

A STUDY OF ATTITUDE OF THE SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Introduction

Inclusionary practices in the school system mean that more and more teachers are being involved in the teaching of children with a variety of disabilities in the regular classroom. Evidence supports the fact that early placement in an inclusive setting, with an individualized programme, will be beneficial to a child providing that adequate resources and qualified personnel are available. Perhaps the most critical factors for successful inclusion are the attitude of the teacher, the learning environment including resources, and peer acceptance which is partly dependent upon teacher attitude. The role that attitudes of non disabled persons play in the lives of people with disabilities is an important area to understand because negative attitudes might limit the integration of disabled people in the community. Therefore, the purpose of my research study is to examine the attitude of teachers in regular schools handling non-disabled children.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

Overall many of the fore mentioned studies on the inclusive education concluded that research in this area is more important because disabled people are more affected by their near and dear ones like relatives, friends, peers and teachers or professionals. Teacher has a tremendous effect on her students her thoughts, her voice, her attitude, her gestures; in fact her very being can motivate the students to do well. Hence it is very important to know what the teacher feels about the decision of inclusive education. Is the teacher ready for inclusion? Does the teacher have the sound knowledge about the students' disabilities? Is the teacher ready to accommodate these students in regular process of teaching and learning? To find answers these questions provoked the investigator to take up the present study.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

1. To study the attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education.
2. To ascertain the relationship between the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education on the basis of some correlates.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education.
2. To ascertain the relationship between attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their teaching experience.
3. To ascertain the relationship between attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their age.
4. To ascertain the relationship between attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and training in inclusive education.

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant relationship between attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their teaching experience.
2. There is no significant relationship between attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their age.
3. There is no significant relationship between attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and training in inclusive education.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study the researcher used the descriptive method as there was no manipulation of the variables like the age, teaching experience, attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education which was studied in its natural settings.

In the present study Correlational method is used to ascertain the relationship between :-

- Attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their teaching experience.
- Attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their age.
- Attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and training in inclusive education.

SAMPLING

- From the list of the English medium schools situated in Mumbai the researcher randomly selected 10 schools for data collection.

NATURE AND SIZE OF THE SAMPLE

- The total sample consisted of 160 teachers.

TOOLS

The researcher prepared the following tools:-

- Personal data sheet
- Rating scale to measure the Attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:-

- The statistical technique used to test the hypothesis was Pearson's product moment coefficient of correlation.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.

It was found that there is a significant relationship in the attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their teaching experience. Teachers who have more number of teaching experiences mostly do not show a positive attitude towards inclusive education. It is always seen that the older people resist any change in the system. Thus it was found that teachers with teaching experience for 1 to 5 years were positive towards the idea of inclusive education.

It was found that there is a significant relationship in the attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and their age. Teachers who are young showed very high scores for the attitude scale which indicates that young generation is always ready to face new challenges.

It was found that there is no significant relationship in the attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education and training in inclusive education. Teachers attitude were not influenced by the training acquired or not in inclusive education.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS:-

The teachers with a positive attitude towards inclusion can help the students to overcome the difficulties and succeed in every walk of their lives. For the teachers to perform effectively the administrators can reduce the number of students in the classroom and relieve the teachers of the other clerical responsibilities which can be handled by others. The teachers can set living example by helping the special students which may motivate those with a negative attitude.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SCHOOLS.-

The most important barrier in the implementation of inclusive education is that the teachers are not sensitized and oriented towards the concept of inclusion. The schools can conduct small workshops where they can provide the teachers with the basic information about students with different needs which will gradually result in a shift of opinion. The teachers should be encouraged for professional development in the area of inclusive education by taking up small certificate or diploma courses offered by IGNOU for keeping them abreast in the field of special education for children with special needs. The teachers should not be overloaded with too many responsibilities. The number of students in the classrooms should be limited. The teachers can be provided with an assistant teacher in the classroom who has specialized in the area of special education. Schools can appoint professionals and special educators also. The schools need to work in collaboration with the parents, community and professionals to implement inclusion successfully. It is also seen that teachers are very poorly paid and that could be one of the reasons why teachers do not want to take up additional responsibilities.

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Training institutions need to include units of work on children with special needs into their core curricula. The attitudes of teachers towards people with disability are of the utmost importance if equitable access is to be ensured for all children. There is little doubt that teachers are going to be required to cater for the needs of children with many diverse abilities and in particular of children with disabilities in their regular classrooms. Consequently, there is an urgent need to ensure that education courses at universities consider the existing attitudes of pre-service teachers and identify ways to make teachers as positive as possible towards people with disabilities.

If positive attitudes are to be developed, teacher skills and competencies need consideration and support in education courses. Teacher education programs need to refer to the development and role of attitudes, identify and analyze the variables that lead to positive attitudes, and provide pre-service teachers with a range of opportunities to develop positive attitudes.

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