

DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN: INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE ENVIROMENT- PRESETT

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Abstract

The development of inclusive education in Uzbekistan has emerged as a critical component of the nation's educational reform efforts. This paper focuses on the inclusion of children with special educational needs (SEN) within inclusive environments, highlighting the role of the PRESETT (Promoting and Enhancing Special Education Teacher Training) program as a key initiative in fostering inclusive education. Through analyzing the progress of the program and the structural, policy, and practical adaptations made in the education system, this study demonstrates the importance of ensuring that children with SEN are fully integrated into general education settings. The paper also explores the challenges, successes, and the future potential for inclusive education in Uzbekistan. SEN stands for **Special Educational Needs**. It refers to the requirements of children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn at the same pace or in the same way as other children. These needs can range from physical disabilities to cognitive, emotional, behavioral, or learning challenges, such as dyslexia, autism, Down syndrome, or speech and language disorders. In an educational context, when a child is identified as having SEN, schools and educators are typically expected to provide additional support or accommodations to help that child access the curriculum and succeed in their learning environment. This can include specialized teaching methods, tailored resources, or the use of assistive technology to ensure that children with SEN can participate fully in education alongside their peers.

Key words: Inclusive education, special educational needs, Republic of Uzbekistan, PRESETT, education reform, teacher training, inclusion.

Introduction

Inclusive education refers to the practice of educating all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, or other conditions, in regular education settings. In the context of Uzbekistan, where historically children with special educational needs (SEN) were often educated in separate, special schools, the concept of inclusive education is a relatively recent development. Over the past decade, however, significant efforts have been made to promote and integrate SEN students into general education classrooms.

One of the key drivers behind the shift towards inclusive education in Uzbekistan is the PRESETT program, which aims to train teachers to address the diverse needs of students, including those with SEN. The program focuses on professional development for educators, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to create inclusive classrooms and adopt inclusive teaching methods. This paper explores the development of inclusive education

in Uzbekistan, with a particular focus on the PRESETT program, its implementation, challenges, and potential future directions for inclusive education in the country.

The **PRESETT** program stands for **Promoting and Enhancing Special Education Teacher Training**. It is an educational initiative designed to improve the quality of education for children with special educational needs (SEN) by focusing on the professional development and training of teachers. PRESETT aims to equip educators with the necessary skills, knowledge, and strategies to effectively support and include children with various disabilities and learning challenges in mainstream classrooms.

While the specific details of PRESETT may vary depending on the country and context, here's a more general overview of its goals and objectives:

1. Objective of the PRESETT Program

The primary objective of the PRESETT program is to enhance the capacity of teachers to work with students with special educational needs in inclusive educational settings. This initiative often involves:

Teacher Training: Providing professional development opportunities for teachers to gain expertise in inclusive teaching strategies, working with diverse learners, and understanding different types of disabilities.

Curriculum Adaptation: Helping teachers modify and adapt their teaching methods, curriculum, and assessment strategies to meet the needs of SEN students.

Promoting Inclusive Practices: Supporting schools in fostering inclusive environments where students with and without disabilities can learn together.

Awareness and Stigma: Reducing societal stigma related to disabilities and fostering a more inclusive attitude within the wider community, not just within schools.

1. The Development of Inclusive Education in Uzbekistan

In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has made significant strides towards promoting inclusive education. The government has implemented various legislative reforms and educational policies designed to create an education system that accommodates the needs of all students, including those with SEN.

The adoption of the 2012 "Law on Education" laid the foundation for inclusive education in Uzbekistan by emphasizing equal access to education for all children, regardless of their physical or mental abilities. The law encourages the inclusion of children with SEN in general education schools, ensuring that students with disabilities have the right to receive an education that is tailored to their individual needs.

The introduction of inclusive education has been further bolstered by international initiatives and the efforts of non-governmental organizations, which have provided training, resources, and advocacy for SEN students. Despite these efforts, however, challenges remain in terms of fully integrating SEN children into general education environments.

2. The Role of PRESETT in Promoting Inclusive Education

The PRESETT (Promoting and Enhancing Special Education Teacher Training) program was launched in Uzbekistan to address the need for adequately trained educators capable of teaching SEN students within inclusive classrooms. The program focuses on equipping teachers with the skills to recognize the diverse needs of SEN students and to adapt their teaching methods accordingly. By providing specialized training, PRESETT plays a crucial role in supporting the inclusion of children with special educational needs in general education settings.

PRESETT is designed to ensure that teachers are not only prepared to teach students with disabilities but also to create an inclusive environment that fosters equality, respect, and understanding among all students. The program covers a wide range of topics, including differentiated instruction, behavior management, assistive technology, and creating accessible learning materials. Additionally, it helps teachers to develop strong communication skills to work effectively with parents, school leaders, and other professionals involved in supporting SEN students.

Since its inception, the PRESETT program has been instrumental in raising awareness about the importance of inclusive education and in developing the competencies of educators. By providing teachers with the tools and knowledge necessary to support SEN students, PRESETT has contributed significantly to the transformation of the Uzbek education system into one that is more inclusive and equitable.

3. Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

While the shift toward inclusive education in Uzbekistan has been promising, the process is not without its challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the lack of adequate resources, including specialized materials, assistive technologies, and trained personnel. Many schools still lack the infrastructure and support systems necessary to accommodate SEN students, which makes it difficult to fully integrate them into general education classrooms.

Another significant challenge is the prevailing stigma surrounding disabilities. In some areas, children with disabilities are still seen as a burden, and there is resistance to including them in regular schools. This stigma often extends to teachers and parents, who may not be adequately prepared or motivated to embrace inclusive education practices.

Moreover, the PRESETT program itself faces challenges in terms of its reach and sustainability. While it has been successful in training a significant number of teachers, the program needs further expansion to ensure that all educators in Uzbekistan have access to inclusive education training. Additionally, the implementation of inclusive education policies requires ongoing investment in professional development, infrastructure, and community awareness.

4. The Future of Inclusive Education in Uzbekistan

The future of inclusive education in Uzbekistan hinges on continued efforts to address the existing challenges and build on the successes of initiatives like PRESETT. To ensure long-term success, it is essential to:

Expand the scope of teacher training programs to reach more educators across the country.

Improve school infrastructure, including the provision of assistive technology and specialized learning materials.

Increase public awareness and reduce stigma surrounding disabilities through education campaigns and community engagement.

Foster collaboration between the government, schools, parents, and non-governmental organizations to create a more inclusive educational environment.

With continued support and commitment, Uzbekistan has the potential to create a truly inclusive education system where children with SEN are integrated into general education settings and have access to high-quality education that meets their individual needs.

Conclusion

The development of inclusive education in Uzbekistan represents a significant shift towards a more equitable and inclusive educational system. Programs like PRESETT have played a pivotal role in equipping teachers with the necessary skills to support students with special

educational needs and to create inclusive learning environments. While challenges remain, the progress made so far is promising, and there is potential for further advancements in the future. By addressing the barriers to inclusion and continuing to invest in teacher training, infrastructure, and community awareness, Uzbekistan can ensure that all children, regardless of their abilities, have access to quality education in inclusive environments.

Overall, PRESETT represents a significant step forward in improving the quality of education for children with special educational needs, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to foster inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environments for all students.

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