

PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

In this paper, an attempt has been made to study the perception of students and teachers of elementary schools towards Inclusive education. Keeping in view the nature of the present study, the investigator developed the perception scale to get their perception regarding Inclusive education. The items for the scale were prepared according to the objectives of the study. The items prepared on a 5 point like type scale; the items were framed in a manner so as to have some appeal for the respondents to draw the required information. The methods followed for the study is descriptive in nature. The focus of study is to find out the perception of students and teachers towards achieving inclusive education at elementary level. Descriptive survey method is followed to collect data about the perception of students and teachers at elementary levels.



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Introduction:-

The majority of population consists of average or normal human beings. Exceptionalities of any nature whether positive or negative, have usually been subject of neglect or even hate and segregation from the time immemorial. In the placement options for education of exceptional children, the options in the shape of placing the exceptional children along with non-exceptional children were also given. All these options have their origins and link to the ideas and concepts of Inclusive education. International legislations in many European countries promote Inclusive education for students with special needs by educating them altogether with their peers in regular schools or special classes. The implementation of Inclusive education differs considerably from one national and local context to another.

Generally, the support for inclusion rests on the following 2 basic presumptions: the right of children to inclusion in regular schools and the fact that Inclusive education is more effective than segregated education.

According to Kozleski et. al(2011) and Loreman et. al(2011), "Inclusive education is considered to be a multidimensional concept that includes the celebrations and valuing the differences and diversity and consideration of human rights, social justice and equal opportunities, as well as of social model of disability ". It encompasses the process of school

transformation and focus on children's entitlement and access to education. Inclusive schools have been defined as schools in which all children learn together, receive quality education and support through appropriate curricula, organisational arrangements, teaching strategies, use of resources and partnership with their communities (UNESCORTED 1994). Students with or without disabilities are educated alongside the local community. Therefore mainstream schools are required to adopt and accommodate a diverse group of students with a variety of needs. In education, "Inclusion" refers to the placement and education of disabled children in regular classrooms with children of same age who do not have no disabilities. The underlying premise of inclusion is that all children can learn and belong to the mainstream of schools and community life. Inclusion is the basic value that extends to all children. The goal of inclusion is to ensure that all children, regardless of any individual differences, are fully included in mainstream of life.

Objectives:-

The following objectives were achieved in this study:-

1. To study the perception of the teachers of elementary schools with respect to availability of infrastructure facilities, teaching learning processes and evaluation process in an inclusive setting
2. To study the problems faced by the teachers of elementary schools in transacting their lessons in an inclusive setting.
3. To study the perception of non-disabled students of elementary schools about their disabled peers with relation to their adjustment in an inclusive setting.

Research Questions:-

1. How do teachers perceive with reference to availability of infrastructure facilities, teaching learning process and evaluation process in inclusive setting at primary level?
2. How do non-disabled students perceive including their disabled peers with relation to their adjustments in an inclusive setting at elementary level?
3. What are the problems faced by teachers in transacting their lessons in an inclusive setting at elementary level?

Delimitations:-

The present study was delimited on the following aspects:-

1. The population of the study is limited to Cuttack city only.
2. The sample for study is limited to elementary school teachers and students only

3. Perception towards Inclusive education is limited to dimensions like availability of infrastructure facilities, teaching learning process, evaluation process and students adjustments.

Methodology:-

The present study comes under the “Descriptive Survey Method”. The focus is to find out the perception of teachers and students towards achieving Inclusive education at elementary level. The descriptive study method is followed to collect data about the perception of students and teachers at elementary level. Tools developed and used to measure the perception of students and teachers towards Inclusive education are:-

1. Perception scale for teachers
2. Perception scale for students
3. Interview schedule for teachers
4. Inclusive classroom observation schedule

Analysis and Interpretation:-

Table 1: analysis of perception of teachers towards Inclusive education with respect to availability of infrastructure facilities, teaching learning process and evaluation process

| Sl. Number | Perception of teacher with regard to _ | SA | A | U | D | SP |
|------------|--|-------|-----|----|-----|------|
| 1 | Availability of infrastructure | 88% | 5% | 0% | 4% | 3% |
| 2 | Teaching learning process | 77.5% | 5% | 8% | 7% | 2.5% |
| 3 | Evaluation process | 72% | 13% | 1% | 10% | 4% |

Table 2: analysis of perception of non disabled students about their disabled peers with relation to their adjustment

| Perception of students | SA | A | U | D | SD |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------|-------|------|-------|
| With relation to their adjustment | 73.13% | 9.4% | 2.03% | 9.3% | 6.14% |

Table 3: perception of teachers- a classroom observation

| Perception of teachers | Yes | No |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| Classroom observation | 75.3% | 24.7% |

Major findings of the study:-

1. Perception of elementary school teachers towards Inclusive education is highly positive
2. Perception of elementary school students towards Inclusive education is highly positive
3. Overall perception of teachers towards Inclusive education with respect to availability of infrastructure facilities is positive. They feel that appropriate facilities are highly essential for an inclusive education set-up
4. Overall perception of teachers towards Inclusive education with respect to teaching learning process is positive. They feel that appropriate teaching learning environment is highly essential for an inclusive classroom
5. Overall perception of teachers towards Inclusive education with respect to evaluation process is positive. They feel that appropriate evaluation is highly essential for Inclusive education set up
6. Perception of non-disabled students about their disabled peers with relation to their adjustment in an inclusive setting is positive. They feel that they adjust properly with their disabled peers without any problem in an inclusive set up
7. Most of the teachers of elementary schools did not face any problem while transacting their lessons to the students in an inclusive classroom. Students were peacefully and silently listening to the advice of the teachers and achieved them in their day to day life

Educational Implications:-

1. The study will be beneficial for teachers. Through this study, they will be enabled to know about an inclusive set-up , various methods of instructions, benefits of use of multilingual education in classroom situation, cooperation between teachers and students, etc.

2. The study helps students for promoting the togetherness among them and achieving national goals. They will be able to create level free environment among them
3. The present study bears implications for the parents as well as the community members. Disabled are no more considered differently able. The parents of those children should exhibit positive attitude towards their education
4. These children should be taken in the same classroom with normal children, rather than placing them in segregated settings exclusively meant for a particular disability.
5. Government and policy makers are also able to find benefits from the study. They are aware about their faults and also about the needs of students, teachers as well as the society and will promote more facilities for setting up an inclusive society.
6. More collaboration between regular and special educators, more professional collaboration should be ideal and becomes an integral part of any educational program.
7. Educational consultants, curriculum specialists, school psychologists and other personnels should pool their expertise in order to develop academic learning activities that impact upon behaviour.

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