

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Development Programs in Nepal: Construction of a Stakeholder Informed Framework

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Abstract : Inclusion of children with a disability (CwD) in Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) programs in Nepal while viewed as desirable is not widespread. Even though the ECED program is currently providing access to ECED services for one million young children, with the aim to improve children's school readiness by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed more effectively in their primary schooling, access to early year's education in inclusive settings for CwD is challenging. Using a heuristic qualitative design, this research aims to construct a framework by analyzing the perspectives of parents and professionals through interviews and focus group discussions, with a view to recommending a new policy to address the rights of CwD and their families. Several school-based and/or organizational and contextual factors interact to contribute to CwD becoming victims of multiple layers of exclusion. The school-based factors include policy, attitudes, teacher efficacy, resources, coordination and parental engagement. The contextual factors are spirituality, caste ethnicity, language, economic status, and geographic location. However, there is a varied effect of the interaction between school-based and contextual factors on different groups of CwD. A policy needs to recognize the multiplicity of the interactions between these factors that inhibit the inclusion of varied groups of CwD in ECED programs and address them separately.

Keywords : children with a disability, early childhood education and development, framework, inclusion

Conference Title : ICSECD 2018 : International Conference on Special Education and Child Development

Conference Location : Rome, Italy

Conference Dates : May 03-04, 2018