

A study on attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education

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Abstract

Teachers play a pivotal role for education of all type of children. Favourable and positive attitude of teachers towards children with disabilities is a major aspect of teaching-learning process and also for the growth and development of children with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. Hence, the present paper is justified to study the attitude of primary school teachers' towards inclusive education. For this, Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (constructed and standardised by Vishal Sood and Arati Anand) was used as a tool for collection of necessary data. Favourable and positive attitude of teachers is must for proper implementation of inclusive education in the educational institutions. It is found from the study that most of the teachers have moderate attitude towards inclusive education, male teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is higher than the female teachers, there is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers of primary school towards inclusive education, experience teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is slightly higher than the less experience teachers and there is no significant difference between the attitude of experienced and less experienced primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Keywords: attitude, primary school teacher, inclusive education

Introduction

Education is the core of equality and empowerment. Though the right to education and to equality of educational opportunities is guaranteed by the Constitution of India, it is disturbing to find that more than half of the population of children and youth with disability are denied these rights and do not receive adequate schooling in an appropriate environment. Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that provides all students with community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. Inclusive education, as an approach, seeks to address the learning needs of all children with a special focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. To be inclusive in education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belongingness with other students, teachers and support staff. One of the major goals of inclusion is to prepare students to participate as full and contributing members of society. Looking from a different perspective, inclusion does not mean 'dumping'. Rather it gives a message, "Everyone belongs to school and everyone is welcome to the school." Besides ensuring equity and equality in schools inclusive education is also a step towards ensuring right to education. Inclusive education is the need of the hour keeping in view the population explosion and availability of limited resources to meet out educational and other demands of all members of population. But, the success of this concept entirely depends on teachers, their commitment and attitude towards special children who are to be imparted education in inclusive settings. Although, the North eastern part of India has showed a marked progress in primary education over the last one or two decades, yet a large section of the society are still excluded from getting the benefits of primary education. Further, inclusive education has become a part of present educational policies worldwide.

However, the success of inclusive education largely depends on its stakeholders, such as teachers, communities, policy makers etc.

Literature Review

There were many studies undertaken which reveal the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. Few of them are mentioned below.

Horne & Timmons (2009) ^[5] found that most teachers were in favour of inclusion. Most felt they got needed support from the principal. However, teachers did feel that they lacked the adequate training needed to implement inclusion successfully. They also felt they were not given sufficient time to prepare and they needed more support in the form of smaller class size and assistance with modifying the curriculum.

Smitha and Acharya (2010) ^[9] found that teachers have unfavourable attitude towards inclusive education. Conclusively, it can be said that teachers' attitude towards disabled students, in particular and inclusive education, in general is the main pivot for making the concept of 'inclusion', a successful venture.

Rekha Chavhan (2013) ^[3] found that majority of pupil-teachers posses medium level of attitude towards inclusive education. It was seen from the results that there is significant difference between male and female student-teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education. Female student teacher has favourable Attitude towards Inclusive Education than male student teachers.

Shane and Christopher ^[8] (2013) conducted a study on "Secondary School Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education". The study was conducted on secondary school teachers including male, female, more experience and less experience teachers. The study found that there was no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers. However the experience of teachers have an

important bearing on their liking or disliking of inclusive education as statistically significant difference was found in the attitude of teachers having more experience. The more experience teachers' favoured inclusive setting.

Need of the Study

Inclusive education has evolved as a movement to challenge exclusionary policies and practices of general schools. The principle of inclusive education is all the children learn together wherever possible regardless of any difficulties and differences they may have. It is a fact that regular schools and regular classroom environment often fail to accommodate the educational needs of many students, especially individuals with disabilities. This is the reason that so many pupils with disabilities do not attend regular schools. Unit regular schools have developed capacity to cater to them; it is difficult to argue for inclusion. One of the major challenges to achieve this goal is the changing task and attitude of regular classroom teacher. Teachers play a pivotal role for education of all type of children. Favourable and positive attitude of teachers towards children with disabilities is a major aspect of teaching-learning process and also for the growth and development of children with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. Hence, the present paper is justified to study the attitude of primary school teachers' towards inclusive education.

Statement of the Problem

In view of the above facts, the investigator has tried to study the attitude of primary school teachers' towards inclusive education. Therefore, the title of the present investigation is "A Study on Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education".

Operational Definition of the Key Terms

Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. Under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students. Implementation of these practices varies. Schools most frequently use them for selected students with mild to severe special needs.

Primary School Teacher: Assistant teachers teaching in classes I-VIII of the Government primary schools established under the rules and regulations framed by the Government of

Assam are termed as Primary School Teachers. These schools are under the administrative control of Directorate of Primary Education within the state of Assam. In this study, the teachers who teach in class I-V are termed as primary school teachers.

Attitude: The term 'attitude' represents individual feeling for or against something. In other words the degree of feeling of favourableness and unfavourableness towards some objects, person, group and ideas is called attitude.

Objectives of the Study

Main objectives of this study are:

1. To study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education.
2. To compare the attitude of male and female teachers of primary school towards inclusive education.
3. To compare the attitude of experienced (up to 10 years) and less experienced (11 years to beyond) primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Hypotheses of the Study

On the basis of 2nd and 3rd objectives, following hypotheses are formulated:

H₁: There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers of primary school towards inclusive education.

H₂: There is no significant difference between the attitude of experienced and less experienced primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Methodology

Selection of Research Method

The Descriptive Survey Method has been applied for the present study. This method is designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of the phenomena and to draw valid general conclusions from the facts discovered.

Population and Sample

All the primary school teachers of Rampur Block of Kamrup district are the population of this present study. Out of these, 160 teachers are selected for this study by using stratified random sampling technique. Following diagram shows the sample of the study:

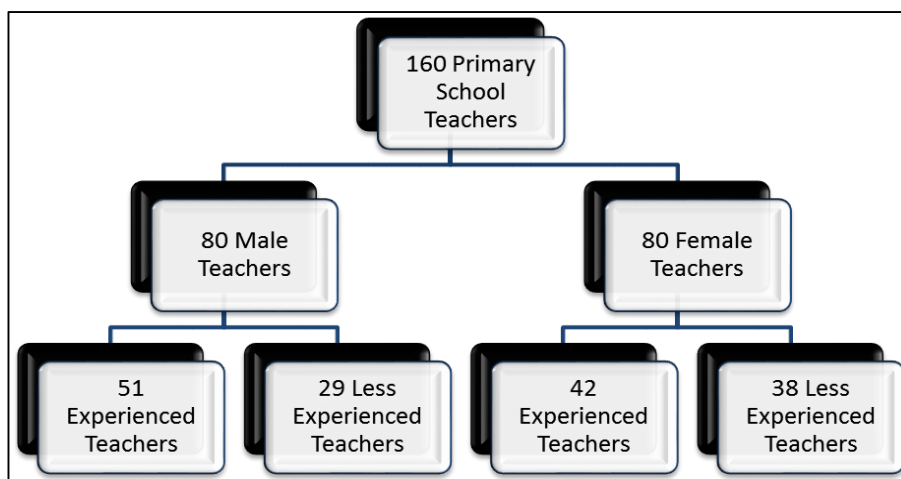


Fig 1

Tool Used

Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (constructed and standardized by Vishal Sood and Arati Anand)^[10] is used as a tool for collection of necessary data. In this scale, there are four areas namely Psychological /Behavioral, Social and parents related, Curricular and co-curricular and Administrative. The scale was three points having the responses ‘Agree’, ‘Undecided’ and ‘Disagree’. The scale consisted of 47 items in which 29 items are favorable and 18 are unfavorable. The reliability of the scale was 0.82 which is computed by Test-Retest method and has Content, Cross, Item and Intrinsic validity.

Statistical Support

The data are mainly analyzed in terms of Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation and ‘t’ test.

Delimitation of the Study

Keeping time and resource constraints in view, the study is delimited to Government Primary Schools of Rampur Block of Kamrup district.

Analysis and Interpretation

The resulting data are analysed objective wise by using appropriate statistical treatment. The results have been explained below.

O₁: To study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 1: Level of Primary School Teachers’ Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Range of Raw Scores	Level of Attitude	Frequency	%
127 and above	Extremely Favourable	0	-
116-126	Most Favourable	7	4.37
105-115	Above Average Favourable	21	13.13
90-104	Moderate Favourable	99	61.88
80-89	Below Average Favourable	12	7.50
69-79	Most Unfavourable	14	8.75
68 and below	Extremely Unfavourable	7	4.37

Table-1 reveals that 4.37% of the teachers are of most favourable attitude category towards inclusive education whereas 13.13% are of above average favourable attitude category, 61.88% are of moderate favourable attitude category and 7.5% are of below average favourable category attitude towards inclusive education. Again 8.75% teachers are of most

unfavourable category and 4.37% are of extremely unfavourable attitude category towards inclusive education.

O₂: To compare the attitude of male and female teachers of primary school towards inclusive education.

H₁: There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers of primary school towards inclusive education.

Table 2: Comparison of Male and Female Primary School Teachers’ Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Remarks
Male	80	95.85	12.56	0.23	Not Significant
Female	80	93.60	11.12		

It is found from the table that Mean and Standard Deviation of male teachers are 95.85 and 12.56 respectively. Similarly same for female teachers are 93.60 and 11.12 respectively. The obtained t-value 0.23 is less than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. It indicates no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers of primary school towards inclusive education at 0.05 level of significance.

O₃: To compare the attitude of experienced (up to 10 years) and less experienced (11 years to beyond) primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

H₂: There is no significant difference between the attitude of experienced and less experienced primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 3: Comparison of Experienced and Less Experienced Primary School Teachers’ Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Teaching Experience	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Remarks
Experienced	93	95.07	12.45	0.65	Not Significant
Less Experienced	67	94.23	11.10		

It is found from the table that Mean and Standard Deviation of experienced teachers are 95.07 and 12.45 respectively. Similarly same for less experienced teachers are 94.23 and 11.10 respectively. The obtained t-value 0.65 is less than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. It indicates no significant difference between the attitude of experienced and

less experienced primary school teachers towards inclusive education at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings and Discussion

Major findings of this study are:

1. Most of the teachers have moderate attitude towards inclusive education and not a single teacher’s attitude

towards inclusive education is under extremely favourable category.

2. Male teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is higher than the female teachers. Again there is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers of primary school towards inclusive education. Hence the 1st null hypothesis is accepted here. The finding was in conformity with the study of Shane and Christopher (2013) [8].
3. Experience teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is slightly higher than the less experience teachers. Again there is no significant difference between the attitude of experienced and less experienced primary school teachers towards inclusive education. Hence the 2nd null hypothesis is accepted here. The finding was not in conformity with the study of Shane and Christopher (2013) [8].

From the findings of this study it is revealed that gender and experience are not determining factors regarding attitude of primary teachers towards inclusive education. For developing the attitude of primary school teachers, following suggestions are made by the investigator:

- To develop the attitude, in-service training should be provided for primary school teachers in the concept of inclusive education.
- School authorities should organised brain storming programmes for primary school teachers.
- The salaries of those teachers teaching the disabled student should be provide higher salary for motivation.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is said that teacher is the key person to implement the inclusive education effectively in schools. Thus, it is very necessary to develop knowledge and skills to operate inclusion. Thus, an endeavour should be made to develop in teachers, the necessary attitude, skills and competencies required to deal effectively with children with various special educational needs. The teachers with favourable attitude towards inclusive education will help in achieving that goal.

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