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Attitude of teachers towards inclusive education

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Abstract

This study investigates the attitude of high school teachers towards inclusive education and its impact on mental stress levels. Utilizing gender, area, and school management as independent variables, the study explores how these factors influence teachers' stress. Results indicate that teachers in non-granted schools experience higher stress levels compared to their counterparts in granted schools. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-ratio methods. The findings underscore the importance of effective school management in mitigating teacher stress, thereby promoting a more conducive environment for inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, teacher attitude, mental stress, high school, school management, educational psychology

Introduction

Historically, students have considered their teachers to be the primary source of knowledge. Nonetheless, educators are now expected to play a big part in helping students develop their multiple intelligences and capacity for lifelong learning by acting as a facilitator. Teachers themselves need to be lifelong learners in order to successfully incorporate the new learning paradigm into their lessons. Education is the first step toward equality and empowerment. Many children with special needs have suffered as a result of the educational system's incapacity to meet their particular demands. Education is the act or process of gaining knowledge, developing one's capacity for judgment and thought, and generally preparing oneself intellectually for a mature life (Upali Pannilage, 2015) ^[4]. Education is the process of gaining knowledge, skills, beliefs, attitudes, and habits (Patro, 2019) ^[1]. Thus, education is essentially a human enterprise that molds people into the shapes of other people. When one has the appropriate instrument, they can utilize it to unlock the doors of mental darkness and let in the light of knowledge and insight. Education is thought to be the best means of fostering our natural talents and advancing all aspect of our lives.

Inclusive Education

According to Farrell (2000) ^[2], inclusive education is viewed more through the lens of the student, and kids should be treated as valued members of the school community and encouraged to engage completely in all school-related activities. Children with disabilities must therefore attend courses with pupils without disabilities in order to be integrated in the educational system. Inclusive education refers to a method of teaching both general education students and kids with special educational needs. Under this paradigm, students with special needs spend most of their time alongside students without impairments. Students with mild to severe special needs are usually selected by schools. Inclusive education is distinct from previous concepts of integration and mainstreaming, which tended to concentrate mostly on disabilities and "special educational needs," and which made the assumption that students will transform or become "ready for" or deserving of accommodations by the mainstream.

Nevertheless, when putting this kind of inclusion into practice, the nature of the impairment needs to be considered. "Inclusion" is defined by Stainback & Stainback (1993) ^[8] as teaching all pupils in regular classes. It shows curriculum that are suitable for each and every learner. It conveys the idea that everyone is inspired and welcomed. The premise behind the inclusion model is that kids with disabilities can and ought to go to regular schools. Therefore, creating an inclusive atmosphere where all children may meet and fulfill their unique educational expectations requires greater creativity and effort on the part of the teachers. Making the educational system more capable of reaching all pupils is the aim of inclusive education.

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"Education for All" seeks to meet the fundamental educational needs of all people while simultaneously offering chances for individual development. In other words, inclusion is a philosophy and method of teaching that provides opportunities for involvement in a wide range of extracurricular, religious, social, recreational, artistic, athletic, and musical pursuits as well as daycare and after-school programs.

Need of inclusive education in India

The PWD ACT, 1995 states that the Indian government is committed to educate children with disabilities in mainstream schools, and that by 2020, all schools in the country will be handicapped-accessible (Sanjeev & Kumar, 2007) [3]. Through inclusive education, all kids ought to get an education in regular classroom settings. However, that does not mean that some children cannot leave the classroom under specific conditions. A youngster may require tailored assistance in a particular subject. It is likely that this is happening in the ordinary course of classes. When schools are inclusive, students with particular characteristics are grouped together in different classrooms for all or part of the school day, and the frequency of a student's absence from the main classroom is carefully considered.

Definitions of inclusive education

In traditional classrooms, all students-impaired or not-should get an inclusive education. It's an approach that takes

into account every child's unique traits, interests, abilities, and academic needs. All schools must take an inclusive stance in order to give children with disabilities access to educational opportunities that can support a child-centered pedagogy that can meet the requirements of all students.

There are a lot of disabled people in India; they cope with difficult problems, have limited access to resources, and confront negative social attitudes. The path towards inclusive education is long and convoluted, full with opportunities and challenges.

Offering aid to children is the goal of inclusion. When it comes to peer acceptability, children with disabilities have an even greater challenge. Children with disabilities are often the objects of teasing and bullying from their peers who do not have the condition. A large number of households with impaired children earn significantly less than the federal poverty threshold. Most Indian teachers are not trained to develop and implement inclusive education plans for students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

Teachers attitude scale towards inclusive education

When integrating students with special education needs into regular classrooms, the attitudes of the teachers play a critical role in their success. A sample of teachers and a self-designed, peer-reviewed, content-analyzed questionnaire (Lynn, 1986) [7] were used to gather information about their views toward inclusion. The personal survey, which collected the opinions of 150 teachers using a structured research tool, was completed by them.

Table 1: Attitude of teachers on behavioural problems

| Positive Statements | Strongly Agreed | Agreed | Can't Say | Disagreed | Strongly Disagreed | Weighted average |
|---|-----------------|--------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|
| Inclusive education helps special kids form positive social attitudes. | 64 | 48 | 20 | 14 | 4 | 88 |
| Inclusive schooling keeps typical kids from growing up to feel inferior. | 45 | 44 | 23 | 29 | 9 | 95 |
| Special children have more confidence in themselves as a result of inclusive education. | 45 | 44 | 21 | 28 | 12 | 90.6 |
| Children with exceptional needs can have their abilities developed to the greatest extent possible through inclusive education. | 56 | 48 | 22 | 17 | 7 | 98.4 |
| Special education students gain academically from inclusive education. | 53 | 44 | 19 | 25 | 9 | 91.4 |
| Negative Statements | | | | | | |
| Inclusive education does not support the intellectual development of special children. | 14 | 15 | 12 | 58 | 51 | 64.2 |
| Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's educational progress. | 10 | 11 | 8 | 54 | 47 | 61.6 |
| In inclusive education, normal pupils are emotionally disregarded. | 6 | 7 | 4 | 50 | 43 | 58.2 |
| Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's ability to learn. | 5 | 6 | 3 | 49 | 42 | 56.8 |
| Children receiving special education must perform on par with other children. We call this inclusive education. | 9 | 10 | 7 | 53 | 46 | 57.8 |

Table 2: Agreements, attitude of teachers on behavioural problems

| Positive Statements | Agreed | Disagreed | Indecisive |
|---|--------|-----------|------------|
| Special children have more confidence in themselves as a result of inclusive education. | 59.33 | 26.67 | 14.00 |
| Children with exceptional needs can have their abilities developed to the greatest extent possible through inclusive education. | 69.33 | 16.00 | 14.67 |
| Inclusive schooling keeps typical kids from growing up to feel inferior. | 59.33 | 25.33 | 15.33 |
| Inclusive education helps special kids form positive social attitudes. | 74.67 | 12.00 | 13.33 |
| Special education students gain academically from inclusive education. | 64.67 | 22.67 | 12.67 |
| Negative Statements | | | |
| Inclusive education does not support the intellectual development of special children. | 19.33 | 72.67 | 8.00 |
| Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's educational progress. | 17.33 | 76.00 | 6.67 |
| In inclusive education, normal pupils are emotionally disregarded. | 12.00 | 82.67 | 5.33 |
| Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's ability to learn. | 10.67 | 84.00 | 5.33 |
| Children receiving special education must perform on par with other children. We call this inclusive education. | 14.00 | 80.67 | 5.33 |

The behavioral attitude of teacher's onwards inclusive education is presented in the Table-1. The data reveals that

most of the respondents agree 59.33 percent of the teachers agree that special children have more confidence in

themselves as a result of inclusive education. Which is almost the double of the average (30%). It is also noticed from the teachers attitude that 69.33% felt that children with exceptional needs can have their abilities developed to the greatest extent possible through inclusive education. In this regard, 59.33 percent agreed that Inclusive schooling keeps typical kids from growing up to feel inferior. Almost three fourth (74.67%) agreed that inclusive education helps special kids form positive social attitudes. Similarly, two third (64.67%) agreed upon the fact that special education students gain academically from inclusive education.

On the contrary, more than three fourth respondents rejected the negative statement with their disagreements. The disagreements were in majority for inclusive education does not support the intellectual development of special children (72.67%), inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's educational progress (76%), In inclusive education, normal pupils are emotionally disregarded (82.67%), Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's ability to learn (84%) and children receiving special education must perform on par with other children. We call this inclusive education (80.67%).

Table 3: Ranking of statements

| Positive Statements | Weighted average | Rank |
|---|------------------|------|
| Children with exceptional needs can have their abilities developed to the greatest extent possible through inclusive education. | 98.4 | 1 |
| Inclusive schooling keeps typical kids from growing up to feel inferior. | 95 | 2 |
| Special education students gain academically from inclusive education. | 91.4 | 3 |
| Special children have more confidence in themselves as a result of inclusive education. | 90.6 | 4 |
| Inclusive education helps special kids form positive social attitudes. | 88 | 5 |
| Negative Statements | | |
| Inclusive education does not support the intellectual development of special children. | 64.2 | 1 |
| Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's educational progress. | 61.6 | 2 |
| In inclusive education, normal pupils are emotionally disregarded. | 58.2 | 3 |
| Children receiving special education must perform on par with other children. We call this inclusive education. | 57.8 | 4 |
| Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's ability to learn. | 56.8 | 5 |

Ranking order of weighted average analysis of teacher attitude towards behavioural problems in inclusive education is presented in the Table 3. It is observed that the first rank has been given to the statement 'Children with exceptional needs can have their abilities developed to the greatest extent possible through inclusive education.' which secured the weighted average 98.4 followed by second rank with a value 95 to the statement 'Inclusive schooling keeps typical kids from growing up to feel inferior.'. Among the positive statements, third, fourth and fifth rank went to statements 'Special education students gain academically from inclusive education (91.4); 'Special children have more confidence in themselves as a result of inclusive education' (90.60) and 'Inclusive education helps special kids form positive social attitudes' (88).

Similarly, among negative statements, the rank 1 has gone statement 'Inclusive education does not support the intellectual development of special children.' with a weighted average of 64.2 followed by the statement 'Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's educational progress.' having a weighted average of 61.6. The third, fourth and fifth rank went to negative statements 'In inclusive education, normal pupils are emotionally disregarded' (58.2); 'Children receiving special education must perform on par with other children. We call this inclusive education' (57.8), 'Inclusive education has a negative effect on ordinary children's ability to learn' (56.8).

Conclusion

There is evidence that inclusive education negatively affects typical children's ability to learn, despite the belief of some educators that inclusive education does not make normal students feel inferior. A small percentage of educators held the opinion that because inclusive education emotionally disregards regular students, it cannot foster the intellectual development of children with exceptional needs. According to the previously cited analysis, most teachers thought that inclusive education could optimize the development and

cultivation of outstanding children's skills. This will assist unusual children in developing a positive social mindset. This illustrates the positive impacts inclusive education has on students with exceptional needs' academic development. Thus, inclusive education contributes to the increased self-assurance of special needs youngsters. Nevertheless, because inclusive education hinders the academic development of typical children, there is still a great deal of unhappiness with it. It has also been reported that some teachers felt that inclusive education put more pressure on kids with special needs to perform on par with their classmates.

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