



A STUDY OF AWARENESS AMONG STUDENT-TEACHERS REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Introduction:

Inclusive school is the demand of the situation. There is no way India can provide education to all children with disability unless it opens the doors of all schools for children with disability. It is not an easy task. It is very important to recognize the complexity of the challenge it brings with it. It demands attitude shift in teachers and school management. It requires child centric approach in teaching / learning and stress on capacity building of every child rather than simply transaction of education curriculum.

Inclusion in education is crucial that all policy makers, school boards, administrators, guidance counsellors, teachers, parents and students tend to ensure inclusive practice in all aspects of educational environments. Research suggests that inclusivity is no longer defined by physical and cognitive disabilities but also includes a full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and of other forms of human differences.

Fully inclusive schools or colleges, which are rare, no longer distinguish between "general education" and "special education" programs which refers to the debates and federal initiatives of 1980s to 2014, such as the Community Integration Project and the debates on home schools and special education-regular education classrooms; instead, the school is restructured so that all students learn together. All approaches to inclusive schooling require

administrative and managerial changes to move from the traditional approaches to elementary, high school education and colleges.

Inclusion is not an experiment to be tested but a value to be followed. All the children whether they are disabled or not have the right to education as they are the future citizens of the country. In the prevailing Indian situation resources are insufficient even to provide quality mainstream schools or colleges for common children, it is unethical and impracticable to put children with special needs to test or to prove any thing in a research study to live and learn in the mainstream of school, colleges and community.

This requires important change in the system of teacher training. The two stream of teacher training i.e. B. Ed. (general) and B. Ed. (Sp. Ed.) will not work sufficiently. All teachers need to know how learning and cognitive development including emotional issues involved in it takes place. One or two courses/papers have to provide knowledge and understanding about how motor, sensory and cognitive impairments create challenges for a child and such papers have to be essential part of the teacher training curriculum. If properly sensitized, it would enhance their capacity and skills of teaching all children with or without disability. Those who are already in teaching, they can be given short term training to prepare them to respond to children with disability in their classrooms. It should include all teachers as well as school management. Parents' involvement and peer support is very important process.

To say in other words, student-teachers need to know how to deal with learning in inclusive education and cognitive development including emotional issues are involved in B. Ed. Curriculum.

Difficulties in Educational Exclusions :

Inclusion is a complex issue. The curriculum is a powerful tool and may be part of the problem / difficulties. However, inclusion are challenging at everywhere. There are three pre-requisites:

- 1) The preparation of the child.
- 2) The preparation of parents.
- 3) The preparation of the teachers.

1) The preparation of the child:

Some children with special needs may require some prior training before they are placed in a regular school. Special educators should make available for the purpose can provide such training and thereafter children with special need may be admitted in mainstream schools. Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh states have conducted exclusive

residential bridge course for children with special need to prepare them for regular schools but in rest of the states it is not yet to be done. From 6 million 30 thousand children with special need were identified in 2002-03. By 2006-07 3 million 38 thousand were identified. From 5 million 66 thousand children with special need enrolled in schools in 2002-03, the enrolment of children with special need currently in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) stands at 2 million 20 thousand (Dec. 2006). The target for 2006-07 include enrolment of 3 million 38 thousand children with special need in 29 States.

2) The preparation of parents:

It has been seen that the parents/guardians of children with special need generally face problems, both social and psychological resulting into marginalization and exclusion of children with special need in mainstream schools. Hence, it is important to undertake widespread awareness among the people especially parents of children with special need. They should be counseled so that they may prepare themselves to send his / her ward to mainstream schools.

3) The preparation of teachers / student-teachers :

In India, teacher training in special education is imparted through both face-to-face and distance mode.

Pre-Service Training:

In India, there is provision for pre-service teacher training upto higher Secondary Education stage. There are 159 institutions of secondary teacher training in School education whereas there are only eleven institutions in the country that imparts pre-service training at elementary or primary level in School Education. The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) is the apex authority to develop, recognize and regulate the course curriculum of School Education. The Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal is the single university in the country, imparting B. Ed. (SE) through distance learning mode. Recently, it has launched Post Graduate Professional Diploma in Special Education Course for general B. Ed. students. The successful candidate of this program supposed equivalent to B. Ed.-SEDE degree holder with specialization in opted disability area. S.N.D.T. Women's University also, it has launched one of the subject for Inclusive education for general B. Ed. students.

As the Indian school system is one of the largest in the world and number of children with special need are very high, the prevailing situation of pre-service teacher training in special education needs to be strengthened or elaborate alternative mechanism for incorporating the elements of special education in general teacher training programs needs to found out. The teacher training course curriculum of general pre-service training programs

neither fully equip the teachers and teacher educators to deal with the children with special need nor it equip them to manage the mild and moderately disabled children in general classrooms. Towards this end, an MOU has been signed between the National Council for Teacher Educations (NCTE) and the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) leading towards a convergence so as to sensitize all teachers and resource persons. The NCERT (2000) has set up a group under the National Curriculum Framework Review to examine the pedagogic inputs and classroom reorganization required for children with special need. Even, UGC National Educational Testing Bureau has already included “Special Education”, in curriculum of its Educational discipline. It includes details about special education, integrated education, education of mentally retarded (MR), visually impaired (VI), hearing impaired (HI), Orthopaedically handicapped (OH), gifted and creative children, learning disabled children and education of Juvenile delinquents. The Postgraduate Departments of Education in India is on way to strengthen the disability element in their respective curriculum.

Accommodation (adoption) / Modification :

- Accommodations are used when the student is expected to learn the same curricular content. But the student may be taught in a different way or need changes in the environment.
- Modification are used when the student is expected to learn less or different curricular content. This could require the modification of assignments, tests, worksheets and other materials in the classroom.

What are accommodations (adoption)? :

Accommodations are changes in teaching methods. It can include changes in:

- Where you teach,
- Who teaches
- How you teach
- How the student can respond
- Materials you use.

Know the Curriculum:

- You have to know what you are trying to teach (curriculum) before you can change how you teach it.
- If you make the wrong changes, you can end up teaching a different concept than the one you wanted the student to learn.

Need of Inclusive Education: The School teachers

- Should have the ability to solve problems.

- Should know about the interest, aptitude and abilities of the disabled children and use them to develop various skills in them.
- Have the ability to provide successful experiences to the disabled children.
- Should have the knowledge of special instructional material and of using them.
- Should be highly patient, welcoming, polite and devoted.
- Should work as team with parents and special educators.
- Keep a record of the child's achievements and failures.

Fear of Parents:

- Parents think that their children with disability may not gain effectively in the inclusive setting.
- Parents fear that their children will be teased or harmed in the inclusive setting.

Features of Inclusive Education:

1. Children have diversified needs.
2. Uniqueness of the children requires continuous support and attention.
3. Demands of flexibility in learning.
4. No fixed teaching style.
5. Mixture of various means and media along with strategies and communication.
6. Different assessment and evaluation methods.

Teacher's role in Inclusive Education:

1. Information provider
2. Guide
3. Counsellor
4. Researcher
5. Resource person
6. Continuous learner
7. Network for sharing

Teachers for Inclusion:

1. Positive orientation
2. Flexibility
3. Innovation
4. Adequate application.

Title of the Research:

“A Study of Awareness among student-teachers regarding Inclusive Education”.

Research Objectives:

1. To study awareness of student-teachers towards 'Inclusive Education'.
2. To explain differences among impairment, disability and handicapped.
3. To encourage the participation of student-teachers.

Research Assumptions:

- 1) Student-teachers are aware about 'Inclusive Education'.
- 2) Teachers are aware that education is compulsory in India.
- 3) Student-teachers should know that there is no difference between general education and special education in inclusive education.
- 4) Parents think that their disabled child should learn in general schools with normal children.

Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant difference in awareness of students-teachers regarding 'Inclusive Education' in pre-test scores and post-test scores.
2. There is no significant difference in attitude of student-teachers regarding 'Inclusive Education' in pre-test scores and post-test scores.

Rationale:

The need regarding the awareness of inclusive education has also become an important aspect of teacher education. The teacher educators would be benefited by such surveys and can plan the required orientations properly.

Sample:

Incidental sample

67 students of B. Ed. class were selected as the sample for research.

Research Methodology: Survey Method.

Tools:

1. S.N.D.T. Women's University's B. Ed. Syllabus (2014-2015).
2. Questionnaire for student-teachers (i.e. Pre-test and Post-test).
3. Instructional Program on Inclusive Education (PPT)

Techniques:

- Student-teachers use a number of techniques to help build classroom communities:
- Involving students in solving problems
- Sharing books that teach community
- Assigning classroom jobs that build community
- Teaching students to look for ways to help each other

- Encouraging students to take the role of teacher and deliver instruction
- Focusing on the strength of a student with special needs
- Organize student desk in groups
- Create a likely and welcoming environment
- Help to establish short-term goals
- Design a multi-faced curriculum
- Communicate regularly with parents and/or caregivers

Statistical treatment:

Use of 't'-test to compare the pre-test and post-test scores and to test the hypothesis.

Scope and limitations :

Scope:

1. The instructional programme could be used for other students also.
2. It could be implemented for student-teachers.
3. It could be implemented for parents whose children are disabled.

Limitations:

1. The instructional programme will focus only on improving 'Inclusive Education'.
2. It does not include any activities to improve other skills.
3. The instructional programme will be for B. Ed. students.
4. The limitations of this program is that it is used only for S.N.D.T. College of Education, Pune which include in this research.

Data analysis:

Data collected through Questionnaire (i.e. Pre-test and post-test) and observation for student-teachers internship and their practice lessons.

After the data is collected, analysis is to be done to find out the results of the research done. The basic objective is to find out whether the hypothesis framed by the researcher is valid or not.

Analysis is the concept of putting data into meaningful perspective. It makes relationship between different units of data appear meaningful.

The post-test scores are considered as indication of the effect of the instructional programme. These post-test scores are used as basic data for testing the hypothesis dealing with the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

As the experiment was done as single group design and the hypothesis deals with the effectiveness of the training programme it test was used.

Findings:

1. The awareness of student-teachers have a realistic time frame to bring such changes and phase-wise plan so that they are able to address the current needs as well as preparation for the future.
2. Explaining the differences among impairment, disability and handicapped, it will be a slow process as it requires revolutionary changes in the mindset of student-teachers.
3. Encouraging the participation of student-teachers does not require huge expenditure but it definitely requires courage and conviction.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

1. Duration for practice teaching should be increased
2. Teacher education rarely keeps up with changes in policy and practice.
3. The Teacher Training Courses at all levels also need to emphasize the study of disability and not let it be treated as an optional subject.
4. Curriculum for education and development of teacher educators also needs revision in the similar manner as for teachers considering the requirements of inclusion.

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