, such distance-learning and coaching models for teachers can dramatically expand reach and build capacity even in remote regions.
- **Use of EdTech and Digital Platforms:** The rise of educational technology offers new tools for inclusion. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools adopted digital learning, which inadvertently opened avenues for children with learning disabilities – for instance, recorded lessons that could be replayed, or digital content that could be customized (font size, captioning) to individual needs. Building on this, startups and NGOs have developed apps specifically for Indian students with learning difficulties. One example is “Kutuki”, a literacy app with multisensory activities in local languages to help early graders with dyslexia. Another is “Olitta”, an app that uses game-based methods to improve attention and executive function in

children with ADHD. The government's DIKSHA platform (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) hosts content for CWSN, including Indian Sign Language videos and audio textbooks. These resources are innovations that ensure students can access learning in different formats. Additionally, some forward-thinking schools are implementing Computer-Assisted Learning Labs where students with learning challenges spend a period each day using adaptive learning software - the software tracks their progress and tailors the difficulty of questions accordingly, providing an individualized pace. Research has shown that such adaptive practice, especially in foundational skills like reading fluency and arithmetic, can significantly boost the skills of learners with difficulties (Mangal, 2019). The government and NGOs are also exploring text-to-speech in Indian languages, since many dyslexic children in India struggle across multilingual environments (their mother tongue and English). Projects in collaboration with IT firms aim to develop better optical character recognition and text-to-speech for vernacular texts, which would be a boon for inclusive education in regional language schools.

- **Resource Rooms and Model Inclusive Schools:** Resource rooms - special classrooms equipped with remedial materials and often a special educator - are being set up in an increasing number of regular schools. A model example comes from Goa, where a school established two resource rooms: one focused on addressing challenges due to learning disabilities (providing remedial instruction in reading, writing, math), and another focused on life skills and vocational training (cooking, gardening, ICT skills) for students with more significant needs[6]. This dual approach ensures academic support as well as holistic development. The Goa resource room initiative reportedly led to improved academic skills and self-confidence in students with learning disabilities, and was recognized as a best practice (Infonomics Society, 2020). Other states like Maharashtra have begun deploying itinerant resource teachers who travel to schools that cannot have a full room, carrying a "kit" of materials (flash cards, letter tiles, abacus, etc.) to conduct remedial sessions. The concept of model inclusive schools - schools that demonstrate exemplary inclusive practices - is also gaining traction. In such schools, not only are infrastructure and teaching methods inclusive, but the culture is one of embracing diversity. For instance, a model school in Bengaluru trains all students in basic sign language and has monthly "sensitization" assemblies where students learn about different disabilities and famous people who have overcome them. Showcasing these model schools is helping change mindsets; seeing successful inclusion in practice convinces other educators and parents that it is doable and beneficial. The government's plan to convert one school in each district into a model inclusive school (as training and resource hubs) is an innovative scale-up strategy on the anvil

(UNICEF, 2021).

- **Community and Parental Initiatives:** Innovations are not only top-down; many are happening at the community level. Parents of children with dyslexia or ADHD in metro cities have formed support networks, sometimes in collaboration with professionals, to share resources and advocate for their children's needs in schools. For example, the Maharashtra Dyslexia Association regularly conducts teacher training workshops and has developed low-cost screening tools in local languages that any teacher can use to flag potential learning issues. Some communities have initiated after-school learning centers run by NGOs or volunteer retired teachers to provide extra tutoring in a stress-free environment for children with learning difficulties. In rural Jharkhand, an NGO-led program trained village volunteers as "shiksha mitras" (friends of education) who help schoolteachers identify children struggling with basic reading and arithmetic and implement simple remedial techniques; this has led to noticeable improvements in those children's performance (IEI, 2020). These grassroots innovations show that with awareness and minimal resources, communities can complement formal school efforts. Moreover, awareness campaigns (often spearheaded by NGOs or disability rights groups) are helping destigmatize learning disabilities. Television and social media in India have started to portray dyslexia and autism in a more informed light (for instance, the popular film "Taare Zameen Par" brought dyslexia to public attention). This growing awareness is an innovation in itself, addressing the societal attitudes so crucial for sustaining inclusive education.

While these developments are heartening, it is important to note that many are still in pilot or limited phases. Scaling up will require sustained commitment, funding, and monitoring. Nonetheless, they offer a vision of what is possible: inclusive classrooms where teaching is adaptive and empathetic, where children with learning disabilities receive the support they need as a matter of course, and where difference is accepted as a normal part of a diverse learning community.

Conclusion

Inclusive education for children with learning disabilities in India is both a significant challenge and an imperative goal. This paper has explored how, despite strong legal and policy foundations, practical barriers have hindered full inclusion in classrooms - from unprepared teachers and scarce resources to rigid curricula and lingering stigma. However, it has also highlighted a range of innovations and effective strategies that are beginning to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

To summarize, children with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, and autism can thrive in inclusive classrooms when certain key conditions are met. Teachers need appropriate training and ongoing support to implement strategies like differentiated multisensory instruction, assistive technology, positive behavior management, and collaborative

learning techniques. Schools need to adapt by providing resource personnel, flexible assessment methods, and accessible materials. Perhaps most importantly, there must be a mindset shift - a move from viewing these children as "problematic" to seeing them as equal learners who simply learn differently. The experiences of schools that have successfully included learners with disabilities show that academic outcomes and social development improve not only for those learners but for all students, as classrooms become more engaging and responsive to individual needs. Inclusion, therefore, is a catalyst for quality improvement in education overall.

The road ahead requires sustained multi-stakeholder effort. Teachers, as front-line implementers, should be continuously empowered through professional development and recognition for inclusive teaching. Educational authorities must ensure that mandates (like having special educators and accommodations) are actually put into practice in every school, including budgeting for needed resources. Parents and communities play a role in advocating for their children's rights and supporting schools in this transition. It is also essential to invest in research and monitoring - to gather data on what interventions yield the best outcomes in Indian contexts and to identify remaining gaps. For instance, more studies are needed on inclusion in rural and economically disadvantaged areas, where challenges may be compounded by lack of basic facilities.

In conclusion, the inclusion of children with learning disabilities in mainstream Indian classrooms is an evolving journey. The challenges are real and cannot be underestimated, but the innovations and success stories emerging across the country offer a blueprint for moving forward. With continued commitment to the principles of equity and the backing of evidence-based strategies, India can advance toward the goal of "education for all" in the truest sense - ensuring no child is left behind because of a disability. Achieving this not only upholds the rights and dignity of children with learning differences but also enriches the educational experience of all learners, fostering an environment of empathy, diversity, and mutual growth. As schools become more inclusive and human-centric in their approach to teaching, they prepare a generation of young citizens who value and uplift each other's strengths and differences, laying the groundwork for a more inclusive society.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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