



## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED- A BOON OR CURSE**

**Gigi. K. Varghese<sup>1</sup> & K Sambath Rani<sup>2</sup>, Ph. D.**

<sup>1</sup>*Ph. D. Scholar.*

<sup>2</sup>*Assistant Professor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Women, Coimbatore*

### **Abstract**

*Inclusive Education denotes to facilitate all children irrespective of their strengths and weaknesses will be part of the mainstream education. The feeling of belongingness amid all community members – teachers, students and other functionaries is developed through inclusive education. Inclusive education strives to deal with the learning requirements of children with special needs, with a meticulous focus on those who are subject to being inaccessible and excluded. Lack of flexibility in curriculum, inability to tend for themselves and thus being bullied by others in the class and not getting adequate attention from the teachers are common issues. Majority of students in India irrespective of practice of inclusive education do not receive formal education. This is mainly because those children with disabilities are segregated from mainstream schools and other regular routines and social activities in normal children. Other causative factors to this condition are lack of affordability and knowledge on the type of education choices accessible to children with special needs. Inclusive education becomes a key reason for integrating a special child with the mainstream. Critical feature of inclusive education for a special needs child is, in having the acceptance and friendship of classmates. This kind of support also aids in the progress of special children and helps them to gain confidence within the school environment. This paper reflects on the attitude of teacher educators on the inclusive education of students with intellectual disability*



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### **Introduction**

Education is a powerful instrument of social change and initiates upward movement in the social structure. Education helps in bringing breach between the diverse sections of the society. The educational status of children with special needs has undergone a revolution for years from special school to inclusive education. Inclusive education address the learning needs of children with special needs with a focus on those who are subject to being isolated and excluded. Inclusive education in schools throughout the country is still at infancy stage, educational institutions are somewhat cynical about having normal and special students in the same set up. The outcome of the action is questionable where a former excluded child is given admission from mainstream. Inclusive education faces some

challenges like lack of flexibility of curriculum, adaptation and accommodation of places, barrier free environment are some of the issue. In inclusive education, irrespective of the strength and weakness students with special students are becoming a part of mainstream system.

Inclusive education becomes a key reason for integrating a special child with the mainstream. Inclusive schools have to be well equipped in all aspects to cater and deliver the quality of education of all children. This includes having a balanced curriculum that is appropriate for all categories of children, teachers who have the ability to handle the individual needs within the classroom and promote an environment where personal development, social skills and student participation is strongly recommended

### **Inclusive Education**

A regular education in a regular classroom is one of the first and most important ways for children with disabilities to learn and belong. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) aiming to do just that was launched by the Government of India in order to Universalize Elementary Education and to provide education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years by 2010.

For children with disabilities, to learn and to belong in an inclusive set up begins with inclusive education/schooling. With the notion of universalisation of elementary education through social inclusion Sarva Siksha Abiyan (SSA) or “Anaivarkum Kalvi” was bought in to practice. The programme of SSA includes the Children with Special Needs (CWSN) as well since Universal Elementary Education cannot be achieved devoid of bringing these children to the mainstream of education. These special children are identified and enrolled in schools to enable them to mingle with their normal counterparts and learn along with them.

Inclusive Schooling is frequently thought of as the inclusion of students with disabilities, regardless of ability, into the same schools and classrooms with peers who are not considered to have disabilities. Inclusive schooling extends disabilities far further than mere physical propinquity to providing students and adults the support required to belong and achieve in classroom and school communities. Inclusion is both a process for and outcome of understanding, acceptance and valuing of differences among today’s school children and youth. It is potentially both a process and an outcome for achieving social justice and equity in our society.

### **Teacher Education And Inclusive Schools**

It is evident that teachers play a critical role in the development of high-quality education systems – that ‘the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and principals’ It follows that enhancing teacher quality is intrinsically linked to the

quality of initial and continuing teacher education programmes. A key task for all teachers is to identify such barriers and work with learners and other education stakeholders to find effective ways to overcome them. This is not an easy task. It is imperative, therefore, that teachers receive appropriate preparation and also on-going support as they move through various career paths.

The teacher has to provide high quality, holistic support and focused involvement with the children with special needs based on a joint perspective, mutual understanding and networking. Hyam, (2004) the role of educators in changing environment is also required to change, if there is to be a smooth transition from mainstream education to inclusive education. Change will not yield the desired results, if those who implement it are resistant or are not committed. Educators must see the value of the change and be prepared to embrace this change. They may need to acquire new skills and reject some of their beliefs and practices. This implies taking risks and facing challenges. Educators are required to reconsider their roles, construct new knowledge and learn new skills to equip themselves for the change.

The inclusion of differently abled students in regular education classrooms requires regular school teachers to upgrade their skills in-order to respond to the new challenges provided by their changing roles and responsibilities. These teachers are now expected to address problems and provide solutions or facilitate solutions to challenges posed by special needs students who may vary in their skill levels. They are now required to undertake initial screening of students who are at risk, adapt instruction to make them responsive to special needs students, contribute in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, work collaboratively with parents and other professionals and use technology to assist students overcome their shortfalls.

The key responsibilities of a teacher in inclusive set up includes Overseeing the day to day operation of the scheme IEDSS in particular and inclusive education in general, Coordinating the provision of support services for children with special needs, Regular visioning and seeking advice from fellow special educators in regard to the education of child with special needs, Visioning with other special educators' of other schools for updating the information and knowledge. Maintain the database of child with special needs, Develop the assessment portfolio of child with special needs, Prepare a list of required materials and equipment before the beginning of the session, Organize continuous, periodic and regular parent meeting, Ensuring that a child with special needs joins in the activities of the school together with other pupils etc.

## **Review of literature**

Janaki B and Cornelius D.J.K conducted a study on “inclusive education for students with intellectual disability”. This paper traces briefly the evolution of Inclusive Education for students with special education needs (SEN) and discusses some significant challenges in its implementation. While the aim of Inclusive Education is to include all children with SEN in mainstream schools, there are many challenges that have to be overcome for their education to be meaningful. This paper focuses primarily on the inclusion of students with intellectual disability, since they are likely to be the largest number with special education needs in ‘inclusive’ schools. It offers the outline of a curriculum that may be derived from the mainstream one in use, and suggests a model that emphasizes the replacement of age / grade placement, as is the present practice, with experience and maturity underpinning learning in persons with intellectual disability. The proposed model needs, of course, to be field-tested.

Chomba. M. J, Mukuria S.G, et al., conducted a study on the “Education For Students With Intellectual Disabilities in Kenya: Challenges and Prospects” Kenya has great potential for enhancing education for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The fact that it has recognized the need to care for learners with special needs is commendable. In comparison to many African countries, Kenya and Nigeria are ahead in developing programs for special education in institutions of higher learning, and in starting schools and units for special education. However, a legal mandate is still required as it would seal many loopholes that currently exist. Without it, the assessment of individual with intellectual disabilities cannot be administered correctly and professionally. In this article, the authors present a coherent account on various aspects related to learners with intellectual disabilities in Kenya. No doubt, the issues and challenges identified call for attention by not only the government of Kenya but also those interested in improving the status of learners with intellectual disabilities.

## **Objectives**

The major objectives of the study are to

- Study on the inclusive education for intellectually disabled students
- Understand the attitude of teacher educators on the inclusive education of intellectually disabled students.
- Comprehend the merits of inclusive education for disabled students

## **Data and Methods**

A descriptive research using survey method was adopted for the study. The study employed a self made questionnaire for collecting the data which is drawn from education colleges in Ernakulum.

## **Sample And Sampling Technique**

For conducting this study Purposive Sampling method was used in order to select the education colleges in Ernakulum on attitude of teacher educator on inclusive education of intellectually disabled child. Teacher educators from educational colleges were selected for the study

## **Methodology**

The research instruments for this study were mainly of two types. For finding out the attitude of teacher educators on inclusive education of the intellectually disabled child an observation checklist was made by the investigator. The checklist mainly consists of two major sessions which includes section A which provides the demographic data of the teacher educators. Section B consists on attitudes of teacher educators on inclusive education of intellectually disabled child.. The scoring of the checklist is ranged from Agree, Disagree and Not Sure. To determine the attitude of teacher educators on the inclusive education of intellectually disabled students, questionnaire with 21 questions which is divided into 3 domains are used. The domains are

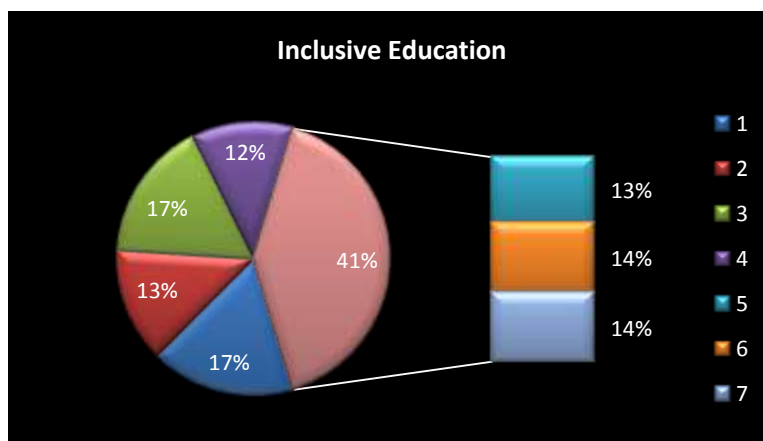
1. Teaching learning environment
2. Administration
3. behaviour

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

## **Results**

**Table 1: Teaching Learning Environment**

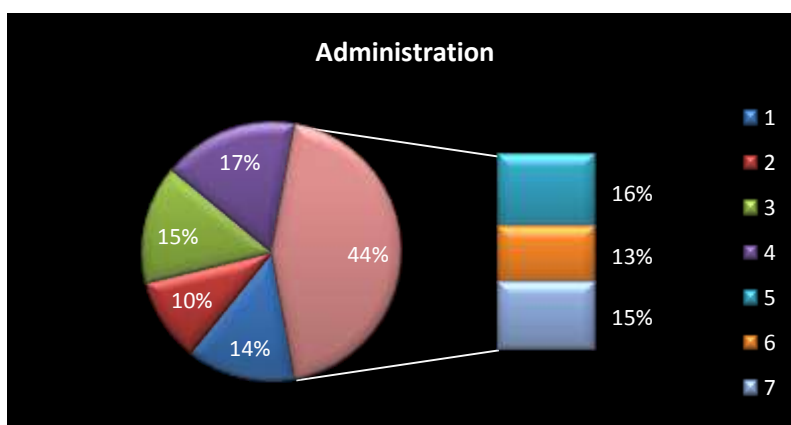
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Agree</b>		<b>Disagree</b>		<b>Not Sure</b>	
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Brings in special and positive environment	34	97.1	0	0.0	1	2.9
Helps in academic development	27	77.1	0	0.0	8	22.9
Positive education through multi-dimensional learning	33	94.3	2	5.7	0	0.0
Inculcate value based learning	24	68.6	0	0.0	11	31.4
Opportunities for educational placement	26	74.3	1	2.9	8	22.9
Provides opportunity to learn through various modalities	28	80.0	1	2.9	6	17.1
Provides a barrier free environment	27	77.1	6	17.1	1	5.7



From the above table it is assumed that 97% of teacher educators believed that inclusion of children with intellectually disability brings in special and positive environment for teaching learning process. Some teachers also believe that through multi dimensional learning a positive attitude can be bought in student’s nature. Sixty eight percent of teacher educators felt that inclusive education can inculcate value based learning and 32% does not believe so. Inclusive education can also provide opportunity to learn through various modalities. Only few teachers believe that it can provide a barrier free environment.

**Table 2: Administration**

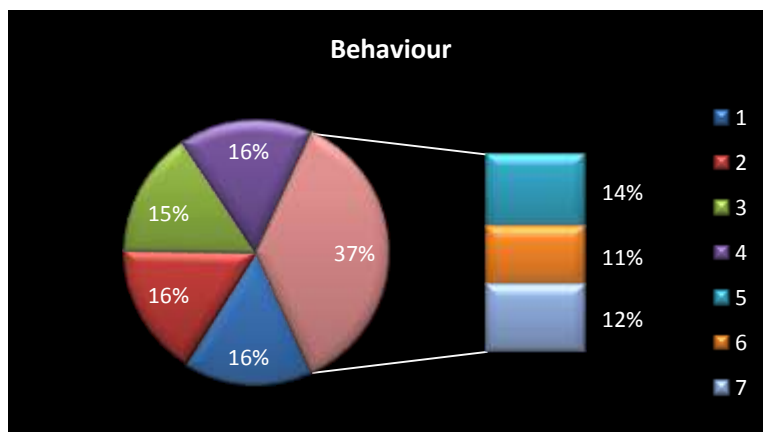
Questions	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Provides useful and elementary education for all children of 6-14 irrespective of disability	25	71.43	1	2.86	9	25.71
Inculcate value based learning	19	54.29	6	17.14	10	28.57
Helps in eliminating the parallel tracks of regular and special schools	27	77.14	6	17.14	2	5.71
Provides training for teachers	31	88.57	1	2.86	3	8.57
Has provision of appointing special teachers in all schools	30	85.71	1	2.86	4	11.43
Improves staff collaboration	23	65.71	3	8.57	9	25.71
Provides useful and elementary education for all children of 6-14 years irrespective of disability	28	80.00	3	8.57	4	11.43



It is reflected from the learning that 88% of the administrators provide training for teacher educators on inclusive education for teachers. 85% of teacher educators accept that they have provision of appointing special teachers in all schools and 26% of teacher educators believe that administration provides useful and elementary education for all children irrespective of 6-14 years irrespective of disability

**Table 3: Behaviour**

Questions	Agree		Disagree		Not Sure	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Provides opportunity for students to communication with other children	34	97	0	0	1	3
Enhances ability to socialize with other children	35	100	0	0	0	0
Creates an environment to learn age appropriate behaviour	33	94	2	5.7	0	0
Increases adaptive behaviour by learning from peer groups	35	100	0	0	0	0
Builds a positive attitude among teachers about the behaviour of the children with intellectually disabled	29	83	0	0	6	17
Increases confidence among parents among parents in managing children with intellectual disability	23	66	2	5.7	10	29
Enhances overall development among children with intellectual disability	26	74	2	5.7	7	20



From the above table it is inferred that all teacher agree that inclusive education can enhance socialization ability with the abled and the disabled and it also increases adaptive behavior by learning from peer group. Intellectually disabled students can learn age appropriate behaviour through inclusive education. Some teacher educators feel that inclusive education cannot bring confidence among parents in managing the intellectually disabled child. It is also shown that inclusive education can bring effective communication with other teacher

## Discussion

The result of the attitude of teacher educators on inclusive education of intellectually disabled students is extremely encouraging and it motivates the students in teaching learning process, to improve their socialization behaviour and in the administration behaviour. Majority of teacher educators believe that through inclusive education one can bring positive education in multi dimensional learning, provides learning through various modalities, helps in eliminating the gap between the regular and special schools. Some of the teacher educators feel that the administration as well as the government should take some responsibility of providing teacher educators with some training in schools and they should appoint some special educators for effective staff collaboration and effective teaching learning process of the child. Through inclusive education it is also said that it enhances the student's socialization skills, helps in learning age appropriate behaviour, increases adaptive behaviour by learning from peer groups.

## Suggestions for Further Research

The following are the suggestions for the further research:

- Further study can be conducted with more number of samples so that more generalized results can be predicted.
- Samples can be equally matched with respect to variable groups.
- Experimental method can be adopted in further research to find the effectiveness of the usage of Assistive devices by the disabled students in higher education.

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