

Research Paper



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A STUDY OF ATTITUDE OF PUPIL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is the practice that provides school experiences to children with disability or special needs in the same school and classrooms where normal students get education. Inclusive Education is the practice of educating students with moderate to severe disabilities alongside children without disabilities in general classrooms within their home neighbourhood schools (Brown et al. 1983). Attitude as a concept is concerned with an individual way of thinking, acting and behaving. Attitudes are formed as a result of some kind of learning experiences. A descriptive study by survey method was conducted to know attitude of pupil teachers towards inclusive education. The sample for the present study comprised of 240 pupil teachers from various teacher education colleges located at Faridabad district of Haryana selected randomly. There were equal numbers of male and female pupil teachers. Teacher's attitude scale towards inclusive education standardized and validated by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand was used for the collection of data. Statistical Treatment such as mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used to analyse and interpret the data. The findings of the study show that there existed a significant difference between male and female pupil teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. Female pupil teachers were found to be more positive towards inclusive education than their counterpart the male pupil teachers.

KEY WORDS: Attitude, Inclusive Education, Pupil Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Attitude is a complex state of mind dealing with one's own belief, feeling, values and disposition of like or dislike towards anything. Teachers should be practically prepared to adopt inclusive education which can only be possible if a teacher possesses positive attitude towards inclusive education. Special Educational Needs and Disability act (2001) leads to an earnest need for education for all children either normal or special need children in a class under the one roof where every child get formal education. Inclusive education stands for improvement of schools in all ways to address the needs of all children either normal or children with special needs or gifted children. The world conference 1994 on Special Needs Education in Salamanca Spain gave emphasis on inclusive education stating that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. The disabled children may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, and developmental or some combination of these. Disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. An individual may be called as disabled if he/she has some disability such as

physical, sensory and cognitive or developmental disabilities or impairment in the past or is seen as disabled based on a personal or group standard or norm. Various mental disorders and various types of chronic disease may also include as disabilities.

A disability may occur at any stage of a person's lifetime or it may be present from birth. Disability is caused by impairments to various subsystems of the body. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), produced by the World Health Organization, distinguish between body functions physiological or psychological and body structures. Impairment in bodily structure or function is defined as involving an anomaly, defect, loss or other significant deviation from certain generally accepted population standards, which may fluctuate over time.

In India the first attempt to educate handicapped children were made in the last two decades of the nineteenth century with the establishment of the first school for the hearing impaired in Mumbai in (1885) A. D., followed by the first school for the visually impaired in Amritsar in (1887) A. D. According to the estimates of national survey organization, the number of disabled persons is about 120 lakhs. The



government of India has established several special institutes for the handicapped such as, national institute for visually handicapped at Dehradun, national institute of handicapped at Mumbai, national institute of orthopedic at Kolkata and national institute of mentally retarded at Hyderabad.

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ATTITUDE

An attitude is a predisposition to react favorably or unfavorably towards ideas, objects, persons, events or situations. Attitude is a kind of mental set which leads one to respond to ideas, presents, and objects in terms of previously acquired feeling and thoughts. An attitude prepares an individual to be motive in particular ways but does not energize him. It is the description and explanations of human behaviour. An attitude may have three components.

- **Cognitive:** A cognitive component, consisting of the ideas beliefs which the attitude holder has about the attitude object.
- **Affective:** In effective emotional component which refers to the feeling and emotions one has towards the object. A behaviour component consisting of one's action, tendencies towards the object.
- **Conative:** In conative component an individual reacts for ones like or dislike for anything. This component consisting of one's action, tendencies towards the object.

According to Allport (1935), 'an attitude is a mental or natural state of readiness, organized through experience, existing a directive or dynamic influence upon the individuals response to all objects and situations with which it is related. According to Warren Psychological Basis, "The attitude or preparation in advance of the actual response constitutes an important determination of the ensuring social behavior. Such neural settings with their accompanying consciousness, are numerous and significant in social life".

According to **Hound Berg** "An attitude denotes the general set of the organism as a whole towards an object or situation which calls for adjustment."

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education gained momentum in India because of various international developments which advocate inclusive education such as Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, UN Standard Minimum Rules, 1993 but it was greatly influenced by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994). In India, it is based on the assumption that education is a basic requirement and it should be accessible to all regardless of disparities, difficulties and disabilities. In India, an ideal system of inclusive education, there is need for the general education system to be modified to fulfill the educational needs of children with disabilities along with normal children and the attitude of teachers should be modified to teach in an inclusive system of education.

Inclusive education is a system of education in which all the students with special education needs are enrolled in

general classes and is provided with special supportive services. This type of education is based on the diverse needs of pupils. In this system of education, there is a specialist who assists the classroom teachers in developing the best strategies for teaching those students who have learning disabilities, sensory impairments such as problems with visions and hearing etc.

Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together. Inclusive education provides the places and the catalyst through which general and special teachers, students and parents come together to create quality democratic schools.

Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that provides all students with community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. Inclusion is about making sure that each and every student feels welcome and that their unique needs and learning styles are attended to and valued. Mainstreaming has many advantages:

- Students become more regular to attend the school they would normally attend.
- The educational setting is more authentic and Greater social opportunities.
- Regular and special education support provides a more individualized approach.
- Curricula are more relevant to the grade and Greater sense of belongingness.

PUPIL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A successful inclusive learning community fosters collaboration, problem solving, self-directed and critical discourse, which allows students with extra-ordinary gifts and talents to move at their natural learning rate, to move at the best of their ability, specific learning challenges to receive creative and effective support to maximize the success. Pupil teachers are the future teachers so they must be given education to work in an inclusive system of education they should be taught that all children benefit from inclusive education as it allows them to:

- Develop individual strengths with high and appropriate expectations for each other.
- Every child has to work on individual goals while participating in the classroom activities with other students of their own age.
- Involve the parents in their wards' education and the activities organized in an institution.
- Foster a school culture of respect and belongingness which provides opportunities to learn about and accept individual differences, lessening the impact of harassment and bullying.
- Positively affect both their school and community to appreciate diversity and inclusion on a broader level.
- Develop friendships with a wide variety of other children, each with their own individual needs and abilities.

Inclusive schools put the values upon pluralism, tolerance, and equality into action where teachers provide appropriate individualized supports and services to all students without the stigmatization that comes with separation. Researches show that most students learn and perform better when exposed to the richness of the general

education curriculum, as long as the appropriate strategies and accommodations are in place. For teachers inclusive education is an exciting challenge, the stresses associated with its introduction being seen as life-sustaining, enjoyable and beneficial. Positive attitudes are considered to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms. Inclusive education can only be successful if teachers are part of the team driving this process. It is important to develop the attitude of pupil teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular settings as their perceptions may influence their behavior toward and acceptance of such students in future.

In India, there are many challenges regarding inclusive education such as the conservative and negative attitude of the society, rigid curriculum, conventional methods of teaching, poor quality of teacher education, lack of infrastructure and facilities, improper policies and programmes etc.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Earlier the special classes were created for students with special needs where special teachers felt that if they could just teach these students separately, in smaller groups, they could help them to catch up. However, the reality is that students in segregated special education classes have fallen further and further behind. Now it is considered that inclusive education is a better way to help all students succeed. The attitudes of teachers toward inclusion of students with learning disabilities in regular education classrooms could help develop remedies and supportive procedures to improve inclusion programs' outcomes. Understanding if a teacher does not have proper training or support to work in an inclusive setting, they may not have positive attitudes towards inclusion. It is the teacher education which can develop this positive attitude among teachers to work in an inclusive environment.

As pupils teachers are the future teachers so they must understand that inclusive education is a process of enabling all children to learn and participate effectively within mainstream school systems. It does not segregate children who have different abilities or needs. The central purpose becomes more challenging as schools accommodate students with increasingly diverse backgrounds and abilities. 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, so a positive attitude towards inclusive system of education must be developed among pupil teachers. So the researcher carried out a research titled "A Study of Attitude of Pupil Teachers towards Inclusive Education" which is imperative. This study provides some information regarding pupil teachers' current feelings, challenges and concerns regarding inclusion of disabled children in main stream of education. It guaranteed non-discrimination and removal of barriers, both physical and psychological; to facilitate the inclusion of students with special needs into regular schools. It urged policy makers, educators, parents and other service providers to consider the premise that special education should be seen as an integral part of regular education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study under investigation is entitled as "A Study of Attitude of Pupil Teachers towards Inclusive Education".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study Pupil Teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.
2. To study male pupil teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.
3. To study female pupil teachers' attitude towards inclusive education
4. To study the difference between male and female pupil teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. Male and female pupil teachers do not differ significantly in their attitude towards inclusive education.

METHODOLOGY

Webster has defined methodology as "The science of methods or arrangement". Research methodology involves systematic procedures to get solution of the problem. There are various research methods but the researcher conducted descriptive research followed by survey method which is comparative in nature. The present study is a descriptive survey which aims at analyzing the attitude of Pupil Teachers towards inclusive education.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Population for the present study comprised of Pupil Teachers of District Faridabad of Haryana. The sample for the present study comprised of 240 pupil teachers from various teacher education colleges located at Faridabad district of Haryana selected randomly. There were equal numbers of male and female pupil teachers.

TOOL USED IN THE STUDY

Teacher's attitude scale towards inclusive education standardized and validated by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand was used for the collection of data.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study was delimited to Pupil Teachers only.
2. The study was delimited to the teacher education colleges located at Faridabad district of Haryana state only.
3. The study was delimited to the 240 pupil teachers.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

The mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used to analyse the data.

Z – Scores Ranges of Attitude of Pupil Teachers:

The table 1, given below shows the number of Pupil Teachers falling under various Level of attitude with respect to inclusive education.

S.N.	Range of Z-scores	Grade	Attitude Level	No. of Male Pupil Teachers	No. of Female Pupil Teachers
1.	+2.01 & Above	A	Extremely high	5	2
2.	+1.26 to +2.00	B	High	18	15
3.	+0.51 to +1.30	C	Above average	25	31
4.	-0.50 to +0.50	D	Average	44	46
5.	-0.51 to -1.30	E	Below average	12	15
6.	-1.26 to -2.00	F	Low	10	8
7.	-2.01 to and below	G	Extremely Low	6	3
Total				120	120

On analyzing the data of Level of Attitude towards inclusive education of 120 male and 120 female pupil teachers, it was concluded that 5 male and 2 female pupil teachers were found to be at the Extremely high level of positive attitude towards inclusive education while 18 male and 15 female pupil teachers were found under high level, 25 male and 31 female pupil teachers were in above average level, 44 male and 46 female pupil teachers at average level, 12 male and 15 female pupil teachers at below average level, 10 male and 8 female pupil teachers at low level and only 6 male and 3 female teachers were found at Extremely Low level of attitude towards inclusive education.

Maximum numbers of male and female pupil teachers were found at an average level of positive attitude towards inclusive education.

COMPARISON OF ATTITUDE BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE PUPIL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The table 2 shows relevant statistics i.e. mean, standard deviation (SD), and t- ratio of male and female pupil teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

Pupil Teachers	N	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	Remarks
Male	120	97.32	25.41	2.22	Significant
Female	120	104.75	26.52		

It is clear from table-2 that the mean scores of attitude of 120 male pupil teachers was calculated to be 97.32 with standard deviation 25.41 which is slightly less than the mean scores of attitude of 120 female pupil teachers i.e. 104.75 with standard deviation 26.52.

On analyzing the data it is clear that two groups differ significantly on their attitude towards inclusive education. The calculated t-value 2.22 is greater than the tabulated t value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the hypothesis, "Which reads as, the male and the female pupil teachers do not differ significantly on their attitude towards inclusive education is rejected.

This shows that the female pupil teachers were found to be more positive towards their attitude to inclusive education in comparison to their male counterpart.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Maximum numbers of male and female pupil teachers were found at an average level of positive attitude towards inclusive education.
- Very few pupil teachers were found to be at Extremely Low level of attitude towards inclusive education
- On analyzing the data it is clear that two groups differ significantly on their attitude towards inclusive education.
- The female teachers were found to be a little more positive in their attitude towards inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

Attitude as a concept is concerned with an individual way of thinking, acting and behaving which is formed as a result of some kind of learning experiences. It has been found that there existed significant difference between male and female pupil teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. Female pupil teachers were found to be more positive in their attitude towards inclusive education than their counterpart the male pupil teachers.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The following statement of attitude must be taught to all teachers in carrying out their education:

- In inclusive system of education, be conscious of duty of care to the students in all educational activities in and out of school.
- Demonstrate the highest standards of professional behaviour, exercise professional judgement and act in a courteous and sensitive manner when interacting with students, parents, staff and the public.
- Collaborate in the development of school plans, policies and programs.
- Treat students equitably, including those with disabilities or other special needs.
- Meet the individual learning needs of students and assist each student to maximize his or her learning outcomes.
- Effectively manage and implement programs for child protection and student welfare.
- Perform duties efficiently and effectively and with honesty, integrity and fairness at all times.
- Not to use any form of corporal punishment or engage in any form of behaviour which could cause physical or emotional abuse to students.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A similar study on a larger sample may be repeated.
2. A similar study on pupil teachers belonging to other district may be undertaken.
3. A comparative study of attitudes of private and Government school teachers towards inclusive education should be under taken.
4. A study may be conducted to know the effectiveness of pre-service and in-service teacher education in order to develop positive attitudes towards inclusive education.
5. Attitude plays a significant role in selecting a job of teaching. A similar study may be conducted to know the pros and cons of different attitude of teachers towards inclusive education.

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