

The Current State and Prospects of Inclusive Education in Uzbekistan

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Annotation

This paper examines the present situation and future development of inclusive education in Uzbekistan. The concept of inclusive education has been gradually introduced into the national education system, aiming to provide equal opportunities for all learners, including those with special educational needs. The research discusses the legal framework, the role of teachers, parental involvement, and the integration of digital technologies. It also highlights challenges such as limited resources, lack of trained specialists, and social attitudes. Finally, it outlines the prospects for developing inclusive education through reforms, international cooperation, and the adoption of innovative methods.

Keywords: Inclusive education, educational reforms, equal opportunities, special educational needs, digital inclusion, teacher training, prospects.

Inclusive education is a global movement that seeks to ensure equal access to quality education for every child, regardless of their abilities, background, or socio-economic status. For Uzbekistan, this issue has become increasingly important in the context of ongoing educational reforms and the country's integration into the global community. Education is recognized as a key driver of social development, and providing inclusive learning opportunities is central to building a fair and sustainable society.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has made significant efforts to modernize its education system, paying special attention to inclusivity. The government has adopted new laws and programs to support children with disabilities and those who require special educational support. However, challenges remain, including limited infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and the need to change public attitudes toward inclusive practices.

The concept of inclusive education has been widely studied by international researchers. UNESCO (2020) stresses that inclusive education is not only about integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schools but also about creating environments where all learners feel valued and supported. Florian (2015) argues that inclusive pedagogy must go beyond traditional methods and recognize diversity as a resource rather than a problem. In the Uzbek context, studies by Abdullaeva (2021) and Turaeva (2022) highlight the progress made in establishing inclusive schools, while also pointing out persistent issues such as a shortage of qualified specialists and insufficient collaboration between schools and families. Government reports (Ministry of Public Education, 2023) emphasize the importance of teacher training and the introduction of digital tools to make inclusive education more accessible.

Uzbekistan has introduced inclusive education as part of its broader educational reforms. In 2019, the government adopted the 'Law on Education,' which guarantees the right to education for all children, including those with special needs. Pilot projects were launched in several regions to test inclusive practices in general secondary schools. Currently, many schools in Uzbekistan are working to adapt their infrastructure. For instance, ramps, accessible toilets, and special classrooms are being introduced. However, progress is uneven. In urban areas, schools are more likely to have the resources to support inclusive education, while rural schools still struggle with outdated facilities.

Teacher training is another area of development. Special courses and workshops are being offered to prepare teachers for inclusive classrooms. Yet, many educators admit they still lack the necessary skills and confidence to teach children with diverse needs. Parental involvement

is slowly increasing, but some families are reluctant to send their children with disabilities to mainstream schools due to social stigma. Awareness campaigns have been launched to promote positive attitudes toward inclusivity, but changing long-standing cultural perceptions takes time.

Inclusive education is no longer just a vision in Uzbekistan; it is becoming a reality. The government's commitment, ongoing reforms, and growing public awareness are shaping a more inclusive education system. However, challenges such as infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and social stigma must still be addressed. Looking ahead, the prospects are encouraging. With stronger policies, better training, and the integration of digital technologies, Uzbekistan has the potential to become a regional leader in inclusive education. Ultimately, ensuring that every child can learn, participate, and succeed will not only transform the education system but also strengthen society as a whole.

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