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Attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of children

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the attitude of the teacher's towards inclusive education as the attitude of teachers or executors has a significant impact on the successful implementation of inclusive education. The population of the study comprised all pre- service and in-service teachers of the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. Out of this population, a sample of 108 pre-service & in-service teachers (associated with primary and secondary school) were selected through quota sampling technique from 11 institutions (belonging to the government and private management system). We wish to discover teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education among their different demographic variables i.e. Mode of service, Gender, Locality. An attitude of teachers towards Inclusive education questionnaire, was used for data collection. Collected data were statistically analyzed by using Frequency counts, Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Standard Error of Mean and ` t ` test. Among the total participants n= 200, 48.14% were pre-service teachers & 51.86% were in-service teachers, 50% teachers associated with the urban area & other 50% teachers living in rural areas, 48% were female & 52% were male. The result shows that attitude of teachers towards inclusive education was moderate to a favorable level. Pre-service and urban teachers had a more positive/favorable attitude towards inclusive education than the attitude of In-service and rural teachers, respectively. In contrast, there was no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, attitude, pre-service teachers, in-service teachers

Introduction

India is the biggest democratic country in the world. Being a quasi- federal nation, the core quality of its constitution, which is mentioned on the very first page i.e. preamble is justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all the citizens of the country. These core qualities would be only attainable by integrating peoples, all sections of society, by providing them inclusive education. Inclusive education aims to promote democratic principles and values and beliefs relating to equality and social justice to all.

Education is the biggest social equalizer but it becomes the biggest discriminatory tool when everyone is not included judiciously according to their special needs. We have seen that children with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups are not welcomed equally in the schools and are not given educational opportunities as per their differentiated needs.

Moreover, the history of education shows that the education system from the beginning was divided into two systems of education, namely special education and general education. Those who have different disabilities were admitted to special schools and those who do not have any kind of disability were enrolled in general schools (Dash, N. 2006). But this view has been changed over some time. Now Inclusive education has taken center stage all over the world, particularly in introducing educational reforms to prevent exclusionary practices. For the better nourishment of children with special needs and disabled many education reforms, policy amendments and different pedagogical strategies and practices have been adopted across the nation-states. Nowadays, inclusive education has become the best tool for social, political, and economic inclusions of children with special needs. It has become a matter of entitlement-a fundamental human right rather than a privilege or charity for children with different abilities.

Inclusive education

This education system accommodates all learners, children, and young people with or without disabilities in a common education system to learn together in a conducive environment. It also talks about all stakeholders in the system such as learners, parents,

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community, teachers, administrators, and policymakers, to be comfortable with diversity and take it as an opportunity rather than a problem.

Inclusive education is not only associated with targeting excluded section of societies or children but also it welcomes diversity, benefiting all learners, providing equal access to education and making appropriate provisions for certain categories of children without excluding them. The definition highlights the point that inclusion is not about meeting the needs of the disabled at the expense of non-disabled but it is a reciprocal process that benefits both; UNESCO (2009). Inclusive education comprehensively talked about the diversities among individuals. It does not only accept the children with special needs into the regular classroom but also accept their diversity, respect their individuality, create opportunities for full participation in every aspect of schooling so that they can reach up to their optimum potential.

Rationale of the study

Today Inclusive Education is a widely accepted approach of the 21st century because it helps in unfolding the hidden potential of the children, ensure the right of every individual without any discrimination and make a universally inclusive environment for the maximum development of the children as we know that we all have equal rights despite much difference. Inclusive education facilitates the idea of acceptance; promotes wider social acceptance, peace, and cooperation.

The most important responsibility of the proper function of inclusive depends upon the involvement and cooperation of teachers, parents, and community leaders. To the successful implementation of inclusive education, a positive attitude is required. It may be of society, peers, parents of the children, teachers, administrator's etc. the most important for the successful implementation of an inclusive approach in the classroom depends upon the attitude of teachers. Therefore, prioritizing inclusive education as an integral part of the education system is not enough but the attitude of teachers for inclusion is equally important. Teacher's attitude is important for the successful implementation of Inclusive Education and contributing great impact on the teaching-learning process in the classroom (Sharma, *et al.*, 2008, Hattie, 2009). Costello and Boyle (2013) and Goddard and Evans (2018) reported that primary pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were generally positive and strengthened across the training years. Monje (2017) found three distinct viewpoints that emerged on inclusion: Believers, Non-Believers and True Believers. The Believers and True believes both supported full-inclusion. The Non-Believers did not support full inclusion for all children with disabilities. The negative attitude of teachers towards IE affects teaching effectiveness & teaching-learning process of Children negatively and creates a hurdle for the success of Inclusive Education (Gal, Schreur and Engel-Yeger, 2010, Cassady, 2011, Taylor and Ringlaben, 2012). Daane, Beirne-Smith, and Latham (2000) suggested a need for proper training of teachers because teachers perceive themselves as unprepared for inclusive education because they lack appropriate training in this area. Khan, Hashmi and Khanum (2017) also recognized teachers' capacity as an essential component of inclusive education and recommended that inclusive education should be a part of pre-service and in- service teacher education. Bansal (2018)

[3] about the majority of the teachers agreed (53.8%) that all children should be educated in the regular classroom and because of inclusive education, they improve academically (52.3%) and have a positive effect on social and emotional development (47.6%). Both disabled and non-disabled children got opportunities for mutual communication (56.9%). 26.1% of the teachers were not sure about inclusive education practices. The studies (Minke *et al.*, 1996; Balboni and Pedrabissi, 2000; Opdal & Wormnaes, 2001; Wall, 2002; Agbenyega, 2007; Das and Kattumuri, 2011) [1, 2] finally conclude that attitude, concerns and perception of teachers towards Inclusive Education affect the implementation of it. Since the teachers' attitude has a significant contribution to successful implementation of inclusive education; therefore, the researcher wanted to investigate that:

- What is the level of attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education?
- Is there any difference between Pre-service Teachers and In-service Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education?
- Is there any difference between Male and Female Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education?
- Is there any difference between Rural and Urban Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education?

Objectives of the study

1. To study the level of attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education.
2. To study the attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education concerning:
 - Mode of service
 - Gender
 - Locality

Hypotheses of the Study

- **H1:** There would be a significant difference between Pre-service and in- service Teachers regarding their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- **H2:** There would be a significant difference between Male and Female Teachers regarding their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- **H3:** There would be a significant difference between Rural and Urban Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Operational Definition of the Terms Used

An operational definition of the terms used in the present study is given below.

Attitude

Attitude is considered one's thoughts or ideas regarding one's feelings that influence behaviors related to a particular issue. Attitude is an individual's viewpoint or disposition towards a particular object (a person, a thing, or an idea). According to Jung, "An attitude is a readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way." Tuckman (1992) defines "Attitude is a cognitive function of a human being expressed through the affective domains. It is considered as an individual's continuing interpretation, general feeling or liking and disliking on any event, person or any behavior." In this study, the attitude of teachers towards inclusive

education is defined as a generalized tendency to think, feel and respond towards inclusion. Operationally, the level of total attitudes of teachers towards inclusion refers to the total score of the 42 items in the attitude scale could be range from 42 to 126. The higher score on the scale suggests that respondent is relatively more positive towards the inclusion of children with disabilities.

Teachers

In this study, it refers to two types of teachers, In-service teachers, and Pre-service teachers.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education refers to an education system which accommodates all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. For the present study, inclusive education means including children with special needs, differently-abled children in the

regular classroom that have been designed for children without disability

In the present study, inclusive education refers to children with special needs with normal children in a main stream school.

Method and Procedure

The descriptive survey method was employed in this study. The population for the study consists of all pre-service and in-service teachers of the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. Quota sampling technique was used for sampling purposes. The selected respondents (pre-service teachers and in-service teachers up to secondary schools) were working in government and private schools and institutions located in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. We decided to take a sample of 200 teachers from different educational institutions. A detailed description of the sample composition is shown in Table- 1.

Table 1: Demographic Variable-wise Distribution of the Sample

Variables	Attributes	Frequency	Percentage	Mean \pm SD
Age	20-35	93	46.5	37.96 \pm 10.03
	36-50	79	39.5	
	51-65	28	14	
Gender	Male	20	10	NA
	Female	180	90	
Years of Experience	\leq 10	99	49.5	1256-18.92
	11-20	55	27.5	
	>20	46	23	
Marital Status	Single	33	16.5	NA
	Married	6	81	
	Divorced	4	2	
	Widowed	1	0.5	
Religion	Hindu	101	50.5	NA
	Muslim	43	21.5	
	Christian	55	27.5	
	Sikh	1	0.5	
Education Qualification	Diploma/Certificate	95	47.5	NA
	B El Ed/ B Ed	81	40.5	
	M Ed	1	0.5	
	Others	23	11.5	
Type of School	Government	21	10.5	NA
	Aided	38	19	
	Unaided	141	70.5	
Class being taught	Lower primary	75	37.5	NA
	Upper primary	125	62.5	
Working with Counsellors	Yes	73	36.5	NA
	No	127	63.5	

From the above table, it is clear that the number of teachers according to their variables were almost the same; the reason behind it was that the researcher used Quota Sampling Techniques (equal proportionate to their demographic characteristics) to select the respondents for the study from different educational institutions.

To measure the attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education the researcher adopted the "Attitude towards Inclusive Education Rating Scale" developed by Dr. Indu Garg and Smt. Sudha. Sameer Pingle. The scale contains total of 42 items in which there were 25 negative statements and 17 positive statements. This scale deals with the four components of inclusive education i.e. basic philosophical

issues, feasibility issues, collaboration issues and perception towards children with special needs. It was a three-point Likert scale having three types of response options; Agree, Disagree and Neutral. The calculation of the positive items score having Agree = 3 points, disagree = 1 point, and Neutral = 2 points and in the calculation of negative statements, it becomes vice-versa. The total attitude score ranged between 42 (minimum score) to 126 (maximum scoring). A higher score on the attitude scale indicates a positive attitude towards inclusive education and fewer scores present a negative attitude towards inclusive education.

Table 2: Normality Test for Teachers’ Attitude Scores

Dependent variables	Skewness (standard error)		Kurtosis (standard error)	
	Skewness	Standard Error	Kurtosis	Standard Error
Test information factor	-.818	(0.414)	-.460	(0.809)
Known questions	.031	(0.414)	-.890	(0.809)
Unknown questions	-.440	(0.414)	.167	(0.809)
Final examination marks	-.249	(0.414)	.417	(0.809)

Thus, table-2 indicates that the obtained teachers’ attitude scores on the attitude scale were distributed normally. However, the Skewness value was -.337 for which z-score was -1.44 which falls in between -1.96 to +1.96 and the kurtosis statistic value was -.400 for which z-score value was -.86 which falls again in between -1.96 to +1.96. It shows that teachers’ attitude scores on teachers’ attitude scale towards inclusive education distributed approximately or nearer to the strong normal

distribution. Hence, the distribution of the sample was fit for the parametric statistical calculation.

Histogram: Normal Distribution of the Attitude Score

Result and Interpretation

Objective 1: To find out the level of attitude of teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 3: Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education

Total Number of Teachers (N)	Mean	Range	Standard Error (SE) of Mean	SD	Z-Score	Level of Attitude
200	100.55	74-124	1.125	11.6 87	(-2.27 to +2.00)	Average to Favourable

It is evident from the table-3 that the range of raw score of teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education was from 74-124, and the mean score 100.55 with its Z-score -2.27 to +2.00.

attitude fell between moderate to the most favorable level (Table-3).

It is evident from the above table that the mean score obtained on the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education was 100.55. It suggested that the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education was moderate to favorable. Approximate 19 percent of teachers’ attitude was below average, whereas, almost 81 percent of teacher’s

Teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education concerning their demographic variables objective 2(a)

To compare the attitudes of Pre- service teachers and In-service teachers towards Inclusive Education.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the attitude of Pre-service teachers and In-service teachers towards Inclusive Education.

Table 4: Teachers’ Attitude across their Mode of Service (Pre-service and In-service Teachers)

Mode of Service	N	Mean	SD	SE M	t-value (calculated)	Sing. Value (two- tailed) or (p- value)	Table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level	DF	Sig
Pre-Service	96	105.35	11.525	1.598	2.455	0.016	1.98	106	#
In-Service	104	95.95	11.326	1.513					

#Significant

From table-4, it could be seen that the calculated t-value is 2.45, which is higher than the expected value of the t-table that is 1.98 at .05 significant levels. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and we can say that there is a significant difference in the attitude of Pre-service teachers and In-service teachers towards inclusive education. The mean score of Pre-service teachers was greater than the means score of In- Service teachers; therefore, it can be concluded that attitude of Pre- service teachers was a more

positive/ favorable attitude towards inclusive education than the attitude of In-service teachers

Objective 2(b): To compare the attitudes of Male Teachers and Female Teachers towards Inclusive Education.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the attitude of Male teachers and Female teachers towards Inclusive Education.

Table 5: Teachers’ Attitude across their Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE M	t-value (calculated)	Sing. Value (two- tailed) or (p-value)	Table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level	DF	Sig
Male Teachers	96	101.73	11.81	1.57	0.75	0.455	1.98	106	#
Female Teachers	104	92.42	11.60	1.60					

*Not Significant

From table-5, it could be seen that the value of the calculated t- value is 0.75, which is less than the expected tabulated t-value of 1.98 at 0.05 significant levels level. In this situation, the null hypothesis was not rejected. From the result, it can be concluded that there was no significant

difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

Objective 2(c): To compare the attitudes of Rural and Urban Teachers towards Inclusive Education.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the attitude of rural teachers' and urban teachers towards Inclusive

Education.

Table 6: Teachers' Attitude across their Locality

Locality	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t-value (calculate d)	Sing. Value (two- tailed) or (p-value)	Table value of 't' at 0.05 level	DF	Sig
Rural	48	92.89	11.31	1.67	2.416	0.17	1.98	106	#
Urban	52	101.20	09.49	1.42					

#-Significant

From the perusal of table-6, it is explicit that the calculated t- value is 2.14, which is greater than the expected tabulated value of 1.98. 0.05 level of significance. Based on this statistical finding, we can conclude that the null hypothesis is rejected. We can say that there is a significant difference in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education across their locality. It is also evident from the table that the mean score of the urban teacher is greater than the mean score of rural teachers concerning their attitude towards inclusive education. Hence, it can be concluded that urban teachers were more positive towards inclusive education.

Discussion

This study was conducted to know the teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. The results of this study depict that (objective1) there is moderate to a favorable attitude of teachers towards inclusive education this is due to might be the result of the inclusion of inclusive education in pre-service teacher programs and in-service teacher programs.

Another important observation deduced from the result was of the first null hypothesis (H₀₁) is not accepted and found that there is a significant difference in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education across their mode of service. This difference in results might be due to pre-service teachers is studying inclusive education as a semester-long course in their pre- service teacher training programs. In contrast, most in-service teachers have not studied inclusive education as a course in their training programs. They are limited to only attend some workshops regarding inclusive education. Another reason for this inconsistency in result might be the effect of the duration of the training attended. The result of the study is similar to the study conducted by Bhakta and Shit (2016) ^[6] that, too, showed a more favourable attitude of pre- service teachers on inclusive education in comparison to in- service teachers and also suggested the reason that teacher training courses made them more conscious towards inclusive education. The hypothesis (H₀₂) not rejected indicates that no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education and sex does not play a significant role. The very similar result revealed by some of the studies (Shane and Christopher, 2013; Kaur & Kaur, 2015; Bhakta & Shit, 2016; Chanda & Behra, 2018; Paramanik and Barman 2018) ^[6]. Whereas, most of the study showed that male teachers had a more positive attitude towards inclusive education in comparison to female teachers (Bansal, 2013; Guria & Tiwari, 2016; Kalita, 2017; Singh, 2018; Das, *et al.*, 2019). In the studies of Chavhan (2013) and Nanda and Jana (2017) ^[4], female teachers were found to have more positive attitude towards inclusive education in comparison to male teachers. The third Hypothesis (H₀₃) is not accepted and concluded a significant difference in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education across their locality. This might be due to the more exposure of urban teachers and they have more opportunities to

access workshop, or seminars conducted online or off line in comparison to rural teachers. The result of this study is in congruence with other studies (Chavhan, 2013; Kaur & Kaur, 2015; Kumar, 2016; Nanda and Jana, 2017; Bansal, 2018) ^[3], which too revealed that urban teachers had a more positive attitude towards inclusive education in comparison to rural teachers but Bindhu & Niranjana (2014) did not find significant difference about the attitude towards inclusive education among teachers of rural area also.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the teachers have moderate to favorable attitude towards inclusive education. Findings of this study provide evidence that pre- service teachers having a more favourable attitude towards inclusive education than the attitude of in-service teachers and gender of teachers does not affect their attitude towards inclusive education and both male and female teachers have the approximately same level of attitudes towards inclusive education. The findings of the present study led the researcher to conclude that urban teachers are a more favourable attitude towards inclusive education than rural teachers.

Implications

The result of the present study would be helpful in understanding the level of attitude of teachers towards inclusive education as well as understanding different demographic factors acting behind teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The finding of the study will be helpful for policy planners to make different policies for inclusion and its successful implementation to enrich the quality of life and social development of the nation. The present study will help define the focus during in-service & pre- service teachers training and orientation or awareness programs among locales as well also be fruitful for the researchers those who are working in the same direction therefore; they may offer recommendations for Inclusive education.

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