



A STUDY ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education in the education system is the Key to world in the 21st century. Considering the varied ability of students learning in any classroom of world is a character of a classroom. Education systems have changed drastically in the last few decades as educating children with disabilities in regular schools has become an important aspect of education system in many countries. This development to keep pupils with disabilities in regular educational settings instead of referring them to special schools is best described with the term 'inclusion'. The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude towards inclusive education of primary school teacher in West Bengal. Particularly an attempt was made to study teacher's beliefs, attitudes and instructional practices including disabled student's views and other associated factors which are believed to make the practice of inclusive education successful. Survey method was employed. A stratified random sample of 600 primary school teachers was chosen situated in 5 districts of West Bengal State. Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE) by Dr. Sood V. & Dr. Anand Aarti was used for data collection. Data was analyzed by applying t-test. Result showed that there is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education of primary school teachers in respect of teaching experience. Finding also indicated that there is significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education of primary school teachers in respect of type of management.

KEYWORDS: *Inclusive Education, Primary School Teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of developing the knowledge and abilities of the individual to achieve success in a society. Education starts from the birth of child and continues throughout the life. Formal education of students starts with regular schooling. School life of child generally begins somewhere between the age of four and six years. Generally school education responsible to provide specific guidance related to skills and competencies that a specific society thinks significant for their future citizens. In the past it was assumed that once the schooling was completed the process of education was finished. But education is a never ending process of human growth and development.

General Education is framed with fundamental aim to common educational experience for prospective students. Generally, it is defined as an educational system which involves study in several subject areas where all the students study the uniform curriculum in same time in same class. The General Education is a program of study which provides the basic knowledge, skills of expressions, attitudes and perspectives that help the students to achieve their aims of academic and social life in future. The term Special Education is mostly used in practice in last few decades and it has now come to signify the education of children with



special educational needs. According to the New World 18 Encyclopedia, “Special education is the most commonly used term to describe the methodology and practice of education for students with special needs, such as learning difficulties, mental health issues, physical or developmental issues etc. It had been believed earlier that children with differing needs and especially those with special needs must be given education separately. Owing to lack of knowledge, educational access and technology, disabled or challenged children were therefore initially segregated from other children. This had led to the rise of general schools on one hand and on the other, the establishment of ‘Special Schools’ for the disabled or the challenged children.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

According to Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffin (2001), inclusion refers to ‘the process of educating children with disabilities in the regular education classrooms of their neighborhood schools. The schools they would attend if they did not have a disability and providing them with the necessary services and support’. Parallel to the development towards including pupils with disabilities into regular schools the terminology to denote those pupils changed. The Warnock Report (Warnock, 1978) suggested moving the focus away from handicaps and disabilities and replacing these with the term ‘Special Educational Needs’. Thus, the focus shifted away from the pupil’s disability to the special needs the pupil has in education. Significant number of disabled children and youth are largely excluded from educational opportunities for primary and secondary schooling. How the learning in the classroom of varied ability students will be successful and effective is a challenge before today’s education system. By producing excellent curricula and preparing quality teachers through teacher education institutions is the perfect solution for the successful inclusive education.

BACKGROUND OF INCLUSION

The inclusive education movement has been legitimate internationally by UNESCO’s Salamanca Statement (**UNESCO, 1994**) and reflects the United Nation’s global strategy of Education for all (**Farrell and Ainscow, 2002**). Inclusive education is now seems as center to human rights and equal opportunities and a priority policy objective of liberal democracies. The **National Policy on Education (1986)** has given priority on an equity basis in the field of education and recommends providing equal opportunity to all not only for access but also for success. Aiming at Education for all (EFA), it should be the priority of all concerned that all children with disabilities in the age groups (6-14 years) are identified for schooling and for this; Inclusive education will be the only positive substitute to increase the coverage.

BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Here are key findings about the benefits of inclusion for children and families:

- When students for special education are placed into a separate classroom from their peers, it puts a label on those students and marks them as ‘different’. Inclusion practices sort children into classrooms without the bias of special needs or non- special needs entering into the process. In this way, inclusion allows each student to have access to the same teachers, instructional materials, tools and lessons as every other student in the school.
- Inclusion creates an awareness and appreciation of individual differences in all students. In regular education teachers can begin to recognize that all students have strengths that can be beneficial and important to entire classroom and these strengths can be built upon to create a meaningful experience.
- All parents want their children to be accepted by their peers, have friends and lead “regular” lives. Inclusive settings can make this vision a reality for many children with disabilities.
- Children develop a positive understanding of themselves and others. When children attend regular classes with normal and disable children with in same roof that reflect the similarities and differences of people in the real world, they learn to appreciate diversity. Respect and understanding grow when children of differing abilities and cultures play and learn together.

- Schools are important places for children to develop friendships and learn social skills in real life situations. Children with and without disabilities learn with and from each other in inclusive classes.

Attitude

Attitude is one of the general climates of man's nature. Human nature is very complex. It has been conceived in three board dimensions is namely- cognitive, affective and co-native. Attitudes are general elements of all the three dimensions of man's nature. Human nature is very complex and multidimensional in nature. Man who is product of both heredity and environment shows two types of attitudes positives and negatives. Attitudes refers in general way to indicate presumed to be enduring to react in a general way to indicate presumed to be enduring to react in a certain way in response to certain kind of some predispositions and to organize opinions into coherent inter-related dusters. It is specific mental state of an individual towards something according to which his behavior towards it is molded.

Teacher's Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Teachers who personally support inclusive practice and accept the concept of inclusion can more readily adapt the learning environment to the diverse needs of students and use a variety of approaches and teaching strategies (Ryan, 2009)

The success of inclusion lies in the hands of the classroom teacher who must plan for the success of diverse learners. The difficulty in planning for an extremely diverse group of learners has been a frequently heard concern voiced by many general educators facing teaching in an inclusive setting. Inclusive schooling is not a process of making different kids fit into exclusionary schools, within the framework of schools as they exist today. It is imperative that teachers accept, recognize and celebrate diverse learners in the class-room, that is, they must promote equity through accepting differences. 'Inclusion cannot mean simply folding all children into the status quo of the general classroom to be fed predigested information. Acquiring knowledge is active not passive. It has to transform and this requires the learner's participation' (Alur and Timmons, 2009).

Need and Significance of the Study

As general education classrooms include more and more diverse students, teachers realize the value of accepting each student as unique. Inclusive education is a process of enabling all children to learn and participate effectively within mainstreaming school systems. It does not segregate children who have different abilities or needs. This, in other words, is to indicate the shift of thinking from an unnatural segregated setting toward inclusive education must be given the due attention it deserves if inclusive education is to be favored and practiced as educational modality. In general Teachers' attitudes were found to be influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition, training of the teacher, experience, gender and availability of support. Implications from this review suggest the need to the availability of training, adapted curriculum, positive attitudes and utmost responsibility of the teachers. One of the most significant stipulations that allow for successful inclusion of special education students is the attitudes or attitudes of the general education teacher regarding the inclusion of special education students into their classroom. So the researcher studied the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the significant difference in attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education in terms of teaching experience and type of school.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education of primary school teachers with regard to teaching experience.
2. There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education of primary school teachers with

regard to type of school.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Design of the study is that important part in any type of research work. It gives us idea about the method of research population, sample, design and the tools. The present investigation is done with the help of questionnaire survey. The present study is a descriptive survey which aims at analyzing the study of attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

POPULATION & SAMPLE

Population for the present study comprises of teachers teaching in primary school of various districts of West Bengal. The sample for the present study comprises of 600 teachers from different schools of 5 districts i.e. Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman, Kolkata, South 24 Pargana and Hooghly of West Bengal state.

Tool

- Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE) by Dr. Vishal Sood & Dr. Arti Anand.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education based on Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Sample	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Standard error of difference
Less than 10 yrs	300	110.3266	6.2484	1.4459	598	0.514
More than 10 yrs	300	109.5833	6.3432			

Table-1 shows that the calculated values of Mean, SD of more than 10 years teaching experience and less than ten years teaching experience primary school teachers are 110.3326 & 109.5833 and 6.2844 & 6.3432 respectively. It is further evaluated that standard error of difference is 0.514. The calculated t-value is 1.4459 is less than table value at 0.05 level of significance is 1.96. Therefore the hypothesis-1 is accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education of primary school teachers based on teaching experience. This could be because of the reason that both 10 years teaching experienced and less than 10 years teaching experienced teachers have more knowledge about the children-learning situations and environment because of the modern days practice.

Figure 1: Mean Values of Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education with respect to Teaching Experience

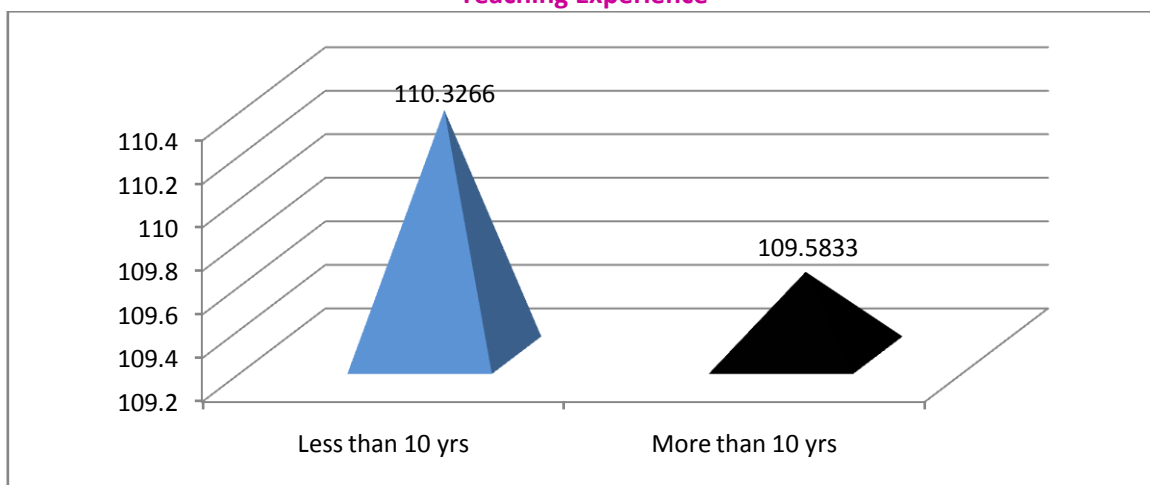
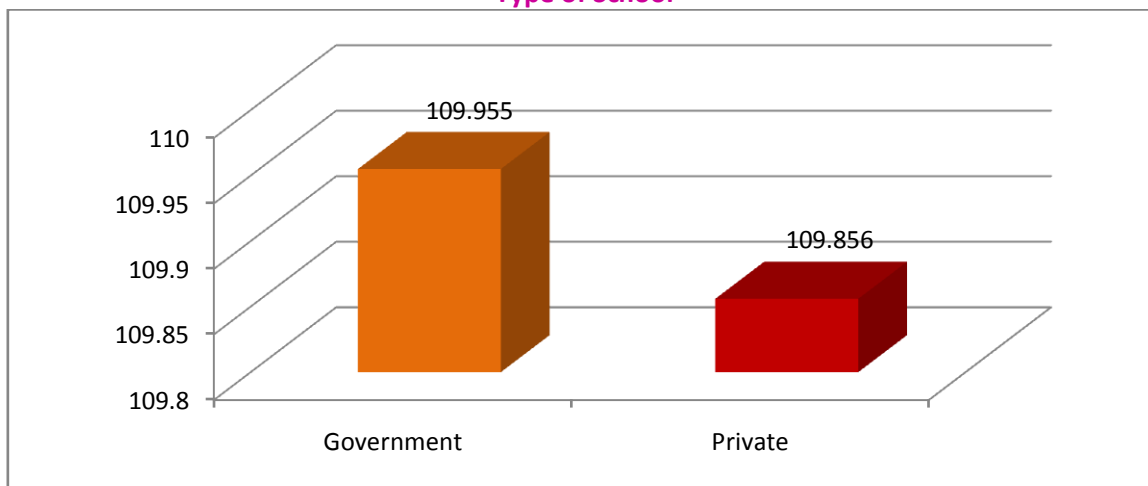


Table 2: Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education based on Type of School

Type of School	Sample	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Standard error of difference
Government	300	109.955	6.3017	2.6739	599	0.517
Private	300	109.856	6.216			

Table-2 depicts that the calculated values of Mean, SD of government and private primary school teachers are 109.955 & 109.856 and 6.3017 & 6.216 respectively. It is further evaluated that standard error of difference is 0.517. The calculated t-value is 2.6736 is which is more than table value at 0.01 level of significance is 2.58. Therefore the hypothesis-2 is rejected. Thus there is significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education between government and private primary school teachers.

Figure 2: Mean Values of Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education with respect to Type of School



EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Worth of a research work is judged by its use in educational field, as this research work have the following educational implications.

- The present study has its implications for teachers, parents, administrators or policy makers and government, since the present study is education. The study has some practical implication for teachers.
- The present study bears implications for the parents as well as the community members to treat students equitably, including those with disabilities or other special needs.
- Disabled are no more considered differently able. The parents of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) children should exhibit positive attitude for the education of their children in the regular classroom along with normal children, rather than placing them in segregated setting exclusively meant for a particular disability.
- The present study essentially has some implications for the government i.e., policy making, Budget planning, resources allocation etc.
- Finding of present study can be used at the time of planning of educational scenario.
- The present study can be helpful to cope with the problems of inclusive education in the current scenario.
- The present study bears implications for school administrators and other stakeholders to improve their attitude towards inclusive education.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

- This study has been confined to five districts of West Bengal state only. Efforts can be made to conduct this type of study in all districts of West Bengal state and same also at inter-state level and national level.

- In this study only govt. Sec Schools was selected, it is advised to take private schools in further researchers.
- In this study, the sample was selected from school level, it is advised to take sample from colleges and universities and professional institutes.

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