

Conference Paper

Inclusive Education in Russia: Historical-Sociological Aspect

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Abstract

This research analyzes social-historic reasons of inclusive education and its essence and significance; its methodological basis along with its reasons and tasks are getting revealed; humanistic essence of inclusive education's conceptions along with pedagogical principles with their implementation possibilities, are getting substantiated. Since inclusion in common understanding is an acknowledgement of diversity in educational environment, one of its aspects became the subject of analysis — which is joint studying process of healthy students and students with limited health abilities (herein referred to LHA). Humanistic criterion of education environment is ability to provide personal development and social integration for a child. First of all — this is a transition to genuine interaction and communication among all children with no differences. For this purpose, different forms of collective activities are used in conditions of barrier-free environment, thus, children could learn standards of social behavior and gain experience of its reproduction in the process of interaction. Thus, the purpose of inclusive education turns out to be education for everyone, and following new humanistic approaches signal the transition from teaching children with LHA in special facilities, to integrated education. Analysis of normative law documents in aspect of requirements which regulate organizing of inclusive education for children with limited health abilities in the system of general education of Russian Federation was conducted in this article. Basing on analysis of documents' content, there was made a conclusion about sufficiency of normative law basis of inclusive education being integrated and implemented into the system of general education; it is also noted that there is unsolved question of researching enforcement practice quality in part of providing special conditions to get general education by children with limited health abilities under conditions of inclusion. The actuality of matter chosen is explained by necessity to search new conceptual solutions and strategies, helping to harmonize human relationships in general with adaptation of people with special education needs.

Keywords: education, inclusion, judiciary system, students with limited health abilities (disabled students), inclusive education environment.

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1. Introduction

Ideas of integrated education for persons with limited health abilities have been implementing into educational systems of the entire world during more than twenty years. According to the Convention about rights of disabled people, “access to general higher education, to professional education, to education for grown-ups and to lifelong studying with no discrimination and equally to others” [4] must be provided for all people with LHA. In the meantime, according to results monitored by the Ministry of science and higher education of the Russian Federation in 2018, disabled students’ density among all students, studying at higher education programs, amounts to 0,4%, which indicates low level of higher education accessibility for young people with LHA.

Realities of XX-XXI centuries determined humanity realizing necessity of equal in rights interaction among existing microsociums — “native” and “alien”, “typical” and “atypical”, “with standard health abilities” and without of them. Democratic setups of the modern world have determined forming “barrier-free” environment for different groups of population (elderly people, disabled people, migrants). “Barrier-free” environment is formed with various components: accessibility to public space in settlements and to different institutions (medicinal, educational, sportive ones etc.) [22]. Significant role in forming “barrier-free” environment is taken by educational institution, or, to be precise, its important component — an institution of general education vector — school. The task of inclusive education is not only to offer teaching system, adequate to modern world’s demands, but also to provide “platform” for social integration and adaptation for children with “differences”.

2. Methodology and Methods

Social institution of education appeared in distant past, being ‘derivative’ of social relationships development in certain time and space continuum. On the R. Oxoby’s opinion [14], inclusion is one of factors determining individual’s accessibility to social institutions and resources in the environment where decisions are taken. It makes it possible to analyze inclusive education widely enough: not only as ‘mechanism’ of teaching children with non-standard health abilities or disabled children, but also as a way to “include” any children with “differences” for getting knowledge and skills of self-realization in modern socium.

Inclusion realizes itself as principle of “learning to live together”, based on humanistic principles. According to this inclusive approach, all students do their studies in general education environment, where comfortable adaptive education space is created, answering the needs of all children with no exceptions. In general, inclusive approach assumes the following principles: acceptance of inclusion philosophy by all participants of education process; understanding different education needs of children and services providing according to these needs with more complete participating in education process; attracting society and discrimination elimination in education.

3. Results and Discussion

Modern world, possessing fast changing technical-technological, informational and socio-cultural systems of human society’s vital activity, ‘claims’ rather high demands to individual’s level of education, as well as to ability of quick adaptation to innovative ‘products’. Person’s level of education and adaptive abilities are ‘composed’ of different parameters such as: psychophysical specialties of individual; educational institution entered and program studied by child; socialization. In modern world, growing child with “differences” often turns out to be uncompetitive comparing to contemporaries “with standard abilities”.

Acknowledgement and integration of inclusion in modern education assumes three directions of its implementation: scientific understanding of inclusion; political-legal standartisation of education process “joining” principles of general and special education [26]; pedagogical basis of work within model of inclusive education (study plans; preparedness of pedagogic workers etc.) [22]. All these vectors of its implementation are interconnected, but that doesn’t assume strengthening one of ‘blocs’ to the detriment of others. Modern researchers [1, 2, 5, 10, 12] define inclusion as a process, a social phenomenon, an ideology, or an environment. Due to all diversity of scientific approaches, inclusion education can be considered as a common “work” with only one group of people with ‘differences’ when children “with non-standard health abilities” study together with normal children. We should highlight the certain political-legal and socio-cultural conditions of inclusive education such as: state policy of forming tolerant relation by society; normative-legal base providing as creation of “barrier-free” space on different levels (settlements, public and living areas), as functioning of inclusive education; preparation of competent specialists (pedagogues, psychologists, defectologists etc); technical gear of general education institutions according to needs of disabled children; presence of appropriate program-methodical maintenance; obligatory

accompaniment (psychologist etc.) of such children during study process in general type institutions. Social adaptation and rehabilitation are considered as basis of “system of psychological-pedagogical aid” [6] for children with “differences”.

Empirical researches, conducted in different countries, indicate the difficulty of inclusive education integrating to the system of general education institutions. Negative or neutral relation by pedagogic crew to the inclusion is caused by set of factors: [4, 11, 22, 23, 24] necessity of additional learning on retraining courses; lacking or absent experience of interaction with children who have various health problems (there is shown high degree of accepting students with physical disability and lesser one in case of presence of behavioral / emotional disorders). Formation of axiological relations from teachers to inclusion in general educational institutions was discovered.

International normative documentation, which postulates and fixates rights of people “with non-standard health abilities” is the base of national normative-legal base formation. Fundamental international act, which claims various rights of every human, including people with “differences”, is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) [21]. Other documents, related to rights protection of disabled people, are divided in two groups, nominally: the first one unites normative acts which fixate rights of different age groups, though special attention is paid to “working age”; the second unites “children related” documents. The first group contains proclaiming documents: right to medical and social provision, to protection of political and civilian rights and protection from any kinds of discrimination. [16, 17, 19]. The second group [13, 15] is devoted to protection of rights, of dignity, of fully-fledged child’s life regardless its origins, social status and health condition; devoted against all kinds of violence and cruelty towards children; devoted to rights of disabled children to special care from grownups and society/state; devoted to material and other aid inquired by parents (legal caretakers); devoted to education; devoted to respect human dignity of child; devoted to active participation in society’s life.

The main document for Russian normative-legal base is the Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993): [3] Russia is proclaimed social state (social protection of family, of motherhood, of childhood, of “third” age persons and disabled persons etc.). With ratification of the Child’s Rights Convention [13] in 1992 Russia had guaranteed legal protection of children, including children “with non-standard health abilities”. The Russian Federation had obligated to work on creation of conditions for fully-fledged life of every child regardless of their health condition (access to medical-social aid service, to the system of general and professional education, to employment ability).

Starting from 1970s there were developed and implemented following projects of inclusive education: [4, 22] «Widening participation» is devoted to expansion of getting education possibility for people with “differences” (people “with non-standard health abilities”; ethnic minorities; children left with no parents’ caretaking; homeless persons etc.); «Mainstreaming» emphasizes on creating conditions for joint leisure and entertainment of people “with standard abilities” and without of them; «Integration» assumes participation in general education process for all children with no exception, regardless of personal, psychological, intellectual and physical needs and traits; «Inclusion» is oriented to excluding discrimination by any mark, so it assumes accessibility to study for everyone with no exception. Inclusion in the system of education assumes as technical reequipment of classrooms, as creation of new methodics of education along with new study programs development; additional training for pedagogues and psychological services working with parents of children “with standard abilities” and without of them”; medical-social support.

There are some programs accepting in the Russian Federation, such as “Our new school” (2010); Federal target program of education development for 2011–2015; National strategy in favor of children (2012–2017). [7–9] Considering the experience of inclusive education in other countries, along with its own socio-cultural space, Russia conducts the search and/or development of “inclusion in general education institutions”.

4. Conclusions

The solution of wide range of new tasks for inclusive education requires rebuilding and changing the specialists’ preparation system for education sphere. In a single word, the inclusion (integration) is the whole complex of serious changes: changes in the whole teaching system, in axiological setups, in understanding teacher’s role, parents’ role and pedagogy at all.

The survey has fixed that necessity of fast, flexible, subtle setting and reaction in interpersonal interaction proclaims new high demands for personal characteristics and competence of all inclusive education specialists. Education transforming into inclusive education requires collective thinking and action about social under consideration of teaching every student. Therefore, it’s necessary to develop new humanitarian technologies of interaction, which could prepare different profiles specialists to take into account different viewpoints; to act effectively for all children; to protect interests of students and to use new principles of professional communication.

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