



ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

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ABSTRACT

Generally, the term 'inclusion' in relation to education is used either for the placement of children with disabilities in the mainstream schools or to end the exclusion of children with disabilities from mainstream schools. But in reality, it is not only limited to inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools but is used to provide intensive educational support to all and bring changes in existing policies, practices and attitudes of the community to make the school environment more flexible to meet the diverse learning needs of all learners. However, there are certain issues that act as barriers to the successful inclusion of children with visual impairment or other type of disabilities. One of the biggest barriers is the attitudes of the teachers. This attitudes of the teachers are affected by several factors like age, gender, locality of school, teaching experience and so on. So, this study aimed to investigate the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment. A total of 50 general classroom teachers teaching in Government Senior Secondary Schools of Thanesar block of Kurukshetra district were selected as sample. A teacher attitude scale was used for data collection. The collected data were statistically analysed by using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The result of the study revealed that majority of the teachers neither possess positive nor negative attitude towards inclusion. This study also reported that factors like gender and locality of school do not influence the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of students with visual impairment.

KEYWORDS

Attitude, Inclusive Education, Inclusion, Students with Visual Impairment, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a powerful tool for shaping our societies as well as the nation. The main purpose of education is to ensure that each individual has equal admittance to gain knowledge, skills and information and becomes a productive citizen of their society. So, education provides an equal opportunity to all individuals including persons with disabilities.

On the one hand, education acts as the biggest social equalizer, but on the other hand, it becomes the greatest discriminatory tool when each learner is not incorporated equitably into the general education system according to their special needs. Furthermore, the educational system reveals that the system of education from the starting was divided into two learning systems; special education and general education. In the special education system, only those students are admitted who have any kind of disability and in the general education system, only those students are admitted who do not have any kind of disability. But, this view has been changed. The concept of inclusive education now is that attempts to resolve the learning needs of all learners even if they all possess different learning styles.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a process of increasing the participation of every learner in schools including those who are afflicted with any type of disability. It is not only mainstreaming the students but also ending their segregation from the mainstream and fulfilling their diverse needs. For the successful implementation of inclusive education, there are lots of initiatives that have been launched at the national and international levels by various government and government-aided agencies. These initiatives are like Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Education for All (1990); United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006); Persons with Disabilities (PwD) Act (1995) and so on. So, the mainstreaming of children with visual impairment in an inclusive set-up provides lots of opportunities to these students like the inclusive environment of the school helps the children with visual impairment to adjust in a better way with their sighted peers, families and societies; makes them feel more confident so that they will be able to deal with the various classroom or society activities and to become productive citizens of their community. On the one hand, inclusive education provides outstanding opportunities to children with visual impairment (CwVI), but on the other hand, there are certain challenges that exist for the successful inclusion of CwVI in mainstream schools. The most common challenges/barriers for the successful inclusion of CwVI are –

1. School infrastructure and provision of assistive devices
2. Negative attitude of teachers, parents and community
3. Lack of trained and qualified teachers
4. Curriculum adaptation for effective classroom practices,

Out of all the four more common challenges, the biggest challenge is the negative attitude of teachers, parents and the community. But, the successful involvement of learners with visual impairment in the general classroom depends to a greater extent, upon the attitude of ordinary classroom teachers. In general, the attitude of teachers is found to be influenced by gender, teaching experience, locality of the school and so on. So, the researcher proposed to carry out a study on “Attitude of teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment”.

Accordingly, the researcher reviewed the related literature and found out some of the related studies, which are being reproduced here:

Joshi (2020) planned a complementary study of the 'Attitude of Special School Teachers and Inclusive School Teachers towards Inclusive Education of Students with Visual Impairment'. He found that teachers of inclusive schools have a positive mindset regarding inclusive education. He also revealed that inclusive school teachers have shown more favourable attitude towards the involvement of pupils with vision impairment in inclusive schools in comparison to special school teachers.

Mathur (2020) conducted a entitled 'Development of intervention module to affect reflective thinking, epistemological beliefs and attitude of mainstream teachers towards inclusion'. Her findings revealed that attitudinal training is more important for the advantageous admittance of not so abled learners.

Another research entitled 'In Service School Teachers' Attitudes and Self-Efficacy towards Inclusion of Children with Disabilities' was carried out by **Mamgain (2018)**. He took a aggregate specimen of 613 in-service school tutors from the Gwalior district for his study. His finding revealed that majority of the teachers have positive attitude towards inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and a higher level of sense of self efficacy to implement inclusive education.

Another research was carried out by **Valvi (2016)** on a topic, 'Attitude, Self Efficacy Skills of Pre-service Teachers towards Inclusive Education'. Her discovery revealed that pupil teachers carry nearly the same attitude and self efficacy skills irrespective of their gender, age and educational qualification. She also concluded that there are three constituents that promote the successful inclusion of students with disabilities. These factors are teachers' abilities, proper infrastructure and support system.

A study entitled 'Student Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusive Education' was conducted by **Chauhan (2013)**. The selected sample for her study was 486 D.Ed student teachers studying in ten educational colleges of Mumbai. She found that majority of the student teacher show favourable attitude toward inclusive education. She also revealed that female pupil educators show more favourable attitude toward inclusive education than male pupil instructors. A research was carried out by **Bansal (2013)** under the topic 'A Study of Attitude of Primary School Teachers toward Inclusive Education'. According to her findings' male, urban and private school teachers show a more positive attitude towards inclusive education than female, rural and government school teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has been planned with the following objectives-

1. To present an overview of teachers' attitude towards inclusion of students with visual impairment.
2. To compare the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment.
3. To compare the attitude of rural and urban teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment.

HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses formulated for the present study are –

1. There exists no significant difference between the male and female teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with visual impairment.
2. There is no significant difference between attitude of rural and urban teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment.

METHODOLOGY

The present piece of research is 'Descriptive Survey' type. It is a type of quantitative research which aims to describe a situation, an event and an institution. It is all about describing the phenomenon, observing and deriving conclusions from it.

Since the locale of the present study was Kurukshetra district of Haryana. Hence, the population for the present study was all the general school teachers, teaching in Government Senior Secondary Schools of Kurukshetra district of Haryana state. A multistage sampling procedure was used for selecting the sample. A total sample of 50 general classroom teachers was selected as a sample for the present study.

For the current study, the researcher herself developed the "Teacher Attitude Scale Towards Inclusion of Students with Visual Impairment" for data collection. This is a five-point Likert type scale, so scoring is done on a five-point scale that contains options, viz. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

The data collected were analysed using Mean, S.D. and t-test.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Considering the objectives the results of the study are presented and analysed in following section-

SECTION-1: AN OVERVIEW OF ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

SECTION-2: ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT WITH RESPECT TO THEIR GENDER AND LOCALITY OF SCHOOL

Section-1: This section deals with an overview of attitude of teachers towards inclusion.

Keeping in view the first objective of the study, the scores of the respondents were arranged in ascending order on the 'Teacher Attitude Scale' then mean and standard deviation values were computed for the whole sample. The values of Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D.) were calculated as 77.7 and 9.45 respectively. These calculated scores were used to determine the score range of attitude towards inclusion expressed by the general classroom teachers as negative, neutral and positive.

TABLE-1.1: AN OVERVIEW OF ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Variable Description	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Negative Attitude towards Inclusion	≤ 68	4	8%
Undecided Attitude towards Inclusion	In between 68 & 87	32	64%

Positive Attitude towards Inclusion	≥ 87	14	28%
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From the TABLE-1.1, it is seen that the number of respondents whose scores were equal to or less than the value 68 obtained by subtracting the scores of Mean and Standard Deviation were considered as having negative attitude towards inclusion and addition of scores of Mean and Standard Deviation gave a value of 87, respondents whose scores were found to be equal or greater than this value were found to have positive attitude towards inclusion. While the remaining sample whose scores were found to be in between 68 and 87 were considered as possessing negative attitude towards inclusion.

Interpretation:

It can be observed from the Table-1.1, the attitude towards inclusion expressed by teachers are classified into three categories i.e. negative, neutral and positive attitude, corresponding to their score range i.e. less than or equal to 68, in between 68 & 87, and greater than or equal to 87 respectively. Nearly three-fifth of the teachers from the total sample of 50 possess a neutral attitude towards inclusion which is 64% of the total sample. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents show a positive attitude towards inclusion which is 28% of the total sample. And a very fewer number of respondents i.e. only 4 educators of the total sample possess negative attitude towards inclusion. This clearly shows that secondary school teachers differ in their attitude towards inclusion of students with visual impairment.

SECTION:2- This section deals with the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment with respect to their gender and locality of school.

TABLE -1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES OF MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Sr. No.	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	SE Mean	t - ratio	Significance
1.	Male	25	76.92	8.86	1.17	0.8142	Insignificant at 0.05 Level
2.	Female	25	79.00	9.20	1.84		

It is observed from the table 1.2, the mean values for male and female teachers are 77.36 and 78.04 respectively with regard to attitude scores towards inclusion of learners with visual impairment, whereas the standard deviations are 8.86 and 9.20, the calculated t-ratio between the two groups was found 0.8142, which was too much lower than the proposed value of the t-table at the 0.05 significant level. So, the hypothesis framed “there is no significant difference between the male and female teachers’ attitude towards inclusion of students with visual impairment” is accepted here. Hence, the researcher concludes that gender does not affect the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of learners with visual impairment.

TABLE-1.3

SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES OF RURAL AND URBAN SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Sr. No.	Locality	N	Mean	S.D.	SE Mean	t-ratio	Significance
1.	Rural	30	78.63	8.664	1.582	0.853	Insignificant at 0.05 level
2.	Urban	20	76.30	10.603	2.371		

It is interpreted from the table-1.3, that the mean and standard deviation values for rural schools teachers are 78.63 and 8.664 respectively and for urban school teachers these values are 76.30 and 10.603 respectively. And it is seen from the table the calculated t-ratio among these two groups is 0.853 which is less than the expected t-table value. So, the assumed null hypothesis that is “there is no significant difference between the attitudes of rural and urban teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment” is accepted here. Hence, the researcher concludes that the locality of school does not influence the teachers’ attitude towards inclusion of students with visual impairment.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of the study indicate that majority of the teachers i.e. 3/5th of the sample possess neutral attitude towards inclusion of students with visual impairment and only about 1/4th of the total sample possess positive attitude towards inclusion. The results of the study also revealed that gender of the teachers and locality of the schools do not play any significant role in the process of inclusion of students with visual impairment. The very similar results were revealed by Paramanik and Barman, 2018; Chanda & Behra, 2018; and Bhakta & Shit, 2016. However, some of the study revealed that male teachers had more positive attitude towards inclusion of students with visual impairment than female teachers (Bansal, 2013; Guria & Tiwari, 2016; Kalita, 2017; Singh, 2018; Das, et al., 2019). In the studies of Chavhan (2013) and Nanda & Jana (2017), female teachers were found to have more positive attitude towards inclusion in comparison to male teachers. Bindhu & Niranjana (2014), also revealed that the locale of the school does not influence the attitudes of the teachers towards inclusion. The results of the present study are not in congruence with other studies (Chavhan, 2013; Kaur & Kaur, 2015; Kumar, 2016; Nanda and Jana, 2017; Bansal, 2018), which revealed that urban teachers had a more positive attitude towards inclusion as compared to rural teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the “attitude of teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment”. The result of the study revealed that majority of the teachers neither possess positive nor negative attitude towards inclusion. This study also reported that gender and locality of the school does not affect the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of students with visual impairment. So, this result indicated that, the implications of the present study lie in providing or conducting an appropriate training program in special education so that teachers can develop appropriate knowledge and skills related to different aspects of special education and also able to know about how to handle special needs student. Because, the positive attitude and beliefs are the foundational stone for the successful inclusion.

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