



A few years back, my friend from New Delhi, having two sons, one studying in CBSE curriculum-based school and the other one, a neurodiverse from a special school, shifted to Chennai. The boy studying in the CBSE curriculum could seamlessly continue his education, from where he left without loss of the academic year. But the scenario was not the same for the neurodiverse. He got admission to a special school in Chennai but he was expected to start his skill development almost from the scratch, the reason being that both the special schools had their own curriculums and methodology of teaching. The skill training could not be continued for the neurodiverse son like the neuro typical. This led to a thought-provoking question— Why is the learning of the neurodiverse from the previous school not measurable? Why is there no structured learning? This leads to a bigger question. Why is there no uniform curriculum for neurodiverse? Though disability is a huge umbrella and sometimes complex, there is a dire need to attempt to design a curriculum that can be standardized, customized, structured and is also measurable.

NEED FOR FRAMEWORK

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way it diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving the quality of education for people with neurodiverse is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity and independent and dignified living. The goal

of education for neurodiverse is to provide basic academic skills or vocational skills that would fetch suitable employment for an individual.

Such skills that would help the neurodiverse fetch a job would facilitate them to lead a meaningful life (supporting their psychological and therapeutic needs), live a gainful life (supporting physiological survival), and contribute to society (independent and respected).

This can be achieved if a uniform curriculum is established and certified programmes are conducted across the nation which ensures quality skill development. Vocation or skill development is generally a training that can be acquired through a well-planned module and does not depend on any collegiate education.

PURPOSE OF UNIFORM CURRICULUM

The purpose of a uniform curriculum across all NGOs or vocational units is to provide students, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders with a measurable plan and structure for delivering quality education. The curriculum identifies the learning outcomes, standards, and core competencies that students must demonstrate before advancing to the next level. This needs to be uniform throughout the nation as parents are prone to relocate due to their job.

The curriculum must enable each child to be a successful learner, to be a confident individual, and to be an independent and responsible employee as an adult. It is a combination of a syllabus and a planned set of activities that enables students and teachers to achieve the desired educational goals.

It is rightly said that: “If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail”. If the curriculum is planned properly and customised according to the needs of the students, the learning will be at the fullest. So, the curriculum of the vocational unit needs to be planned and structured well keeping in mind the needs and level of the students.

BENEFITS OF A UNIFORM CURRICULUM FOR VOCATIONAL UNITS

- If teaching practices are similar, we can expect uniform and holistic development in students across the nation. This will help in integrating them with other professionals in the workplace.
- A good and uniform curriculum sets the basis for further amendments that keep up with the pace of the changing world as there is a constant change in technology and skills.
- There is always consistency in learning even if the students move from one place to another within the country. For example, a student at the basic level across the nation would have completed the same set of skills that is mentioned in the curriculum.
- The development of an individual must always be a measurable parameter. A well-planned curriculum always provides a measurable result thereby helping job providers with recruitment and inclusion. Data always matters. This will determine if the curriculum is successful, or if it requires modifications.
- A uniform and structured curriculum will always be a guide to both teachers and parents to focus on the parameters that need to be developed.
- If the curriculum is uniform, teachers across the country can be connected for mutual knowledge sharing. Faculty development programmes can be more productive. Teachers can work together to make the progression of topics which will benefit the students. Case studies can be discussed regarding the challenges faced by the respective teachers for which they can seek guidance.
- Vocation and skill-based training must have certification-level curriculums. Certificates show the commitment the individual has demonstrated in learning the vocation or skill to build expertise in the professional subject

area. Thus, certification gives an assurance to the company about the individual's competencies in performing a job.

- Curriculum programs can be early intervention, pre-skills, basic, intermediate, and advanced level skill programmes.
- A uniform curriculum helps in maintaining the records of trained professionals and hence makes inclusion at the workplace more procedural and transparent.

While the above task may look daunting given the challenges, I am sure it is a bold but plausible experiment which will bring countless benefits to all stakeholders and the nation. In this blog, I will be sharing more information regarding the curriculum for special school. To know more about structured curriculum for special schools one can purchase my book INVAS <https://notionpress.com/read/invas>