

This study is an exploration of cooperative learning as a teaching strategy to address the special educational needs (SEN) of students in the mainstream classroom. In India SEN is not recognized in the classrooms. Most commonly it remains unidentified and unattended. With the shift from special schools to inclusive schools like everywhere in the world the pressing need in India is to address SEN in the mainstream classrooms. This provides as a background and starting point for an investigation of cooperative learning as a teaching strategy to address the SEN of students in mainstream classrooms. The study has investigation in the light of rich literature in cooperative learning. This investigation was carried out in 4 inclusive primary schools and 2 primary special schools of the Czech Republic and the Netherlands. Qualitative approach involving interview, observation and data analysis was employed. The sample size included class teachers of students 9-10 and 11-12 years and SENCO of the schools. The findings indicate that cooperative learning is used as a teaching strategy in the schools. It benefits all students in the mainstream classroom. It is one of the factors contributing in academic progress of students with SEN. Reading in the group has shown improvement in reading speed and reading comprehension. Cooperative learning contributes in developing social skills of the students which are the prime motivation of teachers to use it. It was also found that teachers have to be oriented towards the benefits of this method as it not only benefits students with SEN but all students in the classroom. It needs careful planning and monitoring on teachers part.