



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

ATTITUDE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract: At present inclusive education has become a part of modern education system. The successful of inclusion depends on teachers' attitudes, morality and their ability to implementation of inclusive education. The present study is conducted to study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education with a sample of 200 primary school teachers of district Murshidabad, West Bengal, India. It is found that the primary teachers have positive attitude towards inclusive education in primary school education and also that there is a significant difference between junior and senior teachers; science and arts teachers. It is also found that area (rural-urban) of school and gender does not affect the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. The findings of this study also recommend ensuring successful adoption of inclusion in primary education by teachers. It is concluded that the Policy makers will have to take the initiative in encouraging the teachers and training them to implement of inclusive education at the primary schools.

Key words: Attitude, Inclusive education, Primary teacher, Primary education.

I. Introduction:

In the last few decades, the view of inclusive education has changed in all educational format. Instead of segregating students with special needs in special classes and schools, the ideology of inclusive education is about fitting schools to meet the needs of all students. The educational system is responsible for including students with special needs for appropriate education for all. Since 1990, every countries have been inspired to improve their education systems in order to promote and facilitate education for every children. In June 1994 representatives of 92 countries and 25 international organizations formed the World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Salamanca, Spain. They have agreed a progressive new Statement on the education of all special needed children, which called for inclusion to be the norm. In addition, the Conference adopted a new Framework for Action, the guiding principle of which is that ordinary schools should accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. All educational policies, says the Framework, should stipulate that special needed children attend the local nearest school 'that would be attended if the child did not have a disability.

According to UNESCO, aged between 6 and 13years (primary education age), are not in school(primary school) today and progression through the school system continues to be a significant challenge in many countries. Additionally, availability of educational facilities and provisions does not equate with ensuring the inclusion of all children in the learning process. In fact, many children attending school continue to be excluded from effective learning opportunities and are unable to appreciate equally the expected facilities of quality education. Present studies have shown that once in school, children from vulnerable groups are more likely to be targeted by school violence and bullying from teachers and peers, with negative consequences on educational quality and outcomes.

ii. statement of the problem:

Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards inclusive education.

iii. operational definition:

1. *Attitude*: - In educational psychology, **attitude** is a psychological construct, a mental and emotional characteristic of a person. An attitude can be as a positive or negative view of people, objects, events, activities, and ideas. It could be concrete, abstract or just about anything in your social environment.

2. *Inclusive education*: - **Inclusive education** is when all students, regardless of any challenges they may have, are placed in age-appropriate general education classes that are in their own neighborhood schools to receive high quality instruction, interventions, and supports that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010; Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

3. *Primary education*: - Primary education, also called elementary education, is for children in school through five grade. Primary education provides students with a basic understanding of various subjects as well as the skills they will use throughout their lives.

4. *Primary school teachers*: - In this study, **Primary School Teachers** refers to educate children between the ages of 6 and 11 in the government aided or government school under a schooling system to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills and foster social, physical and emotional growth.

iv. Review of related literature:

As mentioned earlier, numerous studies have involved teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and the results vary. The majority of the teachers surveyed had strong negative feelings about inclusion and felt that the decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities (Snyder, 1999). Leyser, Kapperman and Keller (1994) conducted a cross-culture study of teachers' attitudes towards integration in the USA, Germany, Israel, Ghana, Taiwan and the Philippines. Their findings showed that there were differences in attitude to integration between these countries. Teachers in the USA and Germany had the most positive attitudes. Teachers' attitudes were significantly less positive in Ghana, Philippines, Israel and Taiwan. The authors reasoned that this could probably be due to limited or non-existent training to acquire integration competencies, the limited opportunities for integration in some of these countries, teaching experiences and experience with students with special education needs. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) in their meta-analysis of 28 survey reports from 1958 until 1995, reported that two thirds of the respondents agreed with the general idea of integration, and a little more than half of them expressed a willingness to teach students with special educational needs in their schools. Another study by Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher and Saumeel (1996) examined special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion using focused group interviews. The majority of these teachers, who were currently participating in inclusive programs, had strong negative feelings about inclusion. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, such as class size, inadequate resources and lack of adequate training.

v. Objectives of the study:

1. To study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education.
2. To compare the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education with respect to their work experience.
3. To compare the attitude of primary school teachers towards Inclusive education between science and arts teacher.
4. To compare the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education with respect to their location of school.
5. To compare the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education with respect to their gender.

vi. Hypotheses of the study:

OH1: There is no significant difference between senior and junior primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education.

OH2: There is no significant difference between science and arts primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education.

OH3: There is no significant difference between rural and urban primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education.

OH4: There is no significant difference between female and male primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education.

vii. Research design:

The present study is a descriptive survey technique which involves the collection of primary data about subjects through the use of a questionnaire.

1. **Population:** All primary teachers working under West Bengal Board of Primary Education constituted the population of the study.

2. **Sample :** For the purpose of data collection a sample of 200 primary school teachers was drawn from different schools of Nadia district, West Bengal by using convenient sampling technique.

3. **Tools Use of the Study** As the purpose of the present study was to study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education, therefore researchers used a self constructed Likert type attitude scale.

A positive item weighed score of 5 for Strongly Agree (SA), 4 for Agree (A), 3 for Undecided (U), 2 for Disagree (D) and 1 or Strongly Disagree (SD) and a negative item weighed score of 1 for Strongly Agree (SA), 2 for Agree

(A), 3 for Undecided (U), 4 for Disagree (D) and 5 for Strongly Disagree (SD). The maximum and minimum score of the scale could be 150 and 30 respective

viii. Analysis and interpretation of data:

Table-1: Showing the assessment of attitude scores of primary school teachers

Categorization of attitude score	No. of teachers (%)
High (Above 120)	71 (35.5%)
Medium/Average (90-120)	124 (62%)
Low (Below 90)	5 (2.5%)

Table-1 shows that out of 200 teachers 71 (35.5%) have high positive attitude, 124 (62%) have moderate or average attitude and only 5 (2.5%) have low attitude towards inclusive education in primary school. Hence, it can be said that most of the teachers have a favourable attitude towards inclusive education.

Table-2: Showing the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Senior and Junior Teachers towards inclusive education.

variable	N	mean	S.D.	d.f.	calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	Levels of significance
Senior	138	114.92	11.32	198	2.210	1.97	At 0.05 level
junior	62	118.89	11.94				

Table-2, shows that the calculated t-value is more than the tabulated t-value. It means that null hypothesis H_0 is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between senior and junior primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education. Junior teachers have more favourable attitude towards inclusive education comparison to senior teachers.

Table-3: Showing the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Science and Arts Teachers towards inclusive education.

variable	N	mean	S.D.	d.f.	calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	Levels of significance
Science	72	118.49	11.22	198	2.188	1.97	At 0.05 level
arts	128	114.85	11.74				

Table-3 shows that the calculated t-value is more than the tabulated t-value. It means that null hypothesis OH2 is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between science and arts primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education. Science teachers have more favourable attitude towards inclusive education comparison to Arts teachers.

Table-4: Showing the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Rural and Urban Teachers towards inclusive education

variable	N	mean	S.D.	d.f.	calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	Levels of significance
rural	105	115.09	12.22	198	1.428	1.97	At 0.05 level
urban	95	117.55	11.11				

Table-4 shows that the calculated t-value is less than the tabulated t-value. It means that null hypothesis OH3 is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between rural and urban primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education. Urban teachers have slight more favourable attitude towards inclusive education as their mean score is more than the mean score of rural teachers.

Table-5: Showing the difference between the mean scores of the attitude of Female and Male teachers towards inclusive education

variable	N	mean	S.D.	d.f.	calculated t-value	Tabulated t-value	Levels of significance
male	120	114.09	12.18	198	1.328	1.97	At 0.05 level
female	80	117.50	11.09				

Table-5 shows that the calculated t-value is less than the tabulated t-value. It means that null hypothesis OH4 is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between female and male primary school teachers on their Mean scores of attitude towards inclusive education. Male teachers have slight more favourable attitude towards inclusive education as their mean score is more than the mean score of female teachers.

ix. Findings and conclusions:

It is found that the majority of primary teachers have positive attitude towards inclusive education in primary school education. There is a significant difference between junior and senior teachers; science and arts teachers in their attitude towards inclusive education in primary education. It is also found that area (rural-urban) of school and gender does not affect the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in primary education. On the basis of

findings the special care needs for the senior and the arts teachers. Special training programmes on inclusive education should be organized for them. The findings of this study also recommend ensuring successful adoption of inclusion in primary education by teachers. The regulatory bodies should think about the mandatory to inclusive in primary education curriculum. The Policy makers will have to take the initiative in encouraging the teachers and training them to inclusion at the primary schools. Inclusive education in primary education helps in developing social, modern and moral thinking among the students and the teachers. It helps in exchange and share ideas among teachers for the professional growth. The quality of primary level of schooling can be easily improved by good attitude of teachers.

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