A STUSDY OF ATTITUDE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract: *Education of children with disabilities has shifted from segregated special schools to inclusion in mainstream education schools and classrooms. As people with disabilities challenged the stigmatizing and limiting nature of segregated education, and gave voice to their anger and dissatisfaction, issues of equality of access and educational opportunity gained impetus and integration became centre stage. Children with or without disabilities have the same rights to educational opportunities under the United Nation Convention on the rights of the child. The commitment of teachers to inclusivity depends entirely on their attitudes towards inclusion. This formed the basis of this study. The study aimed at establishing the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion, their commitment to inclusion and the relationship between teachers' attitude and their commitment towards inclusion. A survey design was employed to acquire both qualitative and quantitative data using census approach, where all the 82 teachers of the four public schools that offer inclusive education in Bahati Sub-County were used as respondents. A questionnaire was employed as the main research instrument containing short structured questions which were on a Likert scale. Data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21 software. Data was presented in form of descriptive (frequencies, means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics.*

Keywords: Education, Rights of the Child, Children Educational

Introduction

Education is essentially a human affair. It is the influence of one person on another. It is the powerful instrument in one's hand to unlock the doors of darkness of mind and filled it with the light of knowledge and wisdom. People without education get easily manipulated by ill meaning leaders and belief on them whatever they told. Education considered as the best mean to nourish our basic instincts and in developing all aspects of our life. Traditionally, teachers are perceived mainly as the knowledge providers to students. But now, teachers are expected to assume a new major role as a facilitator in supporting students' learning process and developing students' multiple intelligences and lifelong self-learning abilities. Teachers themselves also need to be a lifelong learner and be able to articulate their teaching with the

new paradigm of learning. Education lays the path of equality and empowerment. Many children with special needs have become victim to an educational system which is not able to meet their individual needs.

In 1945 the League of Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the field of education, Article 26 of the Declaration proclaims the right of every citizen to an appropriate education regardless of gender, race, colour and religion. This right is also enshrined in the constitutions of all independent nations. The question is: To what extent 2 are national governments guaranteeing the right of 'every' citizen to an 'appropriate' education as we approach the new millennium? What measures are in place at national and local level to address imbalances in education? Traditionally, teachers are perceived mainly as the knowledge providers to students. Now, teachers are expected to assume a new major role as a facilitator in supporting students' learning process and developing students' multiple intelligences and lifelong self-learning abilities. Teachers themselves also need to be a lifelong learner and be able to articulate their teaching with the new paradigm of learning. They should be adaptive and flexible in dealing with a new brand of students comprising different age groups, of diverse ethnicity, and with a wide range of prior knowledge and background. In addition, they should be conversant with the new technologies, which are developing rapidly at an ever-increasing speed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pandey (2016) studied structural barriers in implementing inclusive education for children with special needs. The sample consisted of government primary and upper primary schools of Varanasi city. A checklist consisting fifteen items was used to identify the physical barriers. It was found that majority of schools had accessible doors, well maintained windows, stairs with adequate railings, ventilated and illuminated classrooms. However, the study revealed that only fifty percent of schools have adequate ramps, disabled friendly toilets and water outlets.

Huang and Chen (2017) conducted a study on Attitudes toward Inclusive Education: A Comparison of General and Special Education Teachers in Taiwan. A total of 539 participants were recruited from teachers colleges and public schools in three 50 prefectures of central and southern Taiwan. Results indicate that both the types of teacher education

programs and the teaching experience influence the willingness of the participants to include a student with special needs in the regular classroom setting.

Mohanty and Nanda (2017) investigated how Heads of Elementary Schools are prepared for inclusive education practices. The study was conducted with a sample of twenty Headmasters (N=20) from Garadpur block of Kendrapara district (Rural) and Cuttack city (Urban) of Odisha. Interview Schedule containing six dimensions was used for data collection. The main findings show that, perception of head masters was negative towards Inclusive Education. Heads or Headmasters need to be adequately trained so that they acquire skills and knowledge that would help them in their classroom teaching and practices, especially on inclusive settings. Because of this lack of training, Headmasters lacked confidence in teaching children with special needs in their classrooms especially if it had to take place in an inclusive setting. The findings of the study have significant implications to the school administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involved in implementing inclusive education.

Robert and Guerra (2017) investigated Principal"s Perceptions of their Knowledge in Special Education. A sample of 84 principals in South Texas from predominantly Hispanic schools to determine the principals perceptions regarding their legal, foundational, and contextual knowledge of special education and their suggested topics for inclusion in curriculum content of principal preparation programs to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively implement and supervise special education programs. Results indicated that the principal"s greatest knowledge was of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (100%) and the lowest area of knowledge was in designing curriculum for students with disabilities (65%). The most frequent recommendation for inclusion in principal preparation was for additional content in special education laws, Section 504, and Response to Intervention.

Thakur and Abbas (2017) explored the challenges faced by Punjab Government in implementing Inclusive Education. Structured interviews with inclusive education experts and concerned professionals were carried out. Result reveals that a number of 51 initiatives were taken by Punjab Government but challenges are proportionately much grave hindering its effective implementation. It is recommended that the Department of Special Education should upscale its implementing strategy and advocacy needs in line with the provisions of the national education policy so as to develop a road map for bringing inclusive education into the education system. Required instructional material should be provided within the

schools. If schools are not equipped with requisite material, teachers would not be able to perform their duty properly. A meaningful coordination between general and special education can bring positive results in terms of planning and implementing inclusive education in a time bound strategic framework. General and Special education Departments need to have to actively undertake a joint review of the current curriculum and collaborate with relevant university departments in this arduous task.

Duhan and Devarakonda (2018) examined the teachers" perceptions of inclusion could differ in relation to their knowledge and understanding of inclusion at different stages of the teacher training programme. Participants were (n=126) teachers in a teacher education course at Chester University, UK, were asked to represent their understanding of the concept of inclusion within the local context. A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data. The result indicates that many teachers had struggled to understand and operationalize inclusion as: everyone included in education under the same roof (57.89 %); catering to individual needs (22.8 %); and, everyone getting equal rights and opportunities (19.3 %). For 85% of respondents the understanding of inclusion came from their school-based learning, for 70% it was from modules, research and discussion, and for 22% it was through lectures and seminars. A shift in conceptualization of inclusion was observed at different levels during the training. It is therefore recommended that orientation training of policymakers and education department officials, both at the state and block levels, be conducted.

Specht (2016) explored a Canada-wide snapshot of the self-efficacy and beliefs of 1490 pre-service teachers in relation to inclusive teaching using the teacher efficacy for inclusive practice and the beliefs about learning and teaching questionnaire. At the time of data collection, these pre-service teachers were in the final stages of their teacher education programmes. Based on the results of surveys in 11 Faculties of Education, men have higher self-efficacy than women for managing behaviour in the classroom, elementary pre-service teachers have higher self-efficacy in collaboration than those teaching in secondary schools, those enrolled in the 1-year post-degree programme show lower self-efficacy than those enrolled in programmes of other durations, and those who have experience with people with special education needs show higher self-efficacy than those who do not. Differences illustrated that women were more inclusive than men, 1-year post degree pre-service teachers were less inclusive than others, and those who have experience with people with special education needs are more inclusive than those who do not.

Aiello, Pace, Dimitrov and Sibilio (2017) studied on the implicit dimensions that influence teacher agency and is aimed at investigating the teachers‟ sentiments, attitudes, concerns and perceived levels of efficacy to implement inclusive practices. The sample comprised in two groups: the first included 221 pre-service teachers undergoing training to teach in secondary schools and the second were 131 in-service teachers following a course to obtain the learning support teachers‟ warrant. The TEIP and the SACIE-R scales were administered to conduct the study. Results showed that the future learning support teachers had generally higher scores than the pre-service teachers. The positive attitude of the former group towards inclusive practices, however, seemed not to be linked to their greater teaching experience but more likely to the characteristics of their course of education.

Harper and Debra (2017) explored the Peripheral Factors of Inclusive Education and Teacher Self-Efficacy. A sample of 6 General education teachers from core academic inclusive classrooms participated in this research. Data were collected via an online questionnaire and face-to-face, semi structured interviews. Data analysis revealed that 60 the participating General education teachers considered the prevailing peripheral factor negatively shaping their self-efficacy regarding successful inclusive instruction to be time constraints. Conversely, school administrative support was perceived by the participants as having the most positive impact to their inclusive teaching. Based upon these findings, the following recommendations for future study could extend the results of this current research: (a) investigate strategies related to how school administration achieves the positive perceptions of General education teachers, and (b) examine solutions to time constraints by implementing a plan developed from teacher insights drawn from this study.

Kuittinen (2017) explored Chilean teachers‟ attitudes towards inclusive education and self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices. The data were collected in 2015. A sample of 108 Chilean in-service teachers completed a questionnaire containing a Sentiments, Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education (SACIE) scale, a Teacher Self-Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale, and ratings for the best educational environment for students with different special educational needs. The results indicate that teachers‟ sentiments towards interacting with people with disabilities were positive, but that they had great concerns for including students with special educational needs in their own classrooms. Teachers‟ overall self-efficacy in implementing inclusive practices was high, and teachers with higher self-efficacy also had more positive attitudes. The quality of teachers‟ previous experience (from

very negative to very positive) on teaching students with special educational needs was the strongest predictor of their attitudes towards inclusive education. The most inclusive educational environments were recommended for students with mild special educational needs. The findings of this study suggest that positive experience of teaching students with special educational needs can have positive impact on teachers" attitudes toward inclusion. The findings provide to understand teachers" attitudes toward inclusive education more comprehensively, and give ideas on how to improve pre-service and in-service teacher education.

Timo Saloviita (2020) Positive teacher attitudes are essential for success when children with special educational needs (SEN) are placed into mainstream classrooms. The present study surveyed teachers' attitudes towards inclusion by using a large national sample and Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusion Scale (TAIS). A total of 1,764 Finnish basic-school teachers participated in the e-mail survey. They included 824 classroom teachers, 575 subject teachers and 365 special-education teachers. The classroom teachers scored below and the subject teachers significantly below, the neutral midpoint of the scale. The special-education teachers' mean scores were above the midpoint. About 20% of teachers were strong opponents of inclusion, and 8% were strong advocates. The attitudes towards inclusion had only weak associations with variables other than the teacher category. Teachers' work orientation and self-efficacy had low associations with their attitudes towards inclusion. The results illustrate the attitudinal climate of teachers towards inclusion and indicate the existing potential for policy change.

Nepal Paramanik (2018) Inclusive education is one of the most essential educational programmes in all countries. It has given more opportunities to all students in education system. Success of Inclusive education depends on various factors, in which teacher is the most significant factor. For becoming a competent and successful inclusive teacher, it is necessary to have required knowledge, skills and positive attitude. In the present study an attempt has been prepared by the investigator to study the 'Attitude of secondary school teachers towards Inclusive education' in the district of Purulia, West Bengal. In the present study, the investigator has used Descriptive survey method. The sample consists of 150 secondary school teachers in the district of Purulia, West Bengal. The stratified random sampling method has been used for the collection of data. The investigator has developed Questionnaire by himself to measure the attitude of secondary school Teachers towards the

Inclusive education. For the analysis of data Mean, S.D and 't' test have used in the present study. The findings of this study that the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education is being neither favourable nor unfavourable that is Moderate. This study also indicates that there is a significant difference between Rural and Urban teachers in respect of attitude towards inclusive education. Besides, this study indicates that there is no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers in respect of their attitude towards inclusive education.

Payal&Mayaan (2015) aimed at studying the awareness and attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education. A semi-structured self-constructed interview schedule and a self-constructed attitude scale were used to study the awareness of teachers about disability and Inclusive education, and their attitudes towards inclusive education respectively on a sample of 100 teachers. Results revealed that teachers had some amount of awareness but an inadequate amount of information on disabilities and inclusive education. Disability to most (37) teachers meant 'an inability to do something'. The difference between disability and handicap was stated by most as former being cognitive while handicap being physical in nature. With regard to Inclusive education, a large number (46) stated that they were unaware of the term and did not know what it meant. The majority (52) of them perceived maximum challenges for themselves in an inclusive set up, and emphasized on the role of teacher training courses in the area of providing knowledge (49) and training in teaching methodology (53). Although, 83.3 percent of the teachers held a moderately positive attitude towards inclusive education, a large percentage (61.6 percent) of participants felt that being in an inclusive set up would be very challenging for both children with special needs and without special needs. Though, most (49 percent) of the teachers stated that children with special needs should be educated in a regular classroom, but they further clarified that only those should be in a regular classroom who have physical impairments of mild or moderate degree.

Nagpal (2015) studied Knowledge, Concerns and Attitudes of teachers concerning Inclusion in relation to their demographic professional attributes of 300 teachers of Haryana, India. She found that majority of teachers had 'No Knowledge' about developing/designing and monitoring of IEP, different forms of assessment and their purpose for inclusion, organizing instructional material, managing behavioural problems of CWSN and so many other components of inclusive education. Teachers had a 'Little Knowledge' about the role &

responsibilities of parents and teachers in the success of inclusive education, characteristics of inclusive education programme and characteristics & needs of disabled students. Nagpal also found a positive correlation between total knowledge and total concerns & its four factors which indicated that the teachers who had good knowledge of inclusive education were likely to have fewer the concerns about inclusion.

Sangeeta & Kumari, (2015) In a study, the researchers found an unsuccessful aspect of inclusive programe in SSA. The first constituent i.e. 'awareness', is still unachieved as 40 percent heads and 20 percent regular teachers of the studied inclusive schools of North-West district of Delhi didn't support the philosophy of Inclusive education and merely 30 percent teachers supported it partially. To its more peculiarity, not a single teacher as well as head of the institution was found having the clarity about the meaning, functions, objectives and bases of inclusive education. All the 25 heads revealed that there is no inspection done by the concerned authority in relation to the situation and progress of children with disabilities.

Galovica, Brojcin&Glumbic (2014) in their study 'the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education in Vojvodina', examined the attitudes of preschool, primary, secondary and high school teachers towards inclusive education. In addition, the study established the correlation between these attitudes and gender, education level, teaching experience, formal training in the special education field, and the duration and quality of work experience with children with special education needs. The sample comprised 322 teachers from the Serbian province of Vojvodina. The results showed that, in general, the participants held neutral attitudes towards inclusive education and more positive expectations regarding the outcomes of inclusion. This study also emphasised teaching performance in an inclusive class as a subject of great concern. The high school and preschool teachers as well as the teachers with previous positive experience with working in an inclusive environment reported more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than those from primary and secondary schools and those with negative experiences with the implementation of inclusive practices.

To explore the attitudes and teaching self-efficacy of pre-service teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms, Sharma, Shaukat &Furlonger (2015) conducted a study. A questionnaire was administered to 194 pre-service Pakistani teachers (male 73, female 121) enrolled in a 1-year teacher education programme at a government university in Pakistan. Overall, male pre-service teachers expressed more positive attitudes than their female counterparts regarding the inclusion of students with

disabilities in regular classrooms. Surprisingly, those preservice teachers majoring in special education did not express more positive attitudes towards inclusion than their counterparts who were preparing to teach in mainstream schools. However, participants with training in special education, knowledge of disability legislation, teaching experience and personal experience with a disability reported higher levels of self-efficacy towards teaching within inclusive settings.

In order to examine the teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special educational needs, in public schools and how these attitudes are influenced by their self-efficacy perceptions, Tsakiridou&Polyzopoulou (2014) conducted a research comprised of 416 preschool, primary and secondary education teachers. The results revealed that, in general, teachers develop positive attitude toward the inclusive education. Higher selfefficacy was associated rather with their capacity to come up against negative experiences at school, than with their attitude toward disabled learners in the classroom and their ability to meet successfully the special educational needs students.

Education

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'. According to Rafferty, Boettcher & Griffin (2001), inclusion refers to 'the process of educating children with disabilities in the regular education classrooms of their neighbourhood 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. Exclusion, poverty and disability are linked. Education is widely recognized as a means to develop human capital, to improve

economic performance, and to enhance people's capabilities and choices. Exclusion from education can result in a staggering loss of freedom and productivity in the labor market. The international community (at least at the policy level) has recognized education as a fundamental child right and has committed to a framework for action to address this right, and to redress exclusion as directed by EFA 2000. Including students with diverse educational needs in mainstream schools is now at the heart of educational policy and planning throughout the world and this emphasis on education for all within inclusive schools has served as a catalyst for the transformation of schools. Philosophy regarding the education of children with disabilities has changed significantly over the past two decades and several countries have led in the effort to implement policies which foster the integration and, more recently, inclusion of these students into mainstream educational settings. The belief that special schools could provide the best education for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) has long been considered in many Western countries. However, this belief was questioned in the early 80s, resulting in a discussion to integrate Children With Special Needs (CWSN) in regular schools. Causing the implementation of inclusive education, an increase in the number of CWSN was apparent, which led to the growing belief that spending more time on CWSN would ultimately save public money (Warnock Committee, 1978). Special education led to a segregation of students with SEN from society, which implies a violation of students' rights to be educated with typically developing peers (Fisher, Roach & Frey, 2002). It was no longer believed that special education provided a better education than regular education. The literature reviewed by Gartner and Lipsky & Gartner (1987) underlined that the academic achievement of students with relatively mild SEN in special and regular education did not differ significantly. In line with this, Kavale&Forness (2000) concluded that the effects of special education on academic as well as social development can be questioned. In the early 80s the Warnock report had an important influence on shaping the ideas about special education. Later, in the early 90s, many countries across signed the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), the basic assumption of its Framework of Action being the right of every person with a disability to express his/her wishes with respect to education. Furthermore, the Statement makes it clear that policymakers, school heads and teachers should promote positive attitudes towards CWSN in regular education, since "regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all".

Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education in context of the goals of Education for All is a complex issue, and no coherent approach is evident in the literature. First, at a basic level of policy, unlike health and labor markets, disability is seen as an array of issues crossing health, education, social welfare, and employment sectors, etc. As a result, policy development in relation to individuals with disabilities faces challenges to avoid fragmented, uneven, and difficult to access services. Second, Inclusive Education may be implemented at different levels, embrace different goals, be based on different motives, reflect different classifications of Special Education Needs (SEN), and provide services in different contexts. Specific goals may focus either on improved educational performance and quality of education, or on autonomy, self-determination, proportionality, consumer satisfaction or parental choice. Some of these goals may conflict and produce tensions. Similarly, motives for Inclusive Education may be derived from dissatisfaction with the system, from economic or resource allocation concerns, or from a vision of educational reform. Finally, SEN services may be viewed as a continuum of placement options (multi-track approach), as a distinct education system (two-track approach) or as a continuum of services within one placement- the general education school and classroom (onetrack approach). All of the variants produced by these different aims, levels, systems and motives may be called Inclusive Education.

The term 'inclusive education' is often used to refer to educating students with or without SEN in regular schools (Rafferty at el., 2001). The definition of Farrell (2000) includes a more student-oriented perspective and states that 'students with SEN should take a full and active part in school life, are a valued member of the school community and are seen as an integral member'. Most recently, Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (United Nations, 2006) guarantees the right of persons with disabilities to an inclusive education system at all levels. By signing the Convention, countries commit to providing "effective individualized support measures in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion". A total number of 153 states signed this convention, including India.

Inclusion in an educational philosophy aimed at "normalizing" special services for which students qualify. Inclusion involves an attempt to provide more of these special services by providing additional aids and support rather than by pulling students out for isolated instruction. Inclusion involves the extension of general education curricula and goals to

provide students special services. Finally, inclusion involves shared responsibility, problem solving, and mutual support among all the staff members who provide services to students. Inclusion is actually a much stronger concept which refers to "the right to belong to the mainstream" (Centre of the Studies on Inclusive Education, 2007); leaving behind the idea that only few learners have "special needs". The social model of inclusion rather suggests that all students as individual learners present their own peculiar characteristics and have their own specific educational needs. Such a perspective implies a Copernican revolution which brings all students at the very heart of the educational process whilst the school is required to adjust and change in order to enable each of them to participate in the life of the school to the best of their abilities.

"Inclusive education - according to UNESCO means that the school can provide a good education to all pupils irrespective of their varying abilities. All children will be treated with respect and ensured equal opportunities to learn together. Inclusive education is an on-going process. Teachers must work actively and deliberately to reach its goals". Inclusion is a philosophy for bringing children with special needs well within the purview of mainstream education to recognize the diverse needs of the students and ensures quality education to all through appropriate curricula, teaching strategies, support services and partnerships with the community. Inclusion should, then, be regarded as a long-lasting process which requires time, effort, competence and strong conviction by all those involved in students' education, first and foremost, by teachers. The overall goal of inclusive education is to promote opportunities for all children to participate and be treated equally. Inclusive education is defined as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners and of reducing exclusion to and within education system (UNESCO, 2003). Inclusive education is concerned within providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in both formal and non-formal educational settings. It advocates for changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, policies and strategies. At the heart of inclusive education is the vision to transform the education system so it can provide improved quality of education for all learners. Schools are inclusive when they are working towards full participation, community and equality through: respect for differences, respect for different learning styles, variations in methods, open and flexible curricula and welcoming each and every child. In other words, inclusive schools are learner-centered and child friendly.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the results that the inclusive teachers have high teaching efficacy, knowledge and attitude to deal with all types of children in inclusive classroom. It can be concluded that pre-service teachers need training to deal children with disability in inclusive classrooms. Teacher education institutions in India need to re- frame their programs, ensuring that adequate emphasis may be paid to this aspect. During their initial teacher education training, it is important that pre-service teachers must be exposed to students with disabilities. The large majority of pre-service teachers in this study did not have ongoing contact with children having disabilities. Such contact, if systematically designed, can significantly improve pre-service teachers teaching efficacy, knowledge and attitudes and subsequently, their behaviour in the classroom. With legislation supporting inclusive education in place, it is important that teacher education institutions prepare teachers who are confident in their ability to cater for diversity within their classrooms. Such teachers are, in turn, 163 likely to have positive impact on the attitudes of normal student towards their class fellows with disabilities. The best way to change the attitude of the society towards children with disabilities may be by ensuring positive attitude of the teachers.

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