

Comprehensive Education and Social Justice for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Inclusive education and social justice are exactly like the two wings that a bird needs to fly in the quest for sustainable development in the global community. This paper targets the convergences of inclusive education, social justice, and sustainable development. It will address the systematic education in which all are included. Thereby, their rights to primary education are released, will call for reduction and, if possible, elimination of differences among educational settings, and will argue that an education system is a valuable tool for the restoration and empowerment of most vulnerable groups, thus contributing to social justice, will be examined. In addition, the paper will look at the place of inclusive education in the developmental process and elucidate the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which also contain the Goal 4 provision that ensures inclusive and equitable quality education for all. The last part will offer the directive points for implementation.

Keywords: education for sustainable development (ESD); inclusive pluralism; neoliberalism

Introduction

Inclusive education has become increasingly recognized as a social justice and sustainable development in recent years. It means promoting the full participation of all students in

schools, considering students' differences in socio-economic status, gender, disability, race, or any other physical and mental attributes. Solidarity has social justice as one of its cornerstones. (Jyoti Bora & Ahmed, 2013). It means fairness, equal access, and the removal of barriers to marginalized groups who are most at risk. These ideas are the basis for shaping educational systems that give people power and aid in creating sustainable development.

This study intends to investigate the connection between inclusive education, social justice, and sustainable development.

2. Theoretical Framework

Both inclusive education and social justice are instilled with human rights on their foundation. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states that everyone should be allowed to attend school, regardless of their abilities and differences. This is also true in SDG 4, which promotes education that is inclusive, equitable, and of good quality. Besides, the Salamanca Statement (1994) called for inclusive education as the most favorable way to eliminate discriminatory behavior and create an equal society. (Siddiqui et al., 2019).

3. The Role of Inclusive Education in Promoting Social Justice

3.1 Addressing Educational Inequality

One of the main objectives of inclusive education is to level up education haves and have-nots, especially for disadvantaged groups such as children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and low-income families. Education has been the battleground on which systemic discrimination against these groups has played out over time, thus leaving behind a society riddled with inequality. Inclusive education promotes the breakdown of these barriers by giving personalized help to accommodate the different necessities of all students. (El Mhouthi et al., 2018).

3.2 Fostering Empowerment and Agency

Complaisant education gives disadvantaged students the

opportunity and essential tools to be part of the community, which is ultimately their moving force. A student's educational attainment is a primary determinant of their quality of life and their capacity to escape the poverty trap. Such empowerment perfectly corresponds with the more general contents of the social justice discourse, which aims at equalizing and including every member of society.(Romero & Ventura, 2010).

3.3 Curriculum Reform for Social Justice

A socially just, inclusive education system is a well-structured, global education system of philosophy that embodies justice for every person. Thus, the need for curriculum reform reflects the diverse perspectives, histories, and cultures. Many educational curricula are Eurocentric and fail to represent, therefore, the marginalized groups. The inclusive curriculum consists of multicultural education, recognizes the contributions of several communities, and addresses the unique challenges marginalized populations face(Papazoglou & Van Den Heuvel, 2007).

3.4 Teacher Training and Inclusive Pedagogy

Teachers must be trained in inclusive pedagogy to get justice for all in social issues through inclusive education. This is what it means to say that the accommodation of different learning needs typical of individual students, inclusive classroom environments, and the ability to respond to any discriminatory practices should be the focus of teachers. The teacher training programs must be provided with culturally responsive and thought-provoking practices to develop questions about social inequalities and respect for diversity. (Vaquero, 2011).

4. Inclusive Education as a Pathway to Sustainable Development

4.1 Achieving SDG 4: Quality Education for All

The United Nations SDG 4 explicitly refers to the necessity of providing an inclusive and fair education to all. This belief allows for the rights of everyone, which means no one should be disadvantaged by their background in acquiring

the knowledge and skills required for the global society and economy to be ensured. This is the core of sustainable development, as it allows all people to be part of economic growth and social progress and benefit from it.(Uden, 2012).

4.2 Reducing Poverty and Inequality

Education is paramount as a tool to diminish the two critical goals of sustainable development: poverty and inequality. Education policies that are inclusive and target the marginalized encourage the disadvantaged to catch up with the rest regarding educational attainment. This, in turn, provides more excellent economic prospects for these populations. Education is a known driver of economic development, and inclusive education ensures that no one is left behind in this process.(Olteanu et al., 2014).

4.3 Inclusive Education and Environmental Sustainability

Often, the sustainability of the Earth is overlooked while studying inclusive education. ESD promotes education about and action against environmental climate change. Inclusive education contributes to reaching out to every individual, and ESD education fosters people's collective concern about ecological issues, including climate change.

5. Barriers to Implementing Inclusive Education for Social Justice and Sustainable Development

Despite the clear benefits of inclusive education, its implementation has numerous barriers. These include:

Resource Limitations: Most poor countries lack sufficient funding and human resources to implement inclusive education policies properly.

Cultural Resistance: Social norms and values may still exist in society, which may be the reason for the discrimination of some groups, thereby preventing the introduction of inclusive practices.

Teacher Preparation: Some teachers lack the necessary training and skills to create inclusive learning environments, and teacher training programs might not fully explain the specifics of inclusive pedagogy.

Policy Gaps: Although many countries have officially adopted inclusive education policies, there are frequently discrepancies in implementation and enforcement.

6. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

To fully realize the potential of inclusive education for social justice and sustainable development, the following steps are recommended:

Increase Funding—Governments and international organizations should prioritize funding inclusive education policies, especially in poor countries.

Strengthen Teacher Training—Teacher education courses should incorporate more inclusive teaching methodologies and offer continuous training to teachers.

Develop Inclusive Curricula—The education system should be revised to consider the diversification of the population, especially minorities.

-Foster Global Collaboration - Governments, NGOs, and international bodies should join forces and promote the implementation of inclusive education at various levels.

Monitor and Evaluate Progress—Steps need to be taken to track the lessons learned and implemented during activities or the adoption of policies on the principles of social justice regarding sustainable development.

Conclusion

Inclusive education, on the other hand, forms the cornerstone for attaining social justice and sustainable development. Moreover, inclusive education goes beyond the educational system to empower disadvantaged groups, achieve equality, and boost growth. In addition, inclusive education is consistent with the current global demand for development sustainability, especially SDG 4, which targets providing education for all. Changes must be implemented at the level of government, educational institutions, and international organizations to remove inclusion constraints in education. One more time, inclusive education is achievable and sufficient for development due to the need to combine efforts.

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