

A Study of Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education

Amit Kumar, Research Scholar, Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University, Jaipur

Dr. Manju Sharma, Professor, Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University, Jaipur

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the attitude of the teacher's towards inclusive education as the attitude of teachers or executors has a significant impact on the successful implementation of inclusive education. The population of the study comprised all pre-service and in-service teachers of the Gaya district of Bihar. Out of this population, a sample of 108 pre-service & in-service teachers (associated with primary and secondary school) were selected through quota sampling technique from 11 institutions (belonging to the government and private management system). We wish to discover teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education among their different demographic variables i.e. Mode of service, Gender, Locality. An attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education questionnaire, was used for data collection. The result shows that attitude of teachers towards inclusive education was moderate to a favorable level. Pre-service and urban teachers had a more positive/favorable attitude towards inclusive education than the attitude of In-service and rural teachers, respectively. In contrast, there was no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Attitude, Pre-service teachers, In-service teachers

Introduction

India is the biggest democratic country in the world. Being a quasi-federal nation, the core quality of its constitution, which is mentioned on the very first page i.e. preamble is justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all the citizens of the country. These core qualities would be only attainable by integrating peoples, all sections of society, by providing them inclusive education. Inclusive education aims to promote democratic principles and values and beliefs relating to equality and social justice to all.

Education is the biggest social equalizer but it becomes the biggest discriminatory tool when everyone is not included judiciously according to their special needs. We have seen that children with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups are not welcomed equally in the schools and are not given educational opportunities as per their differentiated needs.

They are considered to be a burden on society and the education system as well, which resulted in their exclusion from normal life and hence turning education against our constitutional values.

Moreover, the history of education shows that the education system from the beginning was divided into two systems of education, namely special education and general education. Those who have different disabilities were admitted to special schools and those who do not have any

kind of disability were enrolled in general schools. But this view has been changed over some time. Now Inclusive education has taken center stage all over the world, particularly in introducing educational reforms to prevent exclusionary practices. For the better nourishment of children with special needs and disabled many education reforms, policy amendments and different pedagogical strategies and practices have been adopted across the nation-states. Nowadays, inclusive education has become the best tool for social, political, and economic inclusions of children with special needs. It has become a matter of entitlement-a fundamental human right rather than a privilege or charity for children with different abilities.

Inclusive Education: This education system accommodates all learners, children, and young people with or without disabilities in a common education system to learn together in a conducive environment. It also talks about all stakeholders in the system such as learners, parents, community, teachers, administrators, and policymakers, to be comfortable with diversity and take it as an opportunity rather than a problem.

Inclusive education is not only associated with targeting excluded section of societies or children but also it welcomes diversity, benefiting all learners, providing equal access to education and making appropriate provisions for certain categories of children without excluding them. The definition highlights the point that inclusion is not about meeting the needs of the disabled at the expense of non-disabled but it is a reciprocal process that benefits both; UNESCO. Inclusive education comprehensively talked about the diversities among individuals. It does not only accept the children with special needs into the regular classroom but also accept their diversity, respect their individuality, create opportunities for full participation in every aspect of schooling so that they can reach up to their optimum potential.

Research Methodology

Today Inclusive Education is a widely accepted approach of the 21st century because it helps in unfolding the hidden potential of the students, ensure the right of every individual without any discrimination and make a universally inclusive environment for the maximum development of the children as we know that we all have equal rights despite much difference. Inclusive education felicitates the idea of acceptance; promotes wider social acceptance, peace, and cooperation.

The most important responsibility of the proper function of inclusive depends upon the involvement and cooperation of teachers, parents, and community leaders. To the successful implementation of inclusive education, a positive attitude is required. It may be of society, peers, parents of the children, teachers, administrator's etc. the most important for the successful implementation of an inclusive approach in the classroom depends upon the attitude of teachers. Therefore, prioritizing inclusive education as an integral part of the education system is not enough but the attitude of teachers for inclusion is equally important. Teacher's attitude is important for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education and contributing great

impact on the teaching-learning process in the classroom. Costello and Boyle (2013) and Goddard and Evans (2018) reported that primary pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were generally positive and strengthened across the training years. Monje (2017) found three distinct viewpoints that emerged on inclusion: Believers, Non-Believers and True Believers. The Believers and True believes both supported full-inclusion. The Non-Believers did not support full inclusion for all students with disabilities. The negative attitude of teachers towards IE affects teaching effectiveness & teaching-learning process of Students negatively and creates a hurdle for the success of Inclusive Education. Daane, BeirneSmith, and Latham (2000) suggested a need for proper training of teachers because teachers perceive themselves as unprepared for inclusive education because they lack appropriate training in this area. Khan, Hashmi and Khanum (2017) also recognized teachers' capacity as an essential component of inclusive education and recommended that inclusive education should be a part of pre-service and inservice teacher education. The majority of the teachers agreed that all students should be educated in the regular classroom and because of inclusive education, they improve academically and have a positive effect on social and emotional development. Both disabled and non-disable children got opportunities for mutual communication. 26.1% of the teachers were not sure about inclusive education practices. The studies finally conclude that attitude, concerns and perception of teachers towards Inclusive Education affect the implementation of it. Since the teachers' attitude has a significant contribution to successful implementation of inclusive education; therefore, the researcher wanted to investigate that:

What is the level of attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education?

- Is there any difference between Pre-service Teachers and In-service Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education?
- Is there any difference between Male and Female Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education?
- Is there any difference between Rural and Urban Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education?

Method and Procedure

The descriptive survey method was employed in this study. The population for the study consists of all pre-service and in-service teachers. Quota sampling technique was used for sampling purposes. The selected respondents (pre-service teachers and in-service teachers up to secondary schools) were working in government and private schools. A sample of 180 teachers from different educational institutions was taken.

To measure the attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education the researcher adopted the "Attitude towards Inclusive Education Rating Scale". The scale contains total of 42 items in which there were 25 negative statements and 17 positive statements. This scale deals with the four components of inclusive education i.e. basic philosophical issues, feasibility issues,

collaboration issues and perception towards children with special needs. It was a three-point Likert scale having three types of response options; Agree, Disagree and Neutral. A higher score on the attitude scale indicates a positive attitude towards inclusive education and fewer scores present a negative attitude towards inclusive education.

For collecting the data, the researcher visited the respondents and administered the questionnaire with clear instructions and confusions of the respondents were resolved. The raw data gathered from the respondents were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted statistically to check the normal distribution of attitude scores of teachers.

The obtained teachers' attitude scores on the attitude scale were distributed normally. The teachers' attitude scores on teachers' attitude scale towards inclusive education distributed approximately or nearer to the strong normal distribution. Hence, the distribution of the sample was fit for the parametric statistical calculation.

Discussion

This study was conducted to know the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The results of this study depict that there is moderate to a favourable attitude of teachers towards inclusive education this is due to might be the result of the inclusion of inclusive education in pre-service teacher programs and in-service teacher programs.

Another important observation deducted from the result that there is a significant difference in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education across their mode of service. This difference in results might be due to pre-service teachers are studying inclusive education as a semester-long course in their pre-service teacher training programs. In contrast, most in-service teachers have not studied inclusive education as a course in their training programs. They are limited to only attend some workshops regarding inclusive education. Another reason for this inconsistency in result might be the effect of the duration of the training attended. The result of the study showed a more favourable attitude of pre-service teachers on inclusive education in comparison to inservice teachers and also suggested the reason that teacher training courses made them more conscious towards inclusive education. The hypothesis (H02) not rejected indicates that no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education and sex does not play a significant role. Most of the study showed that male teachers had a more positive attitude towards inclusive education in comparison to female teachers. Female teachers were found to have more positive attitude towards inclusive education in comparison to male teachers. The third Hypothesis (H03) is not accepted and concluded a significant difference in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education across their locality. This might be due to the more exposure of urban teachers and they have more opportunities to access workshop, or seminars conducted online or offline in comparison to rural teachers. The result of this study is in congruence with other studies which too revealed that urban teachers had a more positive attitude towards inclusive education in comparison to rural teachers but significant

difference was not found about an attitude towards inclusive education among teachers about locale of the institution.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the teachers have moderate to favorable attitude towards inclusive education. Findings of this study provide evidence that pre-service teachers having a more favorable attitude towards inclusive education than the attitude of in-service teachers and gender of teachers does not affect their attitude towards inclusive education and both male and female teachers have the approximately same level of attitudes towards inclusive education. The findings of the present study led the researcher to conclude that urban teachers are a more favorable attitude towards inclusive education than rural teachers.

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