



A STUDY OF SECONDARY-SCHOOL TEACHERS' AWARENESS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

The increasing importance of inclusive education over the last two decades has resulted in a vibrant area of academic scholarship as well as critical studies on the subject. There is an extensive body of research based literature on the subject of inclusive education. Before all else there is a need to sift through the relevant studies on the subject of inclusive education to understand the work already done and finding already made so as to avoid duplication of research work and also to understand the issues involved clearly. The main purpose of the research is to study the awareness of the teachers of secondary school towards inclusive education. In the present paper, I would attempt a comparison on the basis of gender, type of school area and qualification of secondary school teachers as a result of analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data collected from different areas of study the investigator.



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Introduction:

The term 'Special Education' included all those aspects of Education which are applied to special children Such as VI, HI, MR, OH average, above average, and even gifted students, In other words we can say that special education refers to the instruction that is specifically designed to meet the needs of exceptional Children. It involves the designed of physical environment in the class room, teaching procedures, teaching content and equipments for a particular type of disability. There are four aspects about special education i.e. Special educators, special curricular content, special instructional methods and special instructional materials.

To make his teaching more effective a teacher should take all possible efforts to accommodate his instruction to individual differences. The general education system acknowledge the fact the education of all type of children including that to children with disabilities should come under the mainstream education. In the special school concept, the

special education component is 'APART' from the general education system, whereas in integrated approach, it is APART of the general education system (Mani 2001).

Therefore from 'Special school' concept to that of 'Inclusive Education' can be treated as an evolutionary process in the service of children with disabilities, still there are areas where much work should be done to promote the concept inclusive education to included groups such as Visual, hearing motor handicap and intellectually abled/disabled (i.e. gifted or talented, mild and moderate intellectually handicapped apart from students with slow learning), students with specific learning difficulties and behavior disorders. There are the students who experience difficulties in learning, socialization and maintaining Inter-personal relationship with their teachers, parents, peers and community.

Though in 1974, a major shift in education for the children with disability was achieved with the launch of comprehensive project Integrated Education for Disable Child (IEDC). The aim was to provide children with implemented in 15,000 schools in 26 states and union territories and reportedly covered 65,000 children with disabilities in mainstream school. In a bid towards the implementation of this project, the government launched Project Integrate Education Development (PIED), which provided teacher training, methodology for identification of children and school facilities as support services. However, a major criticism against this was that it covered only the mild and moderate disabled who were admitted in school undetected as disabled and that it did not cover pre-school children. It was therefore withdrawn but it did provide learning experiences and brought policy makers closer to the concept of integration, which led later to rethinking education services and to the formulation of Inclusive Education.

The most landmark legislation in the history of special education in India is the persons with Disabilities (equal opportunities, protection of right & full participation) Act 1995. This comprehensive Act cover seven disabilities namely, blindness, low vision, hearing impaired, locomotors impaired, mental retardation, leprosy cured and mental illness.

Sample:

For the present study a sample of 120 teachers were selected by using stratified random sampling. It is to be noticed that some of them were from rural areas and some of them were from urban areas.

Tool used for Study:

Awareness scale was developed by the researcher for this study to ascertain the awareness of teachers towards inclusive education.

Statistical Technique used for the Study:

In the present study the following statistical techniques were employed:

- Descriptive statistics in the form of mean and SD.
- Inferential statistics in the form of ‘t-value’ and ‘F-value.’

Delimitation of Study:

The present study was limited to 120 teachers of Dausa district. Hence the findings of the study are also confined to these delimitations. The objective of the research study was to compare the graduate and post graduate secondary teachers’ awareness towards inclusive education to achieve this objective mean, SD and t-value of the score obtained by graduate and post graduate secondary teachers on different dimension of the awareness of secondary teachers’ towards inclusive education were computed.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the awareness of secondary teachers towards inclusive education.
1. To study the effect of the gender on awareness of teachers towards inclusive education.
2. To study the effect of the type of the school on awareness of secondary teachers towards inclusive education.
3. To study the effect of the area of the school on awareness of secondary teachers towards inclusive education.
4. The study the awareness of different qualification groups of teachers towards inclusive education.

Hypothesis:

- H₀₁ There is no significant difference between the male/female secondary teachers towards inclusive education.
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference between government and private school teachers towards inclusive education.
- H₀₃ There is no significant difference between rural area teachers and urban area teachers towards inclusive education.
- H₀₄ There is no significant difference between Graduate and Post Graduate teachers towards inclusive education.

H0₅ There is no significant difference between trained and untrained teachers towards inclusive education.

Variables of the Study:

Variables used in Research:

In the present study following variables are used:

Independent Variables:

- Teacher (male and female)
- Teacher (Government and Private)
- Teacher (Rural and Urban)

Dependent Variables:

In the present study awareness of secondary teachers towards inclusive education as dependent variable;

Methodology of the Study:

A sample of 120 teachers was taken for the present study to investigate the attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education. The process of random sampling was used to investigate the attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education.

Need for the Study:

This is the main rational to carry-out the current study which deals with studying regular classroom. Teacher's awareness and attitudes are the central point for success of Inclusion. The Inclusive education programme should motivate all students in the regular school. And the concept of inclusive school should aim to increase the participation and broad educational achievements of all groups of students who have historically been marginalized.

Being aware about the special needs of differently able children, the necessary modifications in class curriculum and the awareness about the need for extra input all are significantly essential for teachers to able to be truly inclusive in the type of education they impart. When teachers are aware and well informed about the concept of inclusion, they feel more confident about the roles they need to play in the classroom.

A lack of awareness and skill to include and support students with disabilities along with other children in a regular classroom however can prove to be a major barrier in such a process.

Main Findings:

- The gender difference does not affect the awareness of teachers towards inclusive education.

- The male teachers' awareness towards inclusive education is higher than female teachers.
- The teachers in rural locality are more aware than urban locality teachers towards inclusive education.
- The government teachers' awareness towards inclusive education is higher than private teachers.
- The post graduate teachers' awareness towards inclusive education is higher than graduate teacher.
- The higher educational qualification has affected the awareness of teachers in a positive way towards inclusive education.
- The trained teachers' awareness towards inclusive education is higher than untrained teachers. Proper training affects the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education.
- The item rejected to the item analysis was revised with the help of expert.

This study investigated the knowledge, concerns and awareness of teachers working inclusive education setting towards inclusion. The present study gives evidence that the teachers working in as inclusive education settings have little knowledge of inclusive education. While teachers appear accepting and positive of exclusionary programs, there remain some concerns about implementing inclusive education in the mainstream class room.

The findings of the present study can be beneficial for teachers, administrators, professionals in the field of special education, educational planners and policy makers. Implication of the present study lie in providing suggestions to the teachers, administrators and professionals, educational planners and policy makers for making improvement in some of the areas that can help in effective implementation of inclusive education practices.

Teachers must be prepared to meet his challenge through a sound knowledge base and development of appropriate attitudes and skills. As inclusive education is gaining momentum in India, the teachers working in normal schools should be geared up with adequate knowledge, proper attitudes and compliances to deal with children with disabilities. Department of education should acknowledge the need for additional support training and expertise for general education teachers. As such the RCI, DIETs and the special education departments should organize work shop, seminars, one to two months need based training programmes to these teachers incorporating specific and multiple disability concepts.

Mainstream school, probably cannot cater for students with extreme disabilities. According to one of the interviewees, students with severe disabilities would pose problem of effective teaching because they take a lot of time and that is unfair for non-disable students.

- Limitations of the study have been highlighted and recommendations for directing future research have been made so that similar studies may be conducted after overcoming the limitations.
- The present study was confined to Dausa district another study conducted in other districts also.
- A comparative study can be undertaken whereby the knowledge, concerns and attitudes of pre-service teachers can be compared with in-service teachers concerns and attitudes of male and female teachers can also be compared.
- The study can be elaborated by increasing the size of sample.
- In the present study secondary school teachers were selected as sample further study can be undertaken by selecting higher sec. teacher and primary school teachers.
- Similar study can be planned to investigate knowledge concerns and attitudes of principals and administrators towards inclusion.
- In this study school teachers were selected as sample further study can be undertaken by selecting parents, students as sample.

Conclusion:

In conclusion it can be said that the subject area of 'Inclusive Education' is quite widely researched and investigated area in the broad field of education. It is also the most dominant trend of research and study in the field of Education in the contemporary times. The studies which first began in 1960s have shown no signs of ebbing and in recent times extensive studies on the subject of "Inclusive education" are being carried out the world over including in the developing countries and also in India.

The overall theme identified the research programme is closely related to teachers' awareness and their role in teaching. Inclusion is happening with insufficient understanding of the implications for teachers. Adequate education and continuous training creates increased motivation and capacity to self-actualization the teachers' meeting their professional needs.

Teachers in the study, view inclusive education as difficult, most of them agree that students with disabilities are placed into mainstream school. In this regard teachers are able to

experiment with different techniques and strategies to ensure that all students perform. Teachers in this category are the few with some experience teaching students with disabilities supported by better class room structures that appear to suit the need to students.

However, a student's level of disability may emerge as a factor shaping the attitudes of teachers to the inclusion of special needs students. Students with other disabilities other than mental and intellectual such as severe physical problems without disabled friendly structures and other facilities appear to force teachers to view the inclusion of such students with some apprehension. In this regard, a teacher commented.

Finally, we can say that research has also revealed that regular class teachers preferred to teach children with mild special needs and reject or ignore other who had profound or multiple disabilities (Stangvik, 1997). Therefore, the integration approach did not meet all the needs of the children with disabilities and a new approach was needed, so this is where the inclusive approach was introduced.

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