



TEACHERS' CONCERNS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

***Dr Rubee Mangain Thapliyal**

Assistant Professor,

Government Degree College Bhupatwala Haridwar

Abstract:

Today's children are pivotal for a nation's future productive growth. When referring to children, this encompasses those facing physical, mental, or emotional challenges, as well as those from various groups, classes, races, or linguistic backgrounds. The Right to Education Act asserts that education should be universally accessible without discrimination based on diversity. Consequently, each school bears the responsibility of ensuring education for all. While educating children with diverse needs in mainstream schools poses challenges, research indicates that positive treatment of children with disabilities can make this feasible. It is imperative for nations to enhance the involvement of all children in their GDP by cultivating skill-oriented and productive individuals. The prevalence of disabilities is on the rise, impacting global economic growth both directly and indirectly. Inclusive education emerges as the sole avenue to make education universally accessible and approachable, thanks to its cost-effectiveness. Thus, addressing challenges in educating children with special needs is a contemporary imperative, demanding careful analysis and resolution through optimal practices.

Key words: Teachers' Competency, Attitudes, Inclusive Education

Introduction:

The landscape of schools is undergoing a transformation from conventional to inclusive, characterized by the education of all children, regardless of their diversities, within the same learning environment, guided by the same educators under a unified umbrella. It presents a challenge for general school teachers to cater to the diverse needs of all children within a shared framework, using their current teaching skills and knowledge. This setting requires educators equipped with novel techniques and teaching skills to effectively engage in the task of facilitating learning amidst diversity. The skills that teachers need in an inclusive environment can be categorized as follows:

- Cognitive Skills
- Emotional Skills
- Behaviour Skills

Before delving into the section on inclusive skills, the researcher aims to elucidate teachers' apprehensions regarding the integration of children with disabilities. Disabilities are characterized as the absence of abilities to perform tasks physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, or behaviorally, deviating from what is considered normal for others. In the realm of education, inclusion advocates for a learning environment that encompasses all individuals, regardless of challenging needs or disabilities. This concept extends beyond disabilities, encompassing the specific requirements of children in general schools and those who have been deprived of education.

Teaching children with diverse needs alongside their typically developing peers poses a formidable challenge for educators. These children require additional attention to successfully navigate assigned tasks, a feat achievable only by addressing the following challenges:

- The Challenge of providing a restricted free physical environment.
- The challenge of providing a supportive network for the teachers.
- The challenge of providing training to the teachers for inclusiveness by the experts.
- The challenge of transforming general school teachers into inclusive teachers.
- The challenge of providing aids and other services for children with special needs.
- The challenge is to keep parents of both children with or without disabilities aware of the philosophy of inclusive education, and its importance.
- The challenge of changing teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

Among all the challenges teachers' attitudes and concerns are the strong factors that affect the teachers' performance to be worked in a new growing and challenging task. Until teachers will not act positively towards inclusion they will not be in line with the philosophy of Inclusion in schools. And teachers' attitudes directly correlated with the teachers' concerns. Hence it is necessary for policymakers, administrators, and researchers to work on teachers' attitudes and concerns toward inclusion and analyze the factors affecting their attitudes and concerns towards it.

Objectives of the study:

To find out the concerns of teachers towards the inclusion of children with disabilities in general schools.

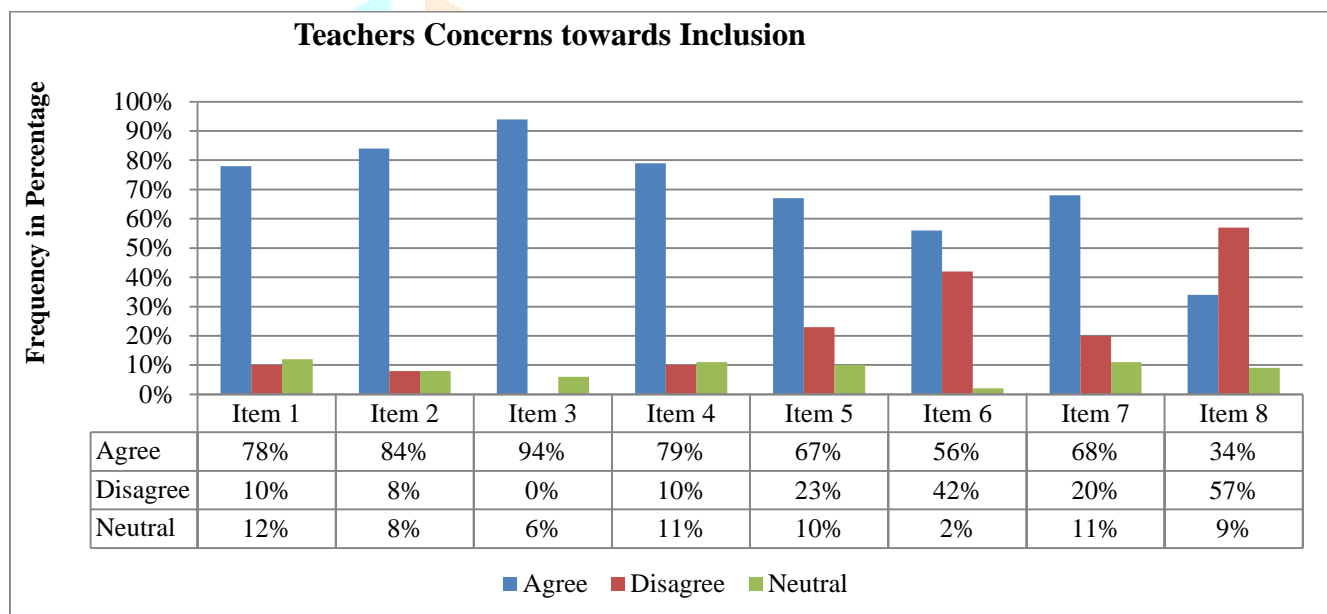
Limitations: This study was delimited to find out the concerns on administrative aspects of Inclusive education in general schools

Methodology: It is a Pilot Study by which the researcher actually wanted to know whether are the teachers concerned or prepared for the implementation of Inclusive education. and 100 elementary school teachers were selected conveniently for the study from block Dabra in District Gwalior in 2016. The Investigator visited elementary school teachers personally at 'block meetings' organized in different movements and administered questionnaires to be filled by the teachers one by one to obtain data accurately for the study.

The researcher has taken help from the tool TASTIE Likert Scale developed by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand in 2011. This is a three-point Likert scale comprised of four areas, psychological/behavioral aspects, social and parent-related aspects, curricular and co-curricular aspects, and administrative aspects of inclusive education. The reliability of the tool measured by test-retest reliability using product moment correlation 'r' which was 0.82 and internal consistency judged by computing coefficient 'r' was 0.68 in the psychological/behavioral aspect, 0.74 in the social and parental aspect, 0.67 in the curricular and co-curricular aspect and 0.81 was in the administrative aspect of the scale which represent that the scale is fairly reliable to measure the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education. This tool is actually used to measure teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education but the researcher has picked up its few item statements and few self-added items to know about the concerns of teachers while implementing Inclusive education and analyzed using frequency percentage analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Item Number	Teachers Concern	Agree (In %)	Disagree (In %)	Neutral (In %)
1.	I am concerned that teachers will face difficulties in the implementation of Inclusive Education	78	10	12
2.	I am concerned that the implementation of inclusive Education is a big challenge for General schools	84	8	8
3.	I am concerned that regular teachers require more intensive In-Service training in implementing IE.	94	0	6
4.	I am concerned that available facilities in general schools are not Satisfactory to implement IE at present	79	10	11
5.	I am concerned that students with disabilities will not be accepted by the rest of the class.	67	23	10
6.	I am concerned that it will be difficult to give appropriate attention to all students in an inclusive classroom.	56	42	2
7.	I am concerned that my workload will increase if I have students with disabilities in my class.	68	20	12
8.	The presence of a special child in the class will create stress among the teachers.	34	57	9



From the above table and frequency graph it could be seen that teachers are more concerned towards the implementation of Inclusive education. 78% of teachers agree with the statement that teachers faced difficulties in the implementation of IE, 84% of teachers agree that it is a big challenge for the teachers to implement IE, and 94% of teachers required intensive and more training in IE, this table also stated that available facilities in general schools are not satisfactory to implement IE, 67% of teachers expressed their concern on that student with disabilities will not be accepted by the others students as they will make fun of them, 56% of teachers also agree that at a same time, it is difficult for the teachers to give their appropriate attention to all the students, 68% of teachers are in agree that teachers workload will increase with the working in the inclusive environment but table gives a good result that only 34 % teachers give their response of agree that inclusion of children with disabilities will create stress for the teachers in inclusive class.

Inclusive competencies for the teachers: from the above frequency analysis table it could be seen that teachers are highly concerned about working in an inclusive environment but they express their interest too of creating an inclusive learning environment for all if they are equipped and supported with essential advanced teaching skills. On the basis of the review of papers, this study also attempts to find out the inclusive skills required for teachers to work in inclusive classes. In developing countries, general schools are the best means of achieving the goal of education for all and hence to be converted into inclusive schools for which general schools' teachers also require intensive long and short-term training courses to

make them prepared for such type of schools. Competencies for an Inclusive environment can be divided into main three areas:

1. Knowledge and understanding of:-
 - International framework and principles.
 - Political, legal, and structural complex of social-cultural diversity.
 - Different dimensions of diversity ex. Ethnicity, gender, special needs and their implication in social settings.
 - Teaching approaches for inclusive settings and related different issues.
 - The developmental task of children under 5 years of age for early diagnosis.
 - The neuroscience of learning.
2. Communication and Relationship for: -
 - Initiating positive communication with pupils, parents, and colleagues from different backgrounds.
 - Dealing with violence and conflicts, creating open-mindedness.
 - Motivating and stimulating all and involving parents in school activities.
3. Management and Teaching (involve actions by teachers to create an effective learning environment) for: -
 - Addressing socio-cultural diversity in the curriculum.
 - Establishing a participatory, inclusive self-learning environment.
 - Selecting and modifying teaching methods for the learning needs of different pupils.
 - Critically evaluating diversity within teacher material such as textbooks, videos, media, etc.
 - Systematic reflection on and evaluation of own practice and its impact on students (ED-DS 2009)

Apart from these competencies teachers must be trained with IEPs, Collaboration with paraprofessional staff, and must visit the special schools to improve their efficiency for the inclusive classroom environment.

Conclusion: from the teachers' concerns analysis it is clear that teachers were more concerned about the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classes. On the other hand, they disagree that the presence of a disability in their class creates stress for them. Hence if teachers are trained with intensive inclusive training at pre-service and post-service levels, they will become more competent and it also helps to make them positive for inclusive education.

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