



COMMITMENT OF TEACHERS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN RELATION THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Anupama Sutar

Lecturer in Education, Department of Education,
Maharishi College of Natural Law, Bhubaneswar, Khordha, Odisha, India

ABSTRACT

Inclusive education means that all students attend schools in appropriate age, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute, and participate in all aspects of the life of the school, so that all student learns and participate together. The purpose of this study was to investigate the commitment of elementary school teachers to inclusive education for the students with disabilities, and whether the commitment to inclusive education between general and special education teachers was equal. Null hypothesis was framed that is there exists no significant difference in the commitment of elementary teachers to inclusive education for children with disabilities. For the present study, the investigator adopted ex-post facto design and descriptive survey method. For the collection of data, standardized tool was adopted that is teacher's commitment tool. The tool was administered on 80 urban/rural elementary school teachers of different elementary schools of Cuttack District, Odisha. The tabulated data was analysed by using 't'-test. According to the results of the study, the null hypothesis has been accepted. There is no significant difference between these demographic variables (gender, experience, locality, training) related to commitment level of teachers to inclusive education for CWD.

Key words: Commitment, Elementary teacher, Inclusive education, Children with disability, Demographic variables.

INTRODUCTION

The belief that every child has a right to quality education, the Govt shall ensure that the PWD enjoy the right to equality, respects and promotes her or his dignity and optimum development are at the core of human rights approach to education (RPWD Act, 2016). Quality education is a right for every child. In 1966, Kothari commission had highlighted the importance of children with disabilities in regular classroom. Integrated education for disabled children (IEDC) program in 1974 was the first formal steps towards education. There are several initiatives had been taken by govt of India towards inclusive setting in general school. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) both clearly express the aim of guaranteeing quality education for all and the importance of providing the required holistic support to develop each child's potential (CRPD Act, 2006). Quality education can only be achieved when each and every child, including the most marginalized and excluded children, are in school receiving inclusive quality education that provides them with the learning required for life. In the present scenario, the PWD Act 1995 and RPWD Act 2016 has significant contribution to inclusive education for children with disabilities by providing appropriate environment. Disability is not uncommon

and is part of human diversity. It is also well understood that children with disabilities face multiple forms of discrimination that lead to their exclusion from society and education. Attitudes toward children with disabilities, as well as a lack of inclusive learning environments, accompanied by the necessary resources and information, compound the challenges they face in accessing education. The good news is that there are effective ways to build inclusive societies in which children with and without disabilities can enjoy their rights, including their right to quality education, on an equal basis with their peers without disabilities. While inclusive education is a broad concept that includes all groups of children, for this series we will focus specifically on children with disabilities. UNICEF education programming, however, covers all groups of children, paying particular attention to children at risk of being excluded from education. Education is a powerful instrument of social change. When putting into practice any policy, the views of the main players, in this case teachers are the key to successful implementation. Thus, the work commitment of teachers is all-important to the successful execution of inclusionary practice (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). For the successful inclusion of CWD in the general education classroom several factors must be present. First, the work commitment of teachers regarding having CWD in the regular class. Second, must be a positive attitude of general education teachers towards disabled children. Third, there needs to be continuous support and assistance from personnel such as special education teachers, school, counsellors, school psychologists and administrator (Talmor, Reiter and Feigin, 2005). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) in their study of teacher attitudes toward inclusion stated that while the movement for inclusive education has appeal as a social justice issue, many educators are hesitant about supporting widespread inclusion of SWD in the general education class. They also stated that studies done in the early stages of the implementation of inclusion in America indicated that there was not widespread support among educators for the placement of SWD in the general education classroom. This study examined the factors that play in teacher commitment in one region in a large urban and rural school district as they pertain to include CWD in the normal classroom.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Teacher attitudes and commitment of the inclusion is a prerequisite as more schools include CWD in the regular education curriculum and class. This portrays a huge potential for the success of inclusive education, since once a teacher is committed towards a given because they are likely to develop positive attitudes and consequently enhancing their performance (Wanderi, 2015). This finding was supported by narrative comments in which teachers felt overburdened by the requirements of having CWD in the general education classroom with what they perceived as inadequate support (Cox, 2009). 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. Further, educational environment-related variables, such as the availability of physical and human support, were consistently found to be associated with attitudes to inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

Earlier studies indicate that while inclusion of CWD in the general education classroom had the general approval of some teachers, not all teachers had positive attitudes about inclusion. Many educators also expressed concern about lack of support and training for dealing successfully with CWD in the general education classroom (Forlin, 2001). This study will examine if, nearly two decades later, these attitudes and concerns have been addressed, as an even larger body of teachers is now involved in working with CWD in the general education classroom. If schools can successfully educate a student in a general education classroom with peers who do not have disabilities, then the school must offer that educational experience. Students with disabilities do not need to keep up with students without disabilities to be educated in a general education. From the overall results we have seen that most educators are committed inclusive education for CWD. However, a few teachers indicated a lack of excitement about working in inclusive settings. There may be many studies on the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. However, there are many limited studies are available that focussing on the commitment of general elementary teachers to Inclusive education for children with disabilities in relation to their demographic variables (gender, experience, training, and locality). Also, there is methodological gap and area gap was found in the context of inclusive education in elementary schools in different states of India. So, the investigator interested to studies on this topic to explore the intensity of work commitment of teacher towards CWD in relation to their various demographic variables.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The RPWD Act 2016 lays emphasis on responsibility on appropriate Governments to take measures and ensure that PWDs enjoy equal right in inclusive classroom setting. The rehabilitation council of India (RCI), 1992 is currently standardized, regulate, and monitor training programs in field of special education and disability. The RCI has a significant to play in promoting inclusive education in India. Currently the NEP 2020 also emphasize on inclusive classroom setting and structural change in the education system benefits for all the children. The researcher has come up with the following problem which was investigated with the title “Commitment of elementary school teachers to inclusive education for children with disabilities in relation to their demographic variables.” The present study is undertaken to explore the intensity of work commitment of teacher towards CWD in relation to their demographic variables. The ex-post facto and descriptive survey design of quantitative approach used in this study.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Commitment: Commitment defined as the responsibilities of general teacher towards his/her tasks assigned at a work place. In the present study it refers to the commitment of general elementary school teachers to inclusive education for children with disabilities.

Elementary School Teacher: Elementary level teacher refers to the person who teaches or instructs to the students of class I to class VIII.

Inclusive Education: This is an approach through which learners with disabilities and special needs, regardless of age and disability, are provided appropriate education within regular schools.

Children with Disabilities: Children with disability are those who differ from the average to such a degree in physical or psychological characteristics. CWD defines a student with disability as needing specially designed instruction to meet his or her learning goals.

Demographic variables: In the present study demographic variables refers to the characteristics and level of inclusion of children with disabilities in relation to gender, experience, location, and training.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are:

5. To study the commitment level of general elementary school teachers to inclusive education for children with disabilities in relation to their gender.
6. To study the commitment level of general elementary school teachers to inclusive education for children with disabilities in relation to their experience.
7. To study the commitment level of general elementary school teachers to inclusive education for children with disabilities in relation to their locality.
8. To study the commitment level of general elementary school teachers to inclusive education for children with disabilities in relation to their training.

HYPOTHESIS

- 1 H_{01} : There is no significant difference in commitment level of male and female teachers of general elementary school to inclusive education for children with disabilities.
- 2 H_{02} : There is no significant difference in commitment level of high and low experienced teachers of general elementary school to inclusive education for children with disabilities.
- 3 H_{03} : There is no significant difference in commitment level of rural and urban teachers of general elementary school to inclusive education for children with disabilities.

- 4 H₀₄ There is no significant difference in commitment level with and without in-service training teachers of general elementary school to inclusive education for children with disabilities.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. The study is delimited to 20 general elementary schools of Cuttack district.
2. The study is confined to general elementary level only.
3. This study is delimited to the Children with Disabilities at Elementary level of Cuttack Sadar only.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study the researcher adopted Ex-post facto design appropriate for the study. In the present study the ex-post facto design of research is found to be the most appropriate one.

Population and Sample: All general elementary schools in Cuttack district were the target population of present study. All teachers of general government elementary schools of Cuttack Blocks were accessible population of the present study. The investigator was select 10 elementary schools from Cuttack Sadar as well as 10 from Cuttack Rural by adopting disproportionate stratified random sampling. Further, 80 teachers of 20 elementary schools were included as sample of the study.

Tool & Techniques: In the present study the investigator was the collect data by using quantitative tools and techniques such as Work commitment scale (developed by Margaret Cox) and technique was t- test.

Procedure Of Data Collection: After selection of the sample and tools and techniques for the collection of data in the schools. Data collection is a major task in the field of research study. In the present study for getting information the researcher collected data from the respondent's i.e., elementary school teachers. In the first phase, the investigator met the headmasters and established rapport with him or particularly the importance of the data. The investigator will collect the data from the 20 sample schools and 80 teachers through the tools by personal visits. After that the investigator explained the purpose of the research to the teachers and their responses were kept confidential and used for research only. The data was collected from the teachers from different general elementary schools.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The main findings drawn from the analysis and interpretation of results have been given below.

- a) **Findings based on commitment of elementary school teacher to inclusive education in relation to gender.**

Table 4.3.1 commitment of elementary school teacher to inclusive education in relation to gender.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	Df	't'	Sig	Remarks
Female	42	76.00	5.827	78	1.971	.052	Not Significant
Male	38	73.74	4.221				

It is found that the calculated of value 't' with df (78) = 1.971, p-value = 0.52 (p>.5) which was not significant at 0.05 level and 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference in commitment level among male teachers and female teachers about teaching inclusive education for CWD. It signifies that those who score high on the commitment scale also have higher ability to handle children with disabilities and those scoring low on the commitment scale have lower ability to handle CWD.

b) Findings based on commitment of elementary school teacher to inclusive education in relation to experience.

Table no 4.3.2 Commitment of elementary school teacher to teaching inclusive education in relation to experience.

Experience	N	Mean	S. D	Df	't'	Sig	Remark
High	53	75.00	5.103	78	.179	.858	Not significant
Low	27	74.78	5.542				

It reveals that the calculated of value 't' with df (78) = .179, p = .858 ($p > .05$) which was not significant at 0.05 level and 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference among high and low experience teachers (commitment level) about teaching inclusive education for CWD. It signifies that those who score high on the commitment scale also have higher ability to handle children with disabilities and those scoring low on the commitment scale have lower ability to handle CWD.

c) Findings based on commitment of elementary school teacher to inclusive education in relation to locality.

Table no 4.3.3 Commitment of general elementary school teacher to teaching inclusive education in relation to locality.

Locality	N	Mean	S.D	Df	't'	Sig	Remark
Rural	38	75.11	6.039	78	.292	.771	Not significant
Urban	42	74.76	4.422				

It is shows that the calculated of value 't' with df (78) = .292, p = .771 ($p > .05$) which was not significant at 0.05 level and 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference in commitment level of rural and urban teachers about teaching inclusive education for CWD. It signifies that those who score high on the commitment scale also have higher ability to handle children with disabilities and those scoring low on the commitment scale have lower ability to handle CWD.

d) Findings based on commitment of elementary school teacher to inclusive education in relation to training.

Table no 4.3.4 Commitment of elementary school teacher to teaching inclusive education in relation to training.

Training	N	Mean	S.D	Df	't'	Sig	Remark
with training	62	74.90	5.043	78	0.69	.945	Not significant
without any training	18	75.00	5.951				

It reveals that the calculated of value 't' with df (78) = 0.69, p = .945 ($p > .05$) which was not significant at 0.05 level and 0.01 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant difference in commitment level with training and without any training teachers about teaching inclusive education for CWD. It signifies that those who score high on the commitment scale also have higher ability to handle children with disabilities and those scoring low on the commitment scale have lower ability to handle CWD.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

- Government should take measures to improve the education of special needs children by providing them instructional materials, aids, and equipment's in the school. A study by the Barrafato (1998) revealed the extent to which support such as school funds resources, parental and teacher attitude, in serving training and planning contribute to the successful inclusion of children with disabilities at the early childhood level. Results demonstrated that overall, the children were socially integrated and adjusted to their setting. All teachers identified certain factors which must be in place to successfully integrated children in regular classrooms. The importance of teacher's aid increase support services, appropriate in-service training for teachers and smaller class size were stressed.
- More concentration should be given on administrative support. Administrator should visit school regularly and should provide financial support for the education of special needs children.
- Parental support is one of the, main causes of failure of special needs children. Thus, parents should provide encouragement, help, and should involve in education and provide remedial instructional material for education of their special need children.
- Teacher plays an important role for the upbringing of children with special needs children. They should provide healthy environment, should take personal care of special need children, and should teach them according to their needs in the school to boost the academic success of special needs children. Ali (2006) evaluated an empirical study on teacher's perception towards education of children with special needs in Malaysia. The main findings show that, in general, teacher's positive attitudes towards children with special needs. The findings also shows that the collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important and that there should be a clear guideline on the implementation of inclusive education. The findings of the study have significant implications to the school administrators, teachers and other stakeholders who directly and indirectly involved in implementing inclusive education.
- Government should emphasis more on educational inclusion in neighbourhood schools. Therefore, it is essential to provide better resource facilities, resource teacher, aid, and equipment's in the inclusive setting.

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