ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM AMONG MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SCHOOL IN JAMMU CITY

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ABSTRACT

Teacher’s attitudes significantly influence the learning environment they create for the students and the application of appropriate practices in the classroom. Teacher plays a crucial role in the implementation of inclusive education. It is important that teachers believe that through their ability to make decisions they can make a great difference in the education of their students with and without disability. Teacher’s perceptions of inclusive policies not only determine the level of acceptance they show towards inclusive practices but also affect their commitment towards the implementation of such policies. The present study “Attitudes towards Inclusive Classroom among Middle School Teachers of Government and Private School in Jammu City” helps in measuring the attitude of teachers towards inclusive classroom. The sample of the present study has been randomly selected 50 teachers from government and 50 teachers from private middle schools of Jammu City (J&K). In order to find out the attitude of teachers towards inclusive classroom a standardized Scale of measuring Teachers Attitude Towards Inclusive Classroom (STATIC) by H.Keith Cochran ,phD (1999) has been used. It has been found that 48% of both government and private teachers working in middle schools having positive attitude towards inclusive classroom. After comparing it has been revealed that there is no difference in the attitude of teachers working in government and private schools located in Jammu City. Attempt has been made through this study to clear the misconceptions of teachers about inclusive classroom and indicating the need to develop positive attitude. So as to make education universal for all irrespectively caste, creed, colour and disability.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge of integrating and including persons with disabilities in the economic mainstream has not been met. Despite international standards and the implementation of exemplary training and employment legislation, policies and practices in some countries, persons with disabilities, and especially children, women, youth and those in rural areas, remain disproportionately uneducated, untrained, unemployed and poor “Well, in India, the major problem is that of positive attitude and awareness or rather, the lack of it. There also a kind of stigma associated with them, which is disgusting. There are laws that state that no school for ‘normal children can refuse admission to persons with disabilities ones, however, it is rarely followed; most schools do refuse admission to such children. All these factors lead to just one result: these children do not receive the education they deserve, the education that their peers receive. Over 600 million people, or approximately ten per cent of the world’s population, have a disability of one form or another. Over two thirds of them live in developing countries. Only two percent of persons with disabilities and children in the developing countries receive education or being rehabilitation. The link between disability, poverty and social exclusion is direct and strong throughout the world” – (UN, 2006).

It has been proved that disability lies in the social system and not within persons with disabilities themselves. They need protection of their rights and equal opportunities instead of showing pity and getting charity. Disability movement both worldwide and within India has a greater role to play in this transformation. The movement has to be strengthening further. In everywhere in the world, persons with disabilities are the largest minority group starved of services and facilities available to their non- persons with disabilities counterparts. As a result they are least nourished, least healthy, least educated and least employed.

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Educating children in an inclusive classroom at a young age is one of the best opportunities to teach them about certain values and advocacies. Inclusive classroom is the provision of services to students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for both children and teachers. It is a system in which all children from a given community learn together in the same local school including children with learning difficulties, special needs or disabilities. As such, educators rely on disability awareness programs in public schools to tell students about the importance of caring for those that have certain disabilities.

There are already many schools that integrate normal children to those with disabilities in order to foster an environment of joint learning. This helps young people with disabilities to be accepted and not alienated from society. It deals them the chance to interact with other kids at such a young age so they become familiar with their environment without having to be cuddled up to it.

Every parent wants their child to be healthy. Due to certain medical conditions, bad genetics or certain accidents, children can grow to develop certain disabilities: they become blind or deaf, they cannot walk or their brain is affected.

The main idea behind this study is that a lot of awareness needs to be created and raised, as all of these children and adults need to be treated equally. Their parents, their relatives, their friends, their teachers, everyone needs to regard these kids like normal beings who were not fortunate enough to maintain or have perfect physical integrity or health in the first place. Creating and raising disability awareness in schools is one of the main actions that need to be done all across the world. Teacher attitude is one of the most important variables in the education of the children with and without disabilities.

**Review of Related Literature**

Sharma and Sanjeev (2009) conducted a study on attitude and concerns of pre-service teachers regarding inclusion of students with disabilities into regular schools in Pune, India. The study focused on attitudes and concerns of pre-service teachers regarding implementation of inclusive education were examined. The participation consisted of 480 pre-service teachers enrolled in a one year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program at Pune University, in the state of Maharashtra. The results of the study showed that participants had somewhat negative attitudes and a moderate degree of concern regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in their classes.

Rahaman & Sutherland (2013) intended to present the results of a small pilot study in their paper in which a dozen Bangladesh teachers were surveyed about the pedagogy and practice of inclusion. A questionnaire was devised to assess the teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion as philosophy, and their knowledge of its practice. In summary, the findings from these interviews revealed that the education system – especially the teacher training system – was not adequate for teachers’ needs with respect to inclusive education. The interviews revealed that most of the teachers had no significant interaction with people with disabilities. Both teachers and parents had a lack of understandings about the legislative requirements and their responsibilities towards disability and inclusive education.

Kibria (2013) presented a paper on academic achievement and psychosocial development of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms in an international conference on inclusive education: ACIE, Dhaka, Bangladesh. The efficacy of placing students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms has been a controversial issue to some stakeholders. Although empirical evidence is very limited in this area, a review of recent research about placement of students with disabilities in inclusive settings indicates significant positive outcomes in the area of social development and in some measures of academics performance.

Khan (2015) investigated a study on the viewpoint of principals and teachers about inclusive education: Evidence from Government Schools of Islamabad, Pakistan. The study was conducted in ordinary government schools of Islamabad capital territory where inclusive education is being practiced. The study was carried out involving 66 principals and 43 teachers. Six primary schools were randomly selected from a total twelve schools. The sample group comprised of both, principals & teachers trained in inclusive education and principals & teachers working in same schools but not trained in inclusive education. Random sampling method was used to select principals & trained teachers where purposive sampling method was used to select teachers who have not been trained in inclusive education. Structured interview and focus group discussion method was used for data collection. The analysis revealed that principals & teachers, with an experience and orientation of inclusive education, have more favorable viewpoint regarding inclusion of students with special needs in mainstream schools.

**Need and Significance of the Study**

Teacher’s attitudes significantly influence the learning environment they create for the students and the application of appropriate practices in the classroom. Teacher plays a crucial role in the implementation of inclusive education. It is important that teachers believe that through their ability to make decisions they can make a great difference in the education of their students with a disability. Teachers perceptions of inclusive policies not only determine the level of acceptance they show towards inclusive practices but also affect their commitment towards the implementation of such policies. It is the teacher who works most closely with the student the knowledge that the teacher acquires and the attitudes he/she holds, greatly influence the ability of students to adapt to their environment as well as their performance in the inclusive classroom. Inclusive classroom is the provision of services to students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for both children and teachers. It is a system in which all children from a given community learn together in the same local school including children with learning difficulties, special needs or disabilities. So for successful implementation of inclusion in the school it is necessary to know teachers attitude towards inclusive education. Thus keeping in mind the above said points the present study has been selected for investigation.
Objectives of the Study

1. To find the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in government schools of Jammu city
2. To find the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in private schools of Jammu city
3. To compare the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in government and private school of Jammu city

Research Questions

1. What is the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in government schools of Jammu city?
2. What is the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in private schools of Jammu city?
3. Is there any difference in the level of attitude towards inclusive classroom among teachers working in government and private schools of Jammu city?

Research Methodology

In view of the objectives of the present study Descriptive Survey Method has been adopted

Sample of the Study

100 teachers working in government and private middle schools of Jammu city has been selected randomly.

Tool

In order to collect data the investigator has used Scale for measuring Teachers Attitude Towards Inclusive Classroom (STATIC) developed by H. Keith Cochran, 1999.

Scoring

Each statement is marked on six-point rating scale viz. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, But Tend to Disagree, Not Sure, But Tend to Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

Procedure of Data Collection

In order to achieve the objective related to attitude the researcher personally visited the selected schools for the data collection. First of all, the investigator approached the heads of the institutions and the purpose of the study was explained to them. Then description of the tool was given that tool consists 20 statement. The teachers were informed that their responses will be kept confidential and each statement has six point i.e 0,1,2,3,4,5,6 therefore, they should be frank, honest, bold, and sincere while answering the questions.

Analysis and Interpretations

Item wise Analysis of Objective one is Given below

To find the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in government schools of Jammu city.
Item 6: I believe that academic progress is possible in children with special needs: - 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 8% of the teachers disagree. 6% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree. 40% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree. 30% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 7: I believe that children with special needs should be placed in special education classes: - 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 2% of the teachers disagree. 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 34% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 40% of the teachers are agree whereas 10% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 16% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

Item 8: I am comfortable teaching a child that is moderately physically disabled: - 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 10% of the teachers disagree. 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 26% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 30% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 9: I have problems teaching a student with cognitive deficits: - 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 10% of the teachers disagree. 24% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 26% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 18% of the teachers are agree whereas 12% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 34% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

Item 10: I can adequately handle students with mild to moderate behavioral problems: - 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 8% of the teachers disagree. 20% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 22% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 30% of the teachers are agree whereas 20% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 11: Students with special needs learn social skills that are modeled by regular education students: - 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 4% of the teachers disagree. 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 26% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 30% of the teachers are agree whereas 6% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 12: Students with special needs have higher academic achievement when included in the regular education classroom: - 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 6% of the teachers disagree. 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 22% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 42% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 13: It is difficult for children with special needs to make strides in academic achievement in the regular classroom: - 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 16% of the teachers disagree. 16% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 32% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 20% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 32% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

Item 14: Self-esteem of children with special needs is increased when included in the regular education classroom: - 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 6% of the teachers disagree, 20% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 30% of the teachers are agree whereas 12% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 15: Students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education student: - 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 8% of the teachers disagree. 10% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 24% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 44% of the teachers are agree whereas 12% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 20% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

Item 16: Special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers: - 10% of the teachers strongly disagree, 6% of the teachers disagree. 22% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 26% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 26% of the teachers are agree whereas 10% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 20% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

Item 17: I don’t mind making special physical arrangements in my room to meet the needs of students with special needs: - 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 8% of the teachers disagree. 18% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 22% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 42% of the teachers are agree whereas 8% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 18: Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs: - 6% of the teachers strongly disagree, 10% of the teachers disagree. 16% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 34% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 28% of the teachers are agree whereas 6% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 19: My principal is supportive in making needed accommodations for teaching children with special needs: - 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 8% of the teachers disagree. 20% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 26% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 32% of the teachers are agree whereas 12% of the teachers are strongly agree.

Item 20: Students with special needs should be included in regular education classrooms: - 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 14% of the teachers disagree. 20% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 20% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 36% of the teachers are agree whereas 8% of the teachers are strongly agree.

To find the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in private schools of Jammu city...
**Item 1:** I am confident in my ability to teach children with special needs: 16% of the teachers strongly disagree, 0% of the teachers disagree, 0% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 20% of the teachers are agree whereas 34% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 2:** I have been adequately trained to meet the needs of children with disabilities: 6% of the teachers strongly disagree, 2% of the teachers disagree, 16% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 42% of the teachers are agree whereas 4% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 3:** I become easily frustrated when teaching students with special needs: 6% of the teachers strongly disagree, 4% of the teachers disagree, 26% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 20% of the teachers are agree whereas 4% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 36% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

**Item 4:** I become anxious when I learn that a student with special needs will be in my classroom: 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 2% of the teachers disagree, 12% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 22% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 42% of the teachers are agree whereas 20% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 16% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

**Item 5:** Although children differ intellectually, physically and psychologically, I believe that all children can learn in most environments: 6% of the teachers strongly disagree, 4% of the teachers disagree, 8% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 24% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 30% of the teachers are agree whereas 28% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 6:** I believe that academic progress is possible in children with special needs: 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 4% of the teachers disagree, 16% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 34% of the teachers are agree whereas 28% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 7:** I believe that children with special needs should be placed in special education classes: 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 6% of the teachers disagree, 12% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 22% of the teachers are agree whereas 26% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 22% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

**Item 8:** I am comfortable teaching a child that is moderately physically disabled: 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 8% of the teachers disagree, 4% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 24% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 38% of the teachers are agree whereas 22% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 9:** I have problems teaching a student with cognitive deficits: 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 16% of the teachers disagree, 6% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 24% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 26% of the teachers are agree whereas 24% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 26% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

**Item 10:** I can adequately handle students with mild to moderate behavioral problems: 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 14% of the teachers disagree, 22% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 40% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 18% of the teachers are agree whereas 2% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 11:** Students with special needs learn social skills that are modeled by regular education students: 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 10% of the teachers disagree, 10% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 26% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 36% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 12:** Students with special needs have higher academic achievement when included in the regular education classroom: 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 10% of the teachers disagree, 18% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 22% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 13:** It is difficult for children with special needs to make strides in academic achievement in the regular classroom: 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 16% of the teachers disagree, 8% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 30% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 24% of the teachers are agree whereas 20% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 26% of the teachers are having positive attitude towards disability.

**Item 14:** Self-esteem of children with special needs is increased when included in the regular education classroom: 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 4% of the teachers disagree, 2% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 28% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 34% of the teachers are agree whereas 32% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 15:** Students with special needs in the regular education classroom hinder the academic progress of the regular education student: 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 14%...
of the teachers disagree. 10% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 46% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree which clearly indicates that only 24% of the teachers are having positive attitude and 76% of the teachers are negative attitude towards disability.

**Item 16:** Special in-service training in teaching special needs students should be required for all regular education teachers:- 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 6% of the teachers disagree. 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 28% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 34% of the teachers are agree whereas 18% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 17:** I don’t mind making special physical arrangements in my room to meet the needs of students with special needs:- 6% of the teachers strongly disagree, 10% of the teachers disagree. 22% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 32% of the teachers are agree whereas 16% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 18:** Adaptive materials and equipment are easily acquired for meeting the needs of students with special needs:- 0% of the teachers strongly disagree, 2% of the teachers disagree. 20% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 28% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 28% of the teachers are agree whereas 22% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 19:** My principal is supportive in making needed accommodations for teaching children with special needs:- 4% of the teachers strongly disagree, 24% of the teachers disagree. 18% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 14% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 28% of the teachers are agree whereas 12% of the teachers are strongly agree.

**Item 20:** Students with special needs should be included in regular education classrooms:- 2% of the teachers strongly disagree, 8% of the teachers disagree. 0% of the teachers not sure but tend to disagree, 20% of the teachers not sure but tend to agree, 30% of the teachers are agree whereas 40% of the teachers are strongly agree.

To compare the level of attitude of middle school teachers towards inclusive classroom working in government and private school of Jammu city.

**Table 1** Comparison of attitude towards inclusive classroom among teachers of Govt. and Pvt. School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Level of Teachers</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>S.E.M</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>65.56</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>1.66*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>67.44</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>.916</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the t-value of 1.66 which is not significant at 0.05 levels which clearly reveals that there is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards inclusive classroom among teachers working in government and private middle schools of Jammu City.

**Educational Implications**

Human rights recognize that everyone is equally to live with dignity. They pertain equally to all people no matter their age, sex race, nationality or disability. Human rights apply equally to men and women with disabilities. They apply equally to people with all types of disabilities, including physical, psycho-social and intellectual disabilities. Person with disabilities have often been marginalized on account of their disability positive recognition of disability has become a part of the inescapable human diversity that enriches our life experience and our society (Corker1999, et.al.)

With the growing concerns for creating right based and barriers free societies for persons with disabilities, awareness towards disability related to education and rehabilitation services is a necessity which lead to such a society where all can live together without any discrimination. Every civilized society therefore must provide for adequate physical and financial resources for the education and rehabilitation of the disabled so that they can enjoy a life of freedom, self-respect and take part in social activities.

The role of the teachers is very significant in the rehabilitation of PWDs. The government has introduced several laws for facilitating the development of children with disability. Unfortunately the follow-ups of these laws are very less. Most of the teachers remain unaware of the existing of grants and schemes for the welfare of their children with disability. Disability occurs among children throughout the world. It is a source of great hardship to the teachers as well as economic and social burden on the community. It is estimated that 2-3% of the population worldwide is disability. Rehabilitation strategies focused largely on literacy and academic goals. An estimated 98% of rural and 95% of urban disabled have not been accessed to services (Bornmai, 1997)

The present study highlighted the awareness and attitude towards disability among middle school teachers of government and private schools.

**Suggestions**

- It is suggested to conduct workshops and sensitization programmes in order to create awareness among the teachers about education and rehabilitation services available for student with disabilities.
- It is suggested that school education department should organized seminar on disability issues.
- Training should be given to the teachers in handling children with specific disabilities.
- In service teachers should attend refresher courses related to disability issues.
- Teachers should be trained in new methodologies of teaching particularly with children with disability.
- A positive attitude towards disability can be developed by organizing conferences related to right of the person with disabilities.
- Teachers should be given orientation programmes on educational benefits and schemes available for children with disability.
- Teachers should make aware about the talents and hidden potentialities of the children with disability.
- Teacher should provide equal opportunities and participation to all children irrespective of disability.

**References**


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