

A Study of High School Teachers 'Concerns' about Inclusion of Children in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The present study reports the concerns of high school teachers in Ballari District about the inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools. A sample of 100 high school teachers responded to a two-part questionnaire. Part-one questionnaire was related to personal data and part-two was a Likert scale consists of statements related to inclusion. Data was analyzed using suitable statistics ('t' & 'F'). It yields the high school teachers exhibits significant differences according to the age and teacher experience wise and the remaining variables sub groups had no significant difference. The implications for teacher training education can improve in terms of knowledge, skills, quality for inclusive settings.

Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) is a new approach towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. An inclusive class may have amongst others, children who are disabled or gifted, street or working children, children from remote or nomadic population (National Curriculum Framework 2005).

Hearing Impairment

Hearing Impairment is a broad term that refers to hearing losses of varying degrees from hard-of-hearing to total deafness. Students with a hearing impairment may find it hard to be recognized in the classroom. The classification of hearing impairment children follows.

- Children suffering from conductive hearing losses

Conductive hearing losses usually affect all frequencies of hearing evenly and do not result increase losses. These are caused by diseases or obstructions in the outer or middle ear, (the conduction pathway for sound to reach to inner to inner ear). Any condition that impedes the sequence of vibrations or prevents them from reaching the auditory that impedes the sequence of vibrations or prevents them from reaching the auditory nerve causes a loss in conduction. It may happen on account of puncture of the eardrum or obstruction of the movement of the bones in the middle ear or blockage by the extended canal by wax or a malformation. However, a child with conductive hearing loss usually is able to use a hearing aid well or can be helped medically or surgically.

- **Children suffering from sensorineural hearing losses**

Sensorineural hearing losses results from damage to the delicate sensory hair cells in the inner ear or the nerves which supply it. These hearing losses can range from mild to profound. They often affect the person's ability to hear certain frequencies more than others. Thus, even with amplification to increase the sound level, a

child with a sensorineural hearing loss may perceive distorted sounds, sometimes making the successful use of a hearing air impossible.

- **Children suffering from mixed hearing losses**

A mixed hearing loss refers to a combination of conductive and sensorineural loss and means that a problem occurs in both the outer or middle and the inner ear. As a result children suffering from such mixed losses exhibit the impairments and disabilities related to both the above two categories.

- **Children suffering from a central hearing loss.**

Central hearing loss results from damage or impairment to the nerves of the nuclei of the central nervous system, either in the pathways to the brain or in the brain itself. It results into a quite severe hearing impairment and hearing disability among the affected children.

Inclusive Education for Hearing Impaired Children

The hearing impaired children are encouraged to get equal educational experiences in the normal schools and expected to follow the same curriculum for the normal children. To compensate hearing loss, hearing impaired children are also included in co-curricular activities, which aim at providing all compensatory skills to make the children to be independent. This helps to bridge the gap between the cognitive development of the hearing impaired children and their educational opportunity.

Need for the Study

Inclusive education in India can be traced back to 1974 when for the first time the scheme of Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) was implemented by the central government in select blocks of the country. This scheme broke new ground by stressing the need for educating children with mild to moderate disabilities in regular school settings. Since then a number of policies, programs and legislations have been implemented that strengthened the government's commitment to this imperative. In 1986, The National Policy on Education (NPE) brought the fundamental issue of equality for students with special needs to the forefront. It stated that the objective should be to integrate physically and mentally disabled people with the general community as equal partners. to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. While the NPE (1986) helped set the stage for further inclusive education, it was the adoption of the Plan of Action (POA) in 1992 paved a solid ground for this initiative. The POA strengthened the initiatives of the National Policy by demanding that children with special needs be educated only in regular schools and not in special schools as had been allowed earlier. All of these efforts got a boost by a shot in the arm when the Government of India passed The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act in 1995. This law required that all states and Union Territories must ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same educational opportunities and basic human rights as their peers without disabilities. The Act further emphasized that, whenever possible, students with disabilities should be educated in regular school settings.

Since the passage of this landmark legislation in 1995, a number of other significant initiatives have taken place as well. Those include Sarva Siksha Abhiyan [Education for All movement] launched in 2001 that included a policy of 'zero reject'. It suggested that no child that has special needs could be neglected or denied enrolment on the basis of a disability. In 2005, the Ministry of Human Resource Development implemented a National Action Plan for inclusion in education of children and youth with disabilities. The main objectives of this plan were to ensure that: (a) no child is denied admission in mainstream education, (b) no child would be turned back on the grounds of disability. and (c) mainstream and specialist training institutions serving persons with disabilities, in the government or in the non- government sector, facilitate the growth of a cadre of teachers trained to work within the principles of inclusion

Policies, programs and legislation initiatives discussed thus far shows unequivocal commitment of the government for the inclusive education of children with disabilities in India. The policy shift that took place in 1974, away from segregated setting to a more inclusive setting, has been strengthened by a number of initiatives of the government of India and support structure and financial assistance provided by outside agencies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF to name a few.

A natural corollary of these developments was the expectation that regular school teachers in India would be required to possess the appropriate attitudes, knowledge and skills to fulfill their new roles and responsibilities. A number of researchers have conducted empirical research that does not however paint an optimistic picture. For example, Das (2001) conducted a needs assessment of primary and secondary regular school teachers in Delhi and reported that the teachers did not consider themselves to be competent in majority of the skills needed in teaching students with disabilities. These teachers indicated that they did not have adequate knowledge of: various disabling conditions, procedures required in developing and implementing Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and government policies and programs for children with disabilities. Sharma (2001) found that both principals and teachers in Delhi were concerned about lack of resources (e.g. special education teachers and paraprofessional staff), the non-availability of instructional materials, the lack of funding, and the lack of training to implement inclusive education.

Research conducted in western countries regarding teacher perceptions towards inclusive education indicate that many teachers hesitate about including students with disabilities in their classrooms (Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011). One of their most primary concerns is that they believe that they lack specialized skills needed in instructing these students. A number of researchers assert that a teacher's willingness to include specific students is strongly influenced by factors such as their attributes (Sachs, 2004), the nature and severity of the disabling conditions of the learners (Elkins and Porter, 2005), availability of physical and human resources (Bradshaw and Mundia, 2006), and their pre-service and in-service training (Chong, Forlin & Au, 2007).

The available research on teacher attitudes indicates that while many general education teachers philosophically support inclusion, most have strong concerns about their ability to implement these programs successfully (Das, Gichuru and Singh, 2013). For instance, studies have shown that most general education teachers do not agree that they have or will be provided with sufficient planning and instructional time necessary to support inclusion (Barton, 1996). Other studies have shown that even after receiving professional development training, many teachers still question their ability to teach students with disabilities, and some doubt they will be provided with the necessary support and resources (Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher R Samuel 1996). In addition, a few studies found that secondary school teachers are often less positive than their elementary counterparts, and in some cases, more resistant to additional responsibilities that inclusion brings with it (Bender, Vail & Scott, 1995).

The above studies show that general education teachers views, beliefs, attitudes and concerns about inclusion according to their background variables. It is necessary to identify the degree of concern the school teachers have to the mainstreaming of the hearing impaired children.

Statement of the Problem

“A Study of High School Teachers' Concerns about Inclusion of Children with Hearing Impairment in Regular Schools in Ballari District”

Operational Definitions of the Terms

- Concerns
The concerns of high school teachers about inclusion of hearing impaired children in regular classroom were measured by means of the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (Sharma & Desai, 2002).
- Inclusiveness : The environment of letting hearing impaired children in regular schools and making them comfortable.
- Inclusion: Organized placement of children with hearing impairment in regular schools
- High Schools : Which provides secondary education between the ages of 11 to 19 years.
- Hearing Impaired Children : The Children who have a hearing loss which may range from mild to profound.
- Regular School: A school that is maintained at government or private expense for the education of the children of a Community or District and that constitutes a part of a system of free public Education commonly including primary and secondary Schools.

Variables of the Study

Concerns

Concern refers to the 'related to' or 'be about' a psychological object. Concerns as "impediments to the successful implementation of inclusive programs", has stressed that inclusion cannot become a viable educational reality unless educators' concerns are systematically identified and addressed (Storer, 1992).

Other Variables involved in the Study

- (a) Gender - Male and Female.
- (b) Age - 20 to 30 year, 31 to 40 years, 41 to 50 years, and above 51 years.
- (c) Educational Qualification-Graduate teachers and Postgraduate teachers.
- (d) Professional Qualifications - With / M.Ed) and Without training.
- (e) Teaching Experience - Below 10 years. 11 to 20 years, 21 to 30years and above 3 years.
- (f) Type of School - Government, Private-aided and Private-unaided schools.
- (g) Area of School - Rural and Urban.

Objectives of the Study

- To find out the overall high school teachers' concerns about inclusion of children with hearing impaired in regular classroom.
- To find out the high school teachers' concerns about inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools according to Ss involved in the study.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is no significant difference on overall high school teachers' concern about inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools.
- There is no significant difference between male and female high school teachers regarding their concerns about inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools.
- There is no significant difference in concerns about inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools between the age of the teachers.
- There is no significant difference in the level of concerns between teachers who had graduate and post graduate educational qualifications.

- There is no significant difference in the level of concerns between teachers who had professional qualifications with training and without training.
- There is no significant difference in concerns about inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools between the teachers who had varying lengths of teaching experience.
- There is no significant difference in concerns among the high school teachers working at different managements about inclusion of children with hearing impairment in regular schools.
- There is no significant difference between area of school and concerns about inclusion of hearing impaired children in general schools.

Methodology

Survey method of research was followed in this study. The Participants in this study were regular (N=100) working at high schools under the government, government aided, and privately run organization in Ballari district. The tool Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES) was developed by Sharma and Desai (2002) was adopted. It has four factors on Teachers' concerns for resources (Factor 1), Teachers' concerns for acceptance of special students (Factor II), Teachers' concerns for academic standard of the classrooms (Factor III), and Teachers' concerns for the workload in inclusive settings (Factor IV). The instrument, Personal data regarding are gender, age, educational qualifications, professional qualifications, teaching experience, type of school and area of school in part-one and the part-two contained the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale was collected and analysed by using suitable statistics.

Area profile

The respondents in this study were high school teachers working in regular high schools, in Ballari District. Ballari District comprises One Corporation (comprising of erstwhile 2 Municipalities, 6 Town Panchayats and 109 Habitations in 9 Village Panchayats), II Municipalities, 16 Town Panchayats and 5,688 Rural Habitations in 20 Panchayat Unions. Vellore has many Government run, Government aided and private run schools (including Matriculation, CBSE & ICSE/ISC). The study covers the sample in and around the Ballari District. The high schools (n=8) included in it were two government, two government aided and four private high schools located in rural and urban areas.

Results and Discussions

The means, SDs and test statistic values of high school teachers' concern about inclusion of children with hearing impaired were presented in the table.

Table: High school teachers' means, SDs and 't' values according to selected background variables (N = 100)

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	't' value
Whole Group	100	54.93	6.82	5.23*
Gender :				
Male	45	54	6.59	1.25@
Female	55	55.68	6.78	
Age				
20-30 years	30	55.23	6.62	4.72@
31-40 years	30	54.67	6.30	
41-50 years	35	54.90	7.47	

above 50 years	05	55.75	7.86	
Educational Qualifications :				
Graduate				0.64@
Post Graduate	34	55.56	6.87	
	66	54.61	7.40	
Professional Qualifications :				
With training				0.59@
Without training	65	55.22	7.10	
	35	54.4	6.31	
Teaching Experience				
Below 10 Years	19	54.32	6.32	4.13@
11-20 years	31	56.00	6.56	
21-30 years	39	54.10	7.62	
Above 30 years	11	56.64	5.45	
Type of School :				
Government	33	55.56	7.45	0.30@
Government Aided	40	54.33	6.15	
Private	27	55.04	7.11	
Area of School				
Rural	62	54.92	7.32	0.02@
Urbal	38	54.98	6.00	

Note • Significant at 0.05 level

@ Not Significant at 0.05 levels

- ❖ High school teachers in general and also irrespective of their gender or age or educational qualifications or professional qualifications or teaching experience or type of school or area of school to which they belonged had significant positive concerns about the inclusion of hearing impaired students in regular schools. The results of the present study falls in the line with the finding of Sharma, Forlin, Loreman and Earle (2006). Changpinit, Greaves and Frydenberg (2007), and Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013) who reported that teachers had a more concerned about inclusion of students with disabilities in their classroom.
- ❖ High school teachers with respect to gender had no significant difference on concerns about inclusion of students with hearing impairment in regular schools. Female teachers had more concerns when compared to male teachers. The results of the present study support with the findings of Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013) and Rina Shah, Ajay Das, Ishwar Desai and Ashwini Tiwari (2015) and Sharmila Vaz, Nathan Wilson & Marita Falkmer (2015) who found significant differences between male and female teachers regarding their concerns about including students with disabilities into their classes.
- ❖ With regard to age of high school teachers about the inclusion of hearing impaired children in regular schools had significant differences. The results of the present study support with the findings of Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013) and Sharmila Vaz, Nathan Wilson & Marita Falkmer (2015).
- ❖ According to the educational qualifications of high school teachers' on concern about inclusion of hearing impaired children in regular schools had no significant differences. The high school teachers who had graduate degree had more concerns than their counterparts. The results of the study supports with the

findings of Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013) and Rina Shah, Ajay Das, Ishwar Desai and Ashwini Tiwari (2015) who reported that significant differences in teachers education qualification.

- ❖ With respect to the professional qualifications of high school teachers' concerns about inclusion of hearing impaired children was found that there exists no significant difference between with training and without training. The teachers with training had exhibits more concerns when compared to without training. The findings of Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013) and Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013) who reported that significant differences in teachers professional qualifications.
- ❖ According to the high school teachers with different teaching experience groups on concerns about inclusion of hearing impaired students in regular schools showed significant differences exists. The age group 11-20 years and above 30 years exhibited high concerns.. The results of the study supports with the findings of Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013) and Rina Shah, Ajay Das, Ishwar Desai and Ashwini Tiwari (2015).
- ❖ High school teachers according to the type of school inferred that there exists no significant difference on concerns about inclusion of hearing impaired students in regular schools. Government and private high school teachers had more concerns. not Nisha Bhatnagar and Ajay Das (2013)
- ❖ With regard to the high school teachers working in rural and urban areas had no significant difference on concerns about inclusion of students with hearing impairment in regular schools.

Educational Implications

Education is a process of human enlightenment and empowerment for the achievement of a better quality of life. Regular teachers are the key service provider in teaching students with special needs in the inclusive classrooms, their concerns about inclusive education was measured. Required paramedical staff facilities were to be provided to the inclusive practices.

It is observed that, certain complexes faced by teachers regarding the special needs as irregular attendance, transfers to another school etc., were noticed. For avoiding of such problems of special needs is to be take care and sufficient guidance requires to their parents.

There are several factors that affect teachers concerns about inclusive education. Teachers' 'concerns for resources' and 'concerns for acceptance of hearing impaired students' have to be fulfilled the necessities. Teacher training education can improve in terms of knowledge, skills, quality for inclusive settings.

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