

ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

* Ms. Monica Mahajan

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to study the Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education. A sample of 200 teachers from various Government and Private schools situated in urban and rural areas of District Hoshiarpur, Punjab was used to conduct the study by employing method of multistage randomization of clusters at school level. The responses of Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE-SA) was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, mode, skewness, kurtosis was used to ascertain the nature of distribution of scores. t-ratios were calculated to study the difference between the various independent variables (rural and urban, government and private, male and female teachers). The findings were: the mean attitude of teachers towards Inclusive Education is above average favourable, there is significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education, there is no significant difference between rural and urban teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education, there is significant difference between private and government teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Keywords: Attitude of Teachers, Inclusive Education

The whole process of education is shaped and moulded by the human personality called the teacher. The teacher is a crucial component in the scheme of education and the success of any educational venture depends upon the teacher. Teachers are the key service providers in teaching students with special needs in the inclusive classroom. For inclusion to be effective it is generally agreed that the school personnel who will be most responsible for its success i.e. regular teachers should be receptive to the principles and demands of inclusion. Teacher attitudes, as well as their behaviours, have been proposed as a key factor in successful inclusive education. According to a number of authors teachers' attitudes toward inclusionary programs are one of the most important factors in determining the success of the practice or program. The extent to which the attitudes of teachers validate or reject an inclusive approach will serve to predict the success of such inclusion. Since teachers play a significant role in ensuring the successful integration of students with special needs, evaluating and investigating teachers'

attitudes is the cornerstone in building a successful inclusion program. The major initial step towards an inclusive school is to assess attitudes of stakeholders of which attitudes of teachers and administrators is the first characteristic largely evident to a high likelihood of becoming a truly inclusive learning environment (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000). Thus, the role of teachers in Inclusive Education is a crucial one; it is imperative that their attitude towards this practice is assessed so that necessary elements are implemented in an effort to address both the students' and teachers' needs.

Berry, Berst, Jund, Overton, Rondina and Tate (2003) studied teachers' attitude towards inclusion in the general education classroom. Overall, it was found that teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusion. However, they do feel that they need more training and support within the inclusive environment. Subban and Sharma (2005) investigated the attitude of regular education teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education. The results imply that teachers were positively inclined towards the philosophy of

* Assistant Professor, S.B.H.S.M. Khalsa College of Education, Mahilpur (Hoshiarpur)

inclusive education, perceiving the process as beneficial to all participants within the inclusive setting. However, they remain cautious about the inclusion of students with more severe disabilities. Wishart (2007) had studied Trainee Teacher's Attitude to Inclusive Education for children with Down's syndrome. Only 13% of respondents indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to teach in an integrated setting and 96% felt that their professional training did not prepare them to meet their challenge. El-Ashry (2009) examined pre-service teachers' attitudes toward including students with special needs in general education classrooms in Egypt. Results showed that pre-service teachers held more negative than positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. However, pre-service teachers in this study had more negative attitudes toward the inclusion of children with mental retardation and emotional and behavioral disorders than they did toward students with other disabilities. Avramidis and Norwich (2010) showed evidence of positive attitudes, but no evidence of acceptance of a total inclusion or 'zero reject' approach to special educational provision. Teachers' attitudes were found to be strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition presented to them (child-related variables) and less by teacher-related variables. Belapurkar and Phatak (2011) revealed the knowledge and attitude of school teachers in urban and rural Pune. The results indicated overall positive attitude of school teachers towards inclusive education and the knowledge level of school teachers about inclusive education are significantly low. Their concept of inclusive education is unclear. They were not clear about Government policies and planning, how to identify different abilities in children, and what remedial treatment can be given to them. Boer and Piji (2011) studied regular primary school teacher attitude towards inclusive education. The study revealed that majority of teachers hold negative attitude towards the inclusion of pupil with special needs in regular primary education. Rahamanand and Sutherland (2012) examined the attitudes of teacher educators towards inclusive education in Bangladesh secondary schools in order to further understand the challenges faced by

countries that are economically marginalized in implementing educational reforms. Teacher educators' attitudes towards inclusive education was generally positive, however participants were unsure how to implement inclusive education. Dukmak and Ain (2013) investigated the attitudes of regular classroom teachers towards including students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Teachers' attitudes were also studied in relation to their gender, age and years of teaching experience. The findings revealed that, in general, teachers showed positive attitudes towards educational inclusion but male teachers showed more positive attitude than females did. Teachers' years of experience were found to influence their attitudes towards educational inclusion, as when the teachers' years of experience increase their attitudes towards inclusion become less positive. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes becomes least positive when teachers view educational placement for students with intellectual disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders to be outside the regular school, and their attitudes become less positive when they view educational placement for students with visual impairment to be outside the regular school. Ridarick and Ringlaben (2013) studied Elementary Special Education teachers' attitudes regarding inclusion. Teachers' strongly agreed that students with learning disabilities and physical disabilities should be included in general education classrooms. Attitudes were also favourable towards the inclusion of students with autism and intellectual disabilities.

Though some researches have been done on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, thus analysing the studies conducted so far it was revealed that teachers have positive attitude towards inclusive education (Berry et.al., 2003; Subban & Sharma, 2005; Avramidis & Norwich 2010; Belapurkar & Phatak 2011; Rahamanand & Sutherland 2012; Dukmak & Ain, 2013; Ridarick and & Ringlaben, 2013), while some studies revealed that teachers have negative attitude towards inclusive education (Wishart 2007; El-Ashry 2009; Boer & Piji, 2011). On the basis of these studies, it is evident that results are inconclusive. Currently, little research is available regarding the attitude of teachers in Punjab towards inclusive education.

Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding, we need to survey teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.
2. To study the difference between rural and urban teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.
3. To study the difference between private and government teachers' attitude towards inclusive education.

METHOD

Sample

A sample of 200 teachers from various Government and Private schools situated in urban and rural area of Hoshiarpur District was taken. The technique of multistage randomization of clusters at school level was employed.

Measures

- Teacher Attitude Scale Towards Inclusive

Education by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand (2011)

- Personal and job demographics: Teachers were asked to fill in a detailed biographical questionnaire with information on location of school and gender.

Procedure

The data for the present research was collected personally by the investigator from selected schools of District Hoshiarpur with the prior permission of principals of the respective schools. The data was calculated, scored, tabulated and then subjected to statistical analysis. The responses of Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE-SA) was analyzed using SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, such as mean, median, mode, skewness and kurtosis of the total sample for the variables of Teacher Attitude towards Inclusive Education was obtained to ascertain the nature of distribution of the scores. Results are given in Table 1

Table 1: Mean, Median, Mode, Skewness and Kurtosis scores on the variable of Teacher Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Variable	Mean	Median	Mode	Skewness	Kurtosis
Teachers Attitude towards Inclusive Education	110	108.50	106.00	0.180	-0.265

Table 1 shows that the values of mean, median, mode for the variable of teachers' attitude towards inclusive education are 110, 108.50 and 106.00 respectively. The small difference in these values depict that the distribution is nearly normal. The value of Skewness for the variable of teachers' attitude towards inclusive education is 0.180 which is almost equal to 0 and the value of Kurtosis is -

0.265, which is less than 0.263, so distribution is slightly Leptokurtic. Table 1 shows that the calculated value of the mean Attitude of teachers towards inclusive education is 110. Norms for interpretation of level of attitude towards inclusive education indicate that the level is Above Average Favourable as the value of 110 lies between 105-115.

Table 2: t-ratio between mean scores of male and female teachers on the variable of Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	Std. Error Mean	df	t- ratio
Attitude Towards Inclusive Education	Males	100	108.26	10.40	1.040	198	2.942
	Males	100	113.06	12.57	1.257		

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-ratio is 2.942 which is more than the table value of 2.60 at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, it is significant at 0.01 level. Thus the hypothesis (1) stating that "There is

no significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education" is rejected

Table 3: t-ratio between mean scores of urban and rural teachers on the variable of Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Variable	Area	N	Mean	S.D	Std. Error Mean	Df	t- ratio
Attitude Towards Inclusive Education	Urban	100	110.97	12.14	1.21	198	0.372
	Rural	100	110.35	11.40	1.14		

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-ratio is 0.372 which is less than the table value (1.97) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is insignificant at 0.05 level.

Thus the hypothesis (2) that "There is no significant difference between rural and urban teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education" is accepted.

Table 4: t-ratio between mean scores of private and government teachers on the variable of Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Variable	School	N	Mean	S.D	Std. Error Mean	Df	t- ratio
Attitude Towards Inclusive Education	Private	100	106.11	11.23	1.12	198	5.923
	Government	100	115.21	10.47	1.04		

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-ratio is 5.923, which is more than the table value of 2.60 at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, it is significant at 0.01 level. Thus the hypothesis (3) stating that "There is no significant difference between private and government teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education" is rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

- There is significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- There is no significant difference between rural and urban teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- There is significant difference between private and government teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study reported that the teachers have a positive attitude towards inclusive education but one cannot deny the fact that it is a slight positive attitude, it's just 'Above Average Favourable' attitude. There is a need to spread the awareness

regarding inclusive education because the male teachers exhibit less positive attitude towards inclusive education in comparison to their female counterparts. There is also need to develop awareness about inclusive education among private teachers as they revealed less positive attitude towards inclusive education than the government teachers. In order to raise awareness there should be awareness campaigns via media, posters, conferences and training. There should be seminars for the in-service teachers about the problems of children with special needs, the strategies and methodologies required to educate special children in inclusive environment. Inclusive Education should also be addressed in pre-service teacher education programmes for its successful implementation. Ideally, Inclusive Education should be a compulsory subject for all prospective teachers and an integral part of teacher training curricula. Fundamental knowledge and skills of inclusive education, such as understanding needs and abilities of children with special needs and pedagogical skills should be

provided widely to prospective teachers.

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