

Chapter 13

Role and Responsibility of Effective Educational Leadership in Transforming Inclusive Education

Mohammad Amin Dar

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6165-859X>

University of Kashmir, India

Mohammad Ishfaq Mir

University of Kashmir, India

Shaheena Aziz

University of Kashmir, India

ABSTRACT

Educational leadership is an important component that attempts to improve education at all levels because it engages, encourages, and integrates with all stakeholders, including students, parents, and educators. Effective educational leadership has a significant impact on inclusive educational practices as it strongly contributes to student performance both inside and outside of the institution. The formulation of effective collaboration and the implementation of tailored educational programmes in an inclusive framework are indeed the primary concerns of effective educational leadership. This chapter presents evidence from the existing literature that focuses on educational leaders' role and responsibility in promoting and implementing inclusive practices, educational leaders as change agents for inclusive education, transformational leadership and inclusive education, and finally, the initiatives and actions taken by educational leaders in transforming inclusive education.

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INTRODUCTION

Several school systems have realized the importance of providing education to differently abled children in a normal classroom setting and Inclusion is the term for this technique. Inclusive education attempts to ensure equality among children of various abilities and backgrounds. Inclusivity in education fosters a culture of mutual respect and encourages pupils from all backgrounds to reach their full potential.

In contemporary society, we have witnessed a growing trend of including learners with disabilities in classrooms alongside regular peers. Traditional types of programs that segregate students into separate classrooms, on the other hand, continue to be the norm, while Inclusion programs are the exception. Worldwide attention to human and civil rights has changed our perceptions not just on individual “disability,” but also on the relevance of deficiencies in any societal environment. According to Arnesen et al. (2009), IE is much more than merely building on existing frameworks; it is a holistic approach that comprises the restructuring of cultures, groups, and organizations including schools to become multi culturally sensitive. Specifically, Black-Hawkins et al., (2007, p. 15) see this as a process of upgrading the number of learners who previously would not have been able to attend mainstream schools due to identified special educational requirements. Timmons and Wagner (2008) perceive education as a cornerstone for an inclusive society because it allows all children to participate in school communities and learn and grow alongside their classmates. Inclusive education according to these two scholars includes the pair of educational and societal aspects of institutions life. According to Corbett and Slee (2000), inclusion is an ideology of recognition:

It is all about creating a system whereby all pupils, regardless of ability, sexual identity, dialect, ethnic background, or community specifically, can be cherished equally, treated with dignity, and given an equal opportunity at school... is an active and vocal statement, a political and public proclamation, and celebratory of discrepancy that necessarily involves ongoing assertive ability to respond to nurture an educative society.

School leaders must create acceptable methods for dealing with a variety of learners. Leadership encourages students to develop a culture of respect and to take advantage of their talents. The leadership style can withstand institutional pressures and changes, resulting in a more inclusive educational environment. In attempt to improve education at the local, regional, and national levels, inclusive educational leadership is critical. Successful school and educational system leaders pay attention to and communicate with all stakeholders, including learners, guardians, educators, and other components of the community. These leaders also form effective management teams that share a common vision for change as well as the means to put that goal into action. Finally, inclusive leaders are devoted to equity and providing every student with good learning experiences. School leaders have a significant impact on inclusive classroom practices since it is both intrinsically and extrinsically linked to positive student results (Mac Ruairc, 2013). In inclusive classrooms, educational leaders are regarded as critical in the transformational process designed for improving the performance and welfare of all students (Donnelly, et al. 2016).

Many and varied emphases have been put on school leadership, particularly inclusive school leadership. It is indeed exceptional that one person possesses all or most of the characteristics necessary to successfully advance the school. It entails that, in modern challenging and complicated school settings, educational leaders must adapt to changes in the educational setup while considering the interests of

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