

Concept of Special Education



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Paper- II
(Education for Special Children)
Unit – I

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Concept of Special Education

We inhabit a diverse world with every individual being unique and special by virtue of difference in physical structure, psychological make-up, social tendencies and behaviour, emotional competencies, educational and socio-economic background.

Normal people of the society consider those persons as exceptional which deviate significantly from the normal people mentally, physically, socially or emotionally and to the extent that they may become problematic to the family and society in all social situation.

Special education also known as *special-needs education, exceptional education, special ed. or (SPED)* and serves children with emotional, behavioural, or cognitive impairments, hearing, vision, speech, learning disabilities; children with orthopaedic or neurological impairments and also gifted children with advanced academic abilities.

Definitions:

There is various definition given by educationist and special educators, the important one are :

"Special education is the instruction designed for students with disabilities or gifts and talents who also have special learning needs. Some of these students have learning difficulties in regular classroom. They need special education to function properly in school".

Bob Algozzine (1990)

"When youngsters in the same class room are remarkably different, it is difficult for the teacher to help them reach their educational potential without some kind of assistance. The help that the schools devise for children who differ significantly from the norm is called special education".

Kirk and Gallagher (1986)

Nature and Characteristics of Special Education:

On the basis of above-mentioned definitions, the major characteristics are as follow:

- Special education is **diagnostic in nature**
- Special education is **specific and specialized in nature**
- Special education is **highly individualized**
- Special education is **measurable and testable in nature**
- Special education is **intensive in nature**
- Special education is **universal in nature**
- Special education is **research oriented and experimental** in nature

History of Special Education:

In the ancient period the disabled children were considered as curse and useless for family and society. The concept of Special Education is originated from **Europe** and **America**.

- In the mid 1555 Spanish monk *Pedro Ponce de Leon* successfully taught hearing impaired children.
- In 1620 *Juan Pablo Ronet* wrote the first book on Education of Deaf children.
- *John Bulwer* in 1644, published book on Education of Deaf Children in England.
- In 1680, *George Dalgarno* discovered instructional methods for deaf and dumb men.
- In 1767, the first school for Deaf child was established by *Thomas Braidwood* in England.
- In 1775, *Michel del' Epee* and *Ambroise Sicard* established the first school for sign language in Paris (France).
- *Samuel Heinicke* (1778) developed oral method for lip reading and speaking skills in Germany at Leipzig.
- In 1847, the first School for Deaf children (today known as American School for the Deaf) was established by *Gallandet* using the French method.

- *Graham Bell* (1847-1992) and *Helen Keller* (1880-1957) worked tirelessly for the Deaf and Disabled children.
- In 1784, *Valentin Hany*, a French philanthropist founded the National Institute for the Blind in Paris.
- *Samuel Graindley Howe* in 1829 established the first school for Blind in Watertown, Massachusset.
- *Louise Braille* (1809-1852) developed the system of Braille Language using raised dots to represent the letter or alphabets, manually prepared for visually impaired.
- *Frank Hall* (1943-1911) developed Braille typewriter.
- In 1932, Braille printing system was standardised internationally.
- Education for children with Mental retardation was started by French physician *Itard* (1755-1832).
- *Edward Seguin* published a classic textbook “Idiocy and it’s Treatment by the physiological Method” in 1866.
- *Decroly* (1871-1932) developed a curriculum for mentally retarded children in Belgium.
- *Binet* (1857-1911) made an immense contribution with the invention of Intelligence testing.

Major contributors:

- *J.M.G Itard*
- *Edward Seguin*
- *Louis Braille*
- *Samuel Howe*
- *Anne Sullivan*
- *Thomas Gallaudet*

Objectives of Special Education:

- Early identification and assessment of special needs of handicapped children.
- Early intervention to prevent a condition from becoming a handicap.
- Psychoeducation of parents about prevention and remediation of defects, care, and training of handicapped children in daily living skills, self-help skills, pre-academic skills and communication skills.
- Facilitate the all-round development of special children by need based educational, personal and vocational guidance.
- Actualise their (special children) abilities and capacities to their maximum extent.
- Community mobilization and awareness of problems of special children and their education.
- Rehabilitation of the special children.
- Facilitate effective living through development of realistic self-concept.

Special Education needed for Special Children:

An exceptional child has some special and unusual needs which can be met only through special education as part and parcel of the general education. This would involve.

- Specially designed instruction.
- Special curriculum.
- Specific facilities.
- Special services.

Special Instructions:

An exceptional child may require special materials, teaching techniques, equipment or facilities as for example, the visually handicapped children may require reading materials in large print or Braille. The Hearing impaired require learning aids/ or instructions in sign equipment. The emotionally disturbed may need smaller and more highly structured classes, while the and gifted and / or talented children may require access to varied types of materials and require the guidance of work professionals.

Special Curriculum:

For different areas of exceptionality such as mental retardation, giftedness, deafness, blindness, orthopedically handicapped, cerebral palsy and social and emotional problems a special curriculum is designed for children. Educationally backward children, handicapped and gifted need specific facilities for their optimal development. Special teaching facilities required to meet, the personal and social needs of the exceptional children. The superior children should be provided with opportunity to work according to their talent. In an average class a bright child feels neglected and demotivated with little endeavour, he comes out of exceptionality. He can keep a position in the class with minimum effort.

Special Facilities:

Some facilities like special building features, study materials and equipment may be required for some types of exceptional children. The special education can be imparted in the regular classroom, special classroom or in combination of both. Special classes are necessary for backward children because they require specific teaching methods.

Special Services:

These may be required for some exceptional children. For e.g. Orthopaedically handicapped children require physical therapy, occupational therapy and to be kept under constant medical supervision. The blind and deaf children may need periodic examination of their vision and hearing abilities. Some exceptional children need periodic examination of their progress in learning as a result of intervention. In a regular class with different categories of children such as handicapped (physically and mentally) gifted (bright and superior) and normal children, the teacher would have problem to devise a method of instruction which is suitable for all. Special education will help not only these exceptional children, but will also be conducive for regular class teachers.

So, **Special education** can include a range of support services, depending on the special needs of the student. Support services may involve physical assistance and therapy, counselling and psychotherapy, modified learning environments and assistive learning devices, educational and psychological assessments, and behavioural modification techniques.

Scope of Special Education:

All the children who comes under the category of special children will comes under the scope of Special Education. Following classification comes under the scope of special children. The details of special children whatever specified in syllabus we will discuss in upcoming units in details.

i) Intellectual Deviance:

- Mentally retarded children
- Gifted children
- Creative children

ii) Sensory Deviance

- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment

iii) Motor Deviance

- Orthopaedic impairment
- Speech impairment

iv) Personality/Behavioural Deviance

- Learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)

v) Educational Deviance

- Educationally bright children
- Educationally backward children

vi) Social Deviance

- Maladjusted children
- Deprived children
- Juvenile delinquents

vii) Multiple Deviance

- condition characterised by presence of more than one type of deviance
Example: deaf and dumb child with ADHD.