

“Inclusion: Teachers’ Attitude towards Educating Differently Able Children”

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ABSTRACT

Indian constitution constitute certain fundamental rights which are not restricted for few but applied to all the Indian citizens irrespective of caste and creed. One such rights is, rights to education which intends to provide education to all students regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic and other impairments under same roof, which in term has given rise to a new approach called inclusive education which rejects the use of special schools for differently able students thus including them under the regular mainstream. In view of the fact that children with disabilities form one of the largest groups that are still outside the fold of the general education system, the scheme provides an opportunity for children with disabilities, who have completed eight years of elementary education to continue their education in regular schools at the secondary level in inclusive environment up to age of 18 years. Thus, when policies are made to educate disabled children along with normal under the same roof, do the teachers who are used to teach regular normal children are willing to teach differently abled ones under regular class room settings is a major issue as teachers’ are the heart in inclusive settings. Therefore the present paper aims to highlight the attitude of teachers’ towards educating differently able students in the existing educational settings. It also suggest how education for differently able can be made effective in Indian context.

KEY WORDS

Inclusion, Attitude, Differently able.

INTRODUCTION

“If special children are unable to move towards education, the education should go towards them”- Swami Vivekananda.

As the voice of education for all has been raised, the next thing to be considered is regarding those who are somehow missing these rights, and those missing are found to be differently abled ones. As all the children whether they are disabled or not have rights to education, as they are the future citizens of our nation. A new approach called inclusive education has come up to educate such children. Geoff Lindsay (2007) suggests that ‘inclusive education/mainstreaming are the key policy objective for education of children and young people with disabilities’. Inclusion means educating disabled with abled children under same settings irrespective of their differences and diversities and the next which bothers is teacher’s attitude and their teaching willingness towards them.

Education for differently abled is been considering from post independence period. British chief educational advisor John Sargent, in his Sargent Report (1944) recommended not neglecting education for handicaps. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) Kothari Commission, also emphasized education

of children with disability should be an inseparable part of the general education system. National Policy on education was adopted by Indian parliament in 1986, which also emphasized the removal of disparities and ensuring equalization of educational opportunities. The right to education act, which was drafted in 2005 but came into full effect from 2010, the Supreme Court, upheld the constitutionality of the act in 2012. This act included people with disability. Thus the parliament of India has passed several legislation for safeguarding the rights of the disabled person in India. This shows that Indian Government is doing remarkable effort to uplift individuals with disabilities by trying to improve their educational system and making it completely inclusive. Thus inclusive is very essential as it helps in building equal society where several single individual is given equal rights. Without inclusion we cannot promote the wellbeing of differently abled children. The only question which comes before us is the attitude of teachers’ towards such individuals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion indicates that they are generally mixed. While a vast majority of teachers have supported the principle of inclusive education, they have voiced some concerns as well. Reasons cited for the lack of supportive attitudes among teachers include apprehension about their lack of ability to accommodate students with disabilities in their classrooms, the lack of planning time to design and implement appropriate instruction for these children (Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003), the lack of administrative support and instructional material (especially assistive technology), and inability to manage student behaviour (Forlin, 2004). Several studies using both quantitative and qualitative studies have examined teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about students with disabilities and inclusive education (e.g. Agbenyega (2007; Wall, 2002; Opdal & Wormnaes, 2001; Balboni and Pedrabissi, 2000; Chiang, 1999; Cornoldi et al., 1998; Brantlinger, 1996; Minke et al., 1996; Villa et al., 1996; Fulk & Hirth, 1994; Giangreco et al., 1993; Gerber, 1992). These studies conclude that attitudes and concerns of teachers affect their acceptance and commitment to implementing inclusion. It is widely accepted that regular classroom teachers'

positive attitudes and acceptance of inclusive educational programs are central to their successful implementation (Beacham & Rouse, 2012; Bhatnagar & Das, 2014; Das, Kuyini, & Desai, 2013; Hettiarachchi & Das, 2014). Disabled children have equal right to get education as per their needs and capability. Inclusive education entails 'increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools' (Booth and Ainscow, 1998). Booth (1996) described inclusive education as addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. UNESCO (2003) developmental approach that '...seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion'. (Ashima Das) says, another strong barrier which the children perceived was the attitude of regular teachers. The interviews with regular teachers revealed that the teachers did not have appropriate exposure in dealing with children with disabilities during their pre-service training and therefore, lacked appropriate attitude and sensitivity. Researchers including Das,

Gichuru, et al. (2013), Forlin (2004), and others argue that teachers' knowledge and skills, together with their attitudes and beliefs, are crucial in the development of inclusive practice. Researchers have concluded that the teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education are affected by variables such as their age, position, professional experience, contact with a person with a disability, type and severity of a child's disability, support from administrators, availability of related services such as a speech therapist, teacher's knowledge of inclusion procedures, and exposure to pre-service or in-service training in special education (Beacham & Rouse, 2012; Das, Gichuru, et al., 2013; Das, Kuyini, et al., 2013; Forlin, 2004; Sharma, 2001).

OBJECTIVES

To know the attitude of school teachers' towards differently able children (inclusive education).

METHOD

Descriptive study was adopted using survey method.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

For collecting the requisite data, 60 High School teachers' was selected.

TOOL

The data was collected from teachers' by administering questionnaire "Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale."

PROCEDURE

For the present study the researcher visited various high schools of Gulbarga city after obtaining the permission of head master and head mistress, questionnaire on "Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale" was given to teachers', and next day it was collected back and based on the responses, analysis was carried out and high responses was considered and tabulated.

DISCUSSION

TEACHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SCALE

NOTE: A-Agree, UD- Unable to Decide, DA- Dis-Agree.

Sl No	ITEMS	A	UD	DA
01	Students who cannot move without help from others should be in regular classroom.	39	06	15
02	Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes.	24	12	24
03	Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes.	54	-	06
04	Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes.	36	06	18
05	Students who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and mathematics skills should be in regular classes.	45	12	03
06	Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes.	24	06	30
07	Students who are physically aggressive towards their peers should be in regular classes.	27	12	21
08	Students who cannot control their behaviour and disrupt activities should be in regular classes.	15	09	36
09	Students who do not follow school rules for conduct should be in regular classes.	21	03	36
10	Students who are frequently absent from school should be in regular classes.	21	12	27
11	Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.	48	06	06
12	Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.	42	09	09
13	Students who are verbally aggressive towards their peers should be in regular classes.	12	06	42
14	Students who have difficulty in expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.	42	15	03
15	Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.	39	12	09

Above table reveals out of 60 teachers, 54 teachers' agree to have students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living to be in regular classes, 48 teachers' agree to have shy and withdrawal students to be in regular classes, 45 teachers' agree to have students who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and mathematics skills to be in regular classes, 42 teachers' agree to have students with speech difficulty and who have difficulty in expressing their thoughts verbally to be in regular classes. Students who cannot move without help from others and whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below the other students in the grade to be in regular classes is agreed by 39 teachers'. 42 teachers' disagree to keep students who are verbally aggressive towards their peers to be in regular class room. 36 teachers' disagree to have students who cannot control their behaviour and disrupt activities and also who do not follow school rules for conduct to be in regular classes. 27 teachers' disagree to have students who remains frequently absent from school to be in regular classroom. 30 teachers' have disagreed to keep students who cannot hear conversational speech to be in regular classes. Out of 60 teachers' 24 teachers' agrees and equally 24 teachers disagrees to

have students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille to be in regular classes. 36 teachers' agree to have students who use sign language or communication boards to be in regular classroom. Out of 60 teachers' 27 teachers agrees to keep students who are physically aggressive towards their peers to be in class room, while 21 teachers' disagree with the same.

SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, the teachers' has expressed neutral attitude towards the practice of inclusive. It can be suggested that differently abled children should be treated equally as the normal children and instead of looking them in sympathy their talents and abilities should be recognised for their self-respect and welfare of the society.

- It should be made compulsory to all schools, teacher training institutions, and other educational institute to celebrate world differently abled day on 3rd of December every year in order to create awareness and to develop positive attitude towards special childrens'.
- It is best suggested that the teachers to be trained during their training period in special children

needs, so that they will not face difficulty in handling them in inclusive setting.

- It can also be suggested that student teachers to have some practical lessons in special schools during their training period.
- B.Ed curriculum should involve certain subjects on special needs for disable to strengthen student teachers attitude favoring inclusion positively.
- Teacher education programme should emphasis largely on developing teachers' awareness of special children and its diagnostic aspects.
- Orientation and workshops programmes should be organize at district, state and national level by inviting experts to train teachers' in identifying learning needs of differently able children, to identify their strengths and weaknesses, in developing teaching plan and teaching aids with locally available materials for an inclusive classroom.
- Teacher's attitudes, available instructions time, the knowledge and skills of teachers and the teaching methods and materials on

hand seem to be important prerequisites for special needs teaching in regular setting, thus teachers' should be trained in intensive way to meet the special children needs.

- Inclusive schools need to make efforts to introduce and provide for relevant alternative activities for children with disabilities when their classmates engage in activities which disabled children cannot participate in. Computer games, art and craft classes, additional music classes or any special skills class where the child displays interest could be arranged as alternative activities.
- Children with disabilities have an equal right for education as laid out by the current education act. Therefore any School offering education to children with disabilities should be able to provide equal facilities to children with disabilities on par with facilities offered to their nondisabled peers.
- When a school plans to introduces an inclusive environment, it would be beneficial for at least the teachers who would be handling inclusive classes to be given some

orientation and special training to equip them to cope with disabled children's.

- It is also crucial important that the teachers are psychologically prepared to teach a class comprised of diverse students. The positive attitudes of teachers toward all students and the general climate they establish in the classroom have a major effect on the academic and social achievement of all students, especially those with disabilities.

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