



ASSESSMENT OF 'TEACHER'S INCLUSIVE PRACTICE SCALE' (TIPS) FOR INVESTIGATING THE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES OF TEACHERS WORKING IN THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

The National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century education.

The National Education Policy 2020 envisages an inclusive and structural change in the educational system. It focuses on 'Equitable and Inclusive Education' which reverberates the idea that no child should be left behind in terms of educational opportunity because of their background and socio-cultural identities.

This paper is an attempt to discuss the new provisional changes for Inclusive Education in NEP 2020 and its success depends on various other factors such as Teacher's efficacy viewed as a key ingredient to create successful inclusive classroom environments. The internal consistency and item-correlation of assessment tool 'Teacher's Inclusive Practice Scale' (TIPS) used for investigating the inclusive practices of teacher's working in the inclusive schools has been discussed.

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Introduction:

Inclusive education has been evolving as a universal concept that stands in the centre of discussion and debates in the field of special education in the past decades (Meijer, 2003). The full inclusion proponents even advocated an elimination of all special schools and classes. The other major task of special schools is to constitute the 'backbone' of the local special education system by serving as resource centers to provide technical assistance to learning in regular classroom programmes including disability identification, teacher training, consultation,

professional guidance, quality supervision and so on (Xiao, 2007). However, special schools generally fail to play such roles due to the lack of resources and co-ordination between special and regular education systems (Sun, 2013). Regular schools focus on preparing able students for better performance in various examinations and very seldom view education for students with disabilities as one of their major responsibilities. The major complaints from regular schools are that professionals from special schools do not understand the routines of regular education and often present as a barrier instead of a facilitator for the



actual teaching in regular classrooms (Piao, 2004). In fact, regular schools are more interested in dumping students who have disabilities and difficulties in learning and behaviour to special schools instead of co-ordinating with them to better serve students with disabilities in regular classrooms (Feng, 2010) The needs of children with disabilities have often been neglected intentionally in mainstream classrooms and some would even have been sent home because teachers are concerned that they may disturb other students and take up teachers' time.

The inclusive education movement has led to the transformation from segregated education placement (e.g., residential institutions, special schools and classes) to more inclusive educational settings such as a continuum of service model and a single full-time general classroom placement for all students (Salend, 2011). However, beyond the inclusive rhetoric are controversial and problematic practices. The move towards inclusive education in various countries has been largely underpinned by its specific cultural values and conflicts between the pursuit of academic excellence and new goal of universalizing basic education for all (Deng and Poon-Mcbrayer, 2012). The boundaries between special and regular schools are enlarged. On the one hand as they tend to develop as very different systems and on the other hand, the boundaries are blurred meanwhile as including children with disabilities into regular schools have evolved as a common practice and special schools try to be linked with regular schools by playing a supporting role

Inclusive Education in India:

The need for a change in education system in India has been felt for a long time. However, this feeling became stronger during the Covid-19 pandemic when we saw how students from disadvantaged groups suffered as we moved to an online model of learning. Integration of special needs children with other groups

was emphasized in both the Programme of Action (1992) and the National Policy on Education (1986). “To integrate the physically and mentally challenged with the general population as equal partners, to prepare them for normal growth, and to enable them to confront life with courage and confidence,” was the stated goal.

The same has also been discussed in National Curriculum Framework of 2005, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), and other initiatives. However, new ways of imagining this integration were needed. This is where New Education Policy comes in.

Having said that, what we can see that various policy documents have outlined the need for inclusive education. But the questions remains if we have achieved anything significant in this direction? As mentioned above, Covid-19 exposed many limitations in our education system.

There were reports of disabled students not being able to access education as the online learning mode wasn't equipped for their needs. Students from economically disadvantaged groups also suffered the most during this period.

The New Education Policy, 2020 (NEP) was launched with a vision of transforming the education system in India. The initiative has been hailed as a positive step in the direction of bringing necessary changes in the education system. Before the introduction of the National Education Policy, the Indian education system was governed by the 1986 NEP and Right to Education (RTI) act of 2009. This meant that there was a huge gap between what was needed and what was being delivered.

For this very reason itself, the National Education Policy becomes extremely crucial. As per the official document of Government of India, the NEP 2020 addresses many concerns related to primary, secondary, higher, and technical education in the



country.

The New Education Policy document states that there is a special emphasis on socially and economically disadvantaged groups to make education “Equitable and Inclusive Education” which reverberates the idea that no child should be left behind in terms of educational opportunity because of their background and socio-cultural identities. Therefore, we can safely say that there is an immediate need for change in education system in India and make it more inclusive.

The NEP education system may or may not be able to address this. Its success depends on various other factors. Teacher efficacy can be viewed as a key ingredient to create successful, inclusive classroom environments.

Review of Literature:

Teacher’s efficacy towards inclusive education:

Gibson and Dembo (1984) found significant differences in the teaching practices of high efficacious and low efficacious teachers. They suggested that High teacher efficacy can be viewed as a key ingredient to create successful inclusive classroom environments.

Studies shows that self-efficacy effect on teachers’ decision process, academic motivation, learning and academic achievement. At the same time, it is proven by researchers that teachers’ self efficacy can change services in education effectively (Karacaoğlu, 2008).

General education teachers tend to have negative perceptions about inclusion (Cochran 1998; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Familia-Garcia 2001)

Lack of teacher training in inclusive practices could have a negative impact on the academic success of students with disabilities in school (Fuchs & Sayeski, 2009)

Hussien and Qaryouti (2014) investigated teachers’ preference toward inclusive education settings. It was found that general education teachers had lower levels of self-efficacy than special education teachers.

Hence, it can be assumed that teachers with different self-efficacy will impact children’s learning differently. With respect to inclusive education both general and resource teachers are accountable for many essential functions in the classrooms.

A study has been carried out to investigating the inclusive practice of teachers working in inclusive schools in Kolkata using developed tool ‘Teacher’s Inclusive Practice Scale’ (TIPS).

Objective:

Assessment of internal consistency and item-correlation of assessment tool ‘Teacher’s Inclusive Practice Scale’ (TIPS) used for investigating the teacher’s inclusive practices working in the inclusive schools.

Methods:

Study Design: Construction of tool

Participants: 10 Teachers with 10 years experience working in the inclusive schools has been taken for this study

Procedure- The tool has been developed to study the teacher’s efficacy for inclusive practices based upon the Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE), developed by Florida Inclusion Network, State of Florida Department of Education (FDOE, 2013)

The teacher’s attitude towards inclusive education and indicators has been taken from three domains:

- i) Leadership and decision making
- ii) Communication and collaboration.
- iii) Instruction and student achievement.

Item review:

To assess the tool's content validity, the item pool was reviewed by a panel of experts.

A content validity ratio (CVR) was then derived for each item by calculating the proportion of experts who rated the item “relevant” or “not relevant” and for the whole tool by calculating the proportion of the total number of items, that were rated valid. The item



review step resulted in 43-item based on four domains: Teacher's attitude regarding inclusive education (15 questions), leadership and decision making (12 questions), communication and collaboration (8 questions), Instruction and student achievement (8

questions), Item design was based on a 5-point Likert scale in which '5' corresponded to "strongly disagree," 4 – "somewhat disagree," 3 – "Neither agree nor disagree," 2 – "Somewhat agree," and 1 – "strongly agree."

Item level statistical characteristics

Table-1

| Sl. No. | Domain/ Indicators | No. of Items (n) | Ranges of Item mean | Ranges of item SD | Ranges of item Skewness |
|---------|--|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Teacher's Attitude Regarding Inclusive Education | 15 | 1.33, 2.40 | 0.48, 1.75 | 0.3, 2.6 |
| 2. | Leadership and Decision Making | 12 | 1.23, 2.23 | 0.00, 0.90 | -0.8, 3.4 |
| 3. | Communication and Collaboration | 8 | 1.12, 2.25 | 0.35, 1.06 | -0.6, 2.8 |
| 4. | Instruction and Student Achievement | 8 | 1.0, 1.5 | 0.00, 0.92 | 1.4, 2.8 |

Scale level statistical characteristics

Table-2

| Sl. No. | Domain/ Indicators | No. of Items (n) | Mean | SD | Ranges |
|---------|--|------------------|-------|------|--------|
| 1. | Teacher's Attitude Regarding Inclusive Education | 15 | 19.33 | 9.61 | 20, 36 |
| 2. | Leadership and Decision Making | 12 | 17.28 | 5.33 | 12, 20 |
| 3. | Communication and Collaboration | 8 | 17.87 | 8.28 | 9, 18 |
| 4. | Instruction and Student Achievement | 8 | 10.26 | 1.27 | 8, 12 |

Statistical analysis:

Internal consistency was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha (α), a widely used measure of variability. All domains and scores were assessed using this approach, and Cronbach's α values >0.70 were considered satisfactory.



Table-3

| Sl. No. | Domain/ Indicators | No. of Items | Inter Item Agreement Score | Correlation |
|---------|--|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Teacher's Attitude Regarding Inclusive Education | 1to 15 | 0.83 | high |
| 2. | Leadership and Decision Making | 1 to 12 | 0.76 | high |
| 3. | Communication and Collaboration | 1 to 8 | 0.79 | high |
| 4. | Instruction and Student Achievement | 1 to 8 | 0.88 | high |

Internal consistency:

Cronbach's α values (Table 1) were above the threshold of 0.70 and ranged from 0.76 to 0.88 across the domains of the items of the teacher's inclusive practice scale (TIPS). The items in all domains/indicators viz . 1) Teacher's attitude regarding inclusive education, 2) leadership and decision making, 3) communication and collaboration, 4) Instruction and student achievement, used in this study demonstrated fair to high internal consistency.

The current analysis of data from the present study supports the TIPS tool as appropriate to use for investigating the inclusive practice of teachers working in the inclusive school. Overall, the tools used exhibited sufficient internal consistency, with the majority of Cronbach's α scores falling between 0.76 and 0.88. These scores represent fair to high levels of domain score correlation.

Implications & Recommendations:

The successful implementation of inclusive education as per of NEP 2020, the Teacher's efficacy also viewed as a key ingredient to create successful inclusive classroom environments.

The developed tool (TIPS) of this study can be used for investigating the inclusive practice of teachers working

in the inclusive and general school and suggest its findings essential to work towards capacity building of general teachers in order to achieve the goals of inclusive education. Hence, the implications are geared towards drawing attention of both policy makers and curriculum designers to take appropriate measures in all mainstream schools and also give more opportunities for general teachers to learn about diverse learners especially those with disabilities. The present study was limited to one school. Periodic studies and documentation of teacher's efficacy should form a regular feature by all the state education departments. This will be beneficial in enhancing the self-efficacy of teachers and help foster inclusive pedagogical practices.

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