

A Study on Perception of the School Teachers towards Inclusive Education and Need of Teacher's Training for Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Inclusion is the buzzword of present age. The dynamism of the field of education indicates that it has to accommodate and facilitate learners from various backgrounds. The essence of inclusive education lies in including children from any background or any special category with the mainstream. In most cases, inclusion of children with special needs is the issue. But this is not possible only through policies. The policies are to be implemented in real sense by the ground-workers, i.e. the teachers. Therefore, orienting the teachers in inclusive education is also an integral part of providing quality education to everyone. The present study will provide a ground report of the inclusive practices of the teachers in the schools of Assam and an understanding of the requirement of teacher-training in this regard. Survey method was used for the study and 300 hundred teachers from six districts of Assam were given a self-structured questionnaire to assess their perception towards inclusive education and also being assessed the training need for teachers for successful implementation of inclusive education in schools. The results of the showed that teachers were possessed a clear perception regarding the needs and importance of inclusive practices in schools but they equally emphasized appropriate training for teachers on inclusive education.

Key words: Inclusive Education, Inclusive practices, Teacher training

1.0 Introduction

Inclusive education has taken a front position in the recent times. Implementing inclusive education in schools depends to a large extent on the teachers and therefore on teacher education. The Gazette notification on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016 (Ministry of Law and Justice) pointed out that the appropriate Government and local authorities shall endeavour that all educational institutions funded or recognized by them provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities. Also it is clearly quoted that "Inclusive education means a system of education wherein students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities." This may be done by adopting suitable teaching learning strategies and making the presentation simple, concrete and interesting so that the teachers who deal with children with special needs are fully equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitude required for inclusive education.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Inclusion is the buzzword of present age. The dynamism of the field of education indicates that it has to accommodate and facilitate learners from various backgrounds. The essence of inclusive education lies in including children from any background or any special category with the mainstream. In most cases, inclusion of

children with special needs is the issue. But this is not possible only through policies. The policies are to be implemented in real sense by the ground-workers, i.e. the teachers. Therefore, orienting the teachers in inclusive education is also an integral part of providing quality education to everyone. As stated above the Gazette notification on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016 pointed out that all educational institution funded by Government and local authorities should provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities. The present study will provide a ground report of the inclusive practices of the teachers in the schools of Assam and an understanding of the requirement of teacher-training in this regard.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

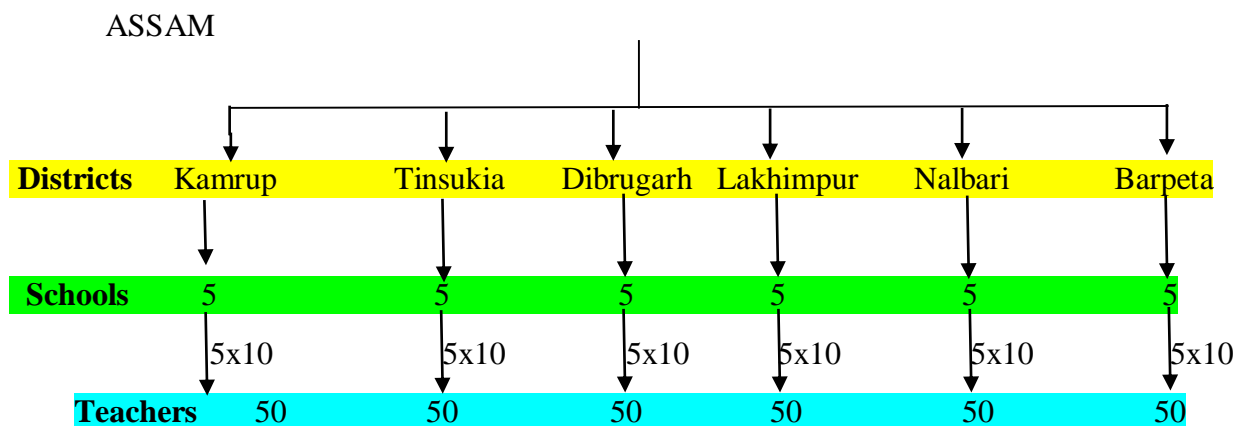
- (1) To study the perception of the school teachers about inclusive education.
- (2) To study the opinion of the teachers regarding knowledge and skills required in order to implement inclusive education.
- (3) To find out the programmes available for teacher training in inclusive education.
- (4) To assess the requirement of training of teachers in inclusive education.

1.3 Methodology

The survey study is carried out by collecting primary data from the teachers of elementary and secondary schools of Assam.

- (a) **Population:** All the teachers working in the elementary and secondary schools of six selected districts of Assam constitute the population of the study.
- (b) **Sample:** In this study, out of 33 districts of Assam, 6 districts were selected using convenient sampling. A sample of 300 school teachers has been selected randomly from 30 numbers of schools belonging to these six districts. The detail about the sample is shown in Figure 1.0.

Figure 1.0: Sampling of Teachers for Inclusive Education



- (c) **Tools for data collection:** For data collection, a self-constructed questionnaire was administered on the teachers of schools. The questionnaire is consisted of thirty one items.

1.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

A questionnaire on inclusive education was administered on the teachers for collecting data to study the perception of inclusion in schools.

From the analysis of the data, it has been found that 48 per cent teachers do not believe that every child regardless of any special need has the right to be educated in the regular class and 34 per cent teachers believe that every child regardless of disabilities has the right to be educated in the regular class. However, 14 per cent teachers said that inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classroom is beneficial to other students. Only 8 per cent teachers think students with special needs will benefit from the inclusive programme in regular classroom. 82 per cent teachers feel that inclusion won't work at any school that has too many learners in a class. Only 18 per cent teachers said that learners requiring specialized academic support gain confidence in a mainstream environment.

Only 12 per cent teachers agreed that inclusive education is the best way to ensure equality of provision of education. Only 6 per cent teachers think that they have the important skills that are necessary to implement inclusive education.

Again, 92 per cent teachers have said that successful implementation of inclusive education requires special training for teachers. 74 per cent teachers are ready to support inclusive education if they get training for the same.

Similarly, 90 per cent teachers have indicated lack of resources as a barrier to implement inclusive education. Increase in workload of the teachers for implementation of inclusive education has been indicated positive by 77 per cent teachers. 93 per cent teachers feel that learners requiring special academic support disrupt the flow of normal lesson. 81 per cent teachers supports that such learners should remain in specialized or remedial schooling. Only 18 per cent teachers feel that inclusion provides an opportunity for the learners to become accustomed to a variety of people in a situation that is similar to the outside world.

For the implementation of inclusive education, 49 per cent teachers said that different teaching methods should be used to cater to the needs of differently-abled and 48 per cent teachers agreed that individual needs of the learners should be considered in an inclusive class. Only 35 per cent teachers said that inclusive teaching requires collaboration among teachers, school administrators and parents. 83 per cent teachers think that inclusive education is very demanding and require greater input and 88 per cent teachers feel that learners with special needs are intellectually less capable than their mainstream peers. 58 per cent teachers said that they would like to work in a school not practicing inclusion. 85 per cent teachers believe that inclusion cannot work at all schools. 79 per cent teachers feel inclusive education is expensive. 85 per cent teachers think that some barriers to learning are very difficult to overcome in the classroom. 91 per cent teachers said that learners who require specialized

academic support are more difficult to discipline. 90 per cent said it is necessary to segregate the learners from the class to receive special academic support.

Again, 69 per cent teachers are of the opinion that teachers should have opportunities to make modification of the syllabus and teaching materials while teaching in inclusive class while 20 per cent are not sure about this. 70 per cent of the teachers have considered inclusive teaching as a challenge as it demands more time. 53 per cent teachers support inclusive teaching as a successful education system to address learners' needs. 41 per cent teachers feels that inclusive teaching makes them more responsible to students with special needs. However, 62 per cent teachers believe that inclusive teaching sounds good in theory but does not work effectively. Only 19 per cent teachers said that they received adequate support from school administration when differently-abled learners are enrolled in my class.

1.5 Conclusion

An orientation programme on Inclusive Education for teachers is essential at present time to build capacity and comprehensive knowledge among the teachers towards inclusive issues. This will help to create an appropriate environment in schools for facilitating and supporting the learning of all children in inclusive ambience.

It may be concluded that the existing training provided to teachers in inclusive education are mostly very short-term. All the teachers in this study are willing for professional development through relevant, comprehensive and relatively long-term training. However, most of the teachers expressed their apprehensions regarding their huge responsibilities and lack of substitute staff for going to attend the long-term training. Therefore, the blended mode of training is the most suitable and viable option for professional development of teachers in inclusive education without hampering their regular duties.

1.6 References

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