

Young Hans

Inclusion is not screening: Why schools must make belonging part of everyday learning

CBSE's sensitisation initiative is a step towards inclusive education, but lasting change depends on everyday classroom practices, peer relationships and meaningful participation

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A few years ago, at the end of a film session in a Bengaluru school, a Class 6 boy raised his hand with a question I still carry. We had just watched a short film about a girl who could not hear, and how she navigated a classroom that kept talking past her. "Sir," he said, "there is a boy in our class who hardly speaks. We thought he was rude. Is it like this for him?" The room went quiet. Nobody had told these children to be kind. A story had simply let them stand, for twelve minutes, inside someone else's life, and then given them the space to ask what that meant for the boy sitting three rows away.

I recalled that moment when CBSE asked its affiliated schools to screen a 30-minute sensitisation module on Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs on 7 October, through the Ministry of Education's PRASHAST portal. It is a welcome step. The module was meant for everyone, from principals and teachers to wardens, aayahs and drivers, an acknowledgement that inclusion belongs to the whole school, not the special educator alone. The Ministry reports participation from more than 60,000 schools, in 12 languages.

But sensitisation can introduce the idea of inclusion. It cannot, by itself, create an inclusive mindset.

Consider a classroom where a child with a disability is always treated kindly, yet rarely chosen for a group activity. Nobody bullies her. Everyone has attended the session. And still, she is left out. We have become reasonably good at teaching children what to say. We have been far less deliberate about changing how they think.

Attitudes are not installed; they are grown, on playgrounds and in friendships. Inclusion that lives in a module stays in the module. Inclusion that lives in routines, in who gets picked for the team, who is asked to read aloud, how a teacher responds when a child takes longer, becomes culture.

So what does sustained practice look like?

First, it is woven into the ordinary school day, not saved for an awareness week. A science project can ask children to design a playground that a wheelchair user, a child with low vision and a child sensitive to noise could all enjoy. Empathy grows fastest when it is a problem to solve, not a rule to memorise. Second, it harnesses story. In my years of working with children and cinema, I have seen visual storytelling do what lectures rarely manage: let a child enter another person's world. A well-chosen film about a child on the autism spectrum moves understanding from the head to the heart.

Third, it leaves room for talk, because the real learning begins when the film ends. Why did the character feel left out? What could her classmates have done differently? Have we behaved the same way without realising it? Awareness-led instruction tells children what to think. Reflection lets them discover what they actually think. That Class 6 boy did not need a definition. He needed permission to ask.

Fourth, it demands participation, not mere tolerance. There is a world of difference between being allowed into a classroom and being made to feel part of it. Schools can build belonging through mixed-ability teams, buddy systems, performances and sports that offer every child a genuine role, and teachers trained to notice quiet exclusion, not just obvious bullying. Above all, they must listen to children with disabilities and their parents. None of this replaces formal initiatives. Modules like CBSE's set standards, build a shared vocabulary and signal that the system is serious, in the spirit of NEP 2020's commitment to equity. But we must not confuse completing an activity with achieving an outcome. A certificate cannot measure empathy. Perhaps we should ask children different questions. Who gets left out in your classroom? Whose voice is rarely heard? Does every child here have someone who makes them feel they belong? Sensitisation takes thirty minutes. The real question is what we do on the 364 days after the screening. Inclusion is not what children know about difference. It is what they do when they encounter it.

A 30-minute sensitisation session can introduce students to the idea of inclusion, but building an inclusive school culture requires more than awareness. Inclusion must be reflected in everyday classroom practices, peer relationships, school activities and opportunities for participation. He highlights the importance of listening to children with disabilities, encouraging meaningful interactions and creating learning environments where every student feels respected, supported and valued



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UoH to host free international training programme on higher education leadership

Hans News Service



THE Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre (MMTTC) at the University of Hyderabad (UoH) to organise a six-day international online training programme on 'Leading the Modern University: Leadership, Governance and Transformation in Higher Education' from December 7 to 12, 2026. The programme will be offered free of cost and is aimed at strengthening the leadership and professional competencies of university administrators.

The training seeks to prepare administrators to address emerging challenges in higher education, including institutional governance, strategic management, organisational change, international engagement and digital transformation.

It will focus on developing leadership capabilities that extend beyond routine administrative responsibilities and support effective institutional decision-making.

The programme will be conducted entirely online through live sessions from 10 am to 5.15 pm IST on all six days. A total of 150 participants will be accommodated, including 25 seats reserved for international applicants.

The initiative is expected to facilitate interaction and knowledge exchange among university administrators from India and other countries.

The training will cover six thematic areas: understanding the modern university; leadership, people and professional excellence; strategic university management and change; governance, resources, risk and accountability; internationalisation and global engagement; and digital, artificial intelligence (AI) and the future university.

Through these sessions, participants will explore institutional responsibilities, decision-making, organisational change, accountability and the implications of emerging technologies for higher education.

The programme will also examine how universities can respond to changing academic and professional environments.

Eligibility and registration

In India, the programme is open to Group A/ Class I officers in university administrative cadres, including Assistant Registrars, Deputy Registrars, Joint Registrars, Registrars and officials holding equivalent positions. Applicants must register through the UGC Malaviya Mission portal at mmc.ugc.ac.in, under the NEP Theme Training section, by selecting the University of Hyderabad. A No Objection Certificate (NOC) is required for applicants.

International participation is open to senior- and middle-level university administrators. Candidates from outside India can apply through the International Registration Form available on the University of Hyderabad website.

The last date to submit applications is November 30, 2026. Participation certificates will be issued to candidates who successfully complete the programme.

Programme details

- Programme: Leading the Modern University: Leadership, Governance and Transformation in Higher Education
- Organising institution: Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre, University of Hyderabad
- Dates: December 7–12, 2026
- Mode: Live online sessions
- Timings: 10 am to 5.15 pm IST
- Programme fee: Free
- Total seats: 150, including 25 international seats
- Application deadline: November 30, 2026

The initiative is part of the University of Hyderabad's efforts to support professional development and strengthen leadership and governance capabilities in higher education institutions.

It also provides a platform for international exchange of experiences and practices in university administration.

TODAY IS NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY

Rethinking the purpose of education



Education has traditionally been viewed as a pathway to academic achievement, professional qualifications and employment. However, its purpose extends far beyond earning degrees or securing jobs. Education plays a vital role in shaping individuals, developing critical thinking and preparing citizens to contribute meaningfully to society.

In a rapidly changing world, the ability to memorise information is no longer enough. Students need to learn how to question, analyse, solve problems and apply knowledge to real-life situations. With technology and artificial intelligence transforming workplaces and everyday life, education must help learners develop adaptability, creativity and the confidence to navigate change.

The purpose of education also lies in building responsible and informed citizens. Schools and colleges are important spaces where young people learn values such as empathy, respect, equality, collaboration and social responsibility. These qualities help them understand different perspectives and participate constructively in their communities.

Equally important is ensuring that education is accessible and inclusive. Every child, regardless of economic background, gender, location or ability, should have opportunities to learn and grow. Quality education should not be limited to those who can afford it or have access to better resources.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises holistic, multidisciplinary and experiential learning, encouraging institutions to move beyond rote learning and support the overall development of students.

IIIT-Delhi opens PhD admissions for winter 2026 session

Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIIT-Delhi) has opened applications for its Ph.D. programme for the Winter Session 2026, inviting candidates interested in advanced research across six disciplines. The last date to submit applications online is November 15, 2026.

The doctoral programme offers research opportunities in Computational Biology, Computer Science and Engineering, Electronics and Communications Engineering, Human-Centered Design, Mathematics, and Social Sciences and Humanities. Eligibility requirements and application guidelines vary by discipline and are available on the institute's official admissions website.

IIIT-Delhi provides financial assistance to eligible full-time Ph.D. scholars to support their research and academic development. The support includes a monthly fellowship of ₹60,000, assistance for purchasing a laptop or desktop, and additional funding for research-related expenses.

Scholars can also receive ₹1.5 lakh to support visits of up to two weeks to laboratories abroad, providing opportunities to interact with researchers and gain exposure to ongoing international research. In addition, the institute offers a Professional Development Allowance (PDA) of ₹2.5 lakh for attending academic conferences and workshops.

The institute said its doctoral programme emphasises rigorous research, faculty mentorship and interdisciplinary collaboration. It aims to prepare scholars to contribute to academia, industry and society through research and innovation.

Prof. Sumit Darak, Dean of Academic Affairs at IIIT-Delhi, said the institute provides Ph.D. scholars with an environment focused on impactful research and interdisciplinary collaboration, supported by financial assistance and travel grants for international exposure.

He added that IIIT-Delhi graduates currently hold faculty positions at reputed institutions and research roles in industry, both in India and abroad. The institute has invited candidates with a strong interest in research to apply for the upcoming session.

Applicants can review discipline-specific eligibility criteria and complete the online application through the official website: https://iiitd.ac.in/admission/phd/oct2026.

For admission-related queries, candidates can contact the Ph.D. admissions team at phd-admissions@iiitd.ac.in.

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