

## Collaborative Strategies for Successful Inclusive Education: Insights from Teachers

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### Abstract

Due to lack of knowledge, educational access and technology, disabled children were initially treated as unwanted and segregated from other children. In recent times there has been a shift to make education possible for everyone under the same roof. Teaching and learning has become personalized where content, pace and strategies are being taken into cognizance according to the unique capabilities of a student. This study aimed to assess the attitude of teacher in making inclusive education a success. In this study descriptive method of research was used and 100 teachers were selected by random sampling technique from different Govt. middle schools in district Pulwama. Semi structured interview schedule was employed to collect the data. After analysing the data in qualitative way it was found that teachers were of the opinion that all learners regardless of their disabilities should be in regular classrooms and they showed more favourable attitude towards children with mild disabilities. It has also been seen that collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important in making inclusive education successful. The majority of the respondents agreed that special students need extra care and help in the classroom and that these students were seen as having more disciplinary problems when compared to the regular student. In general, teachers were found to hold positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Originality/value: The study emphasizes on the awareness about disability and the steps taken towards an equal position of students with disabilities in the schools in particular and people with disabilities in the society in general. The findings from this research may help the stake holders and policy makers to boost the teaching and learning environment in the schools that offer inclusive education. Changes at policy level and support facilities for special needs students as an open concern are needed to achieve this equalization.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, Positive attitude, Implementation, Special needs, Teacher

### Introduction

Education is the fundamental right of every child, which makes the provision for all the students' to have access to knowledge and skills irrespective of varying abilities. It is an evolving approach which recognizes the needs of those children who are vulnerable to denial and makes endeavour in addressing the same. An increasing number of policy papers and publications have reinforced the ideology of inclusion. According to UNESCO, Inclusive education denotes the quality education provided to every student regardless of their unique abilities. Inclusive education means including the children with disabilities in the normal classroom that have otherwise been designed for children without disabilities (J. W. Kugelmass, 2006). Inclusive education states that all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional disparities are treated as same. For the development of

social skills and better social interaction of the student's inclusive education is the need of education system. There has been a growing interest in inclusive education over the last two decades. During this span of time, researchers have done significant amount of research on children with disabilities and their effective functioning in the society have recognised integration of these children who would conventionally be placed in special schools (Rayner, 2009). The reason behind this statement could be like any other normal person, persons with disabilities are influenced by similar political, social financial and other challenges in the society they need to deal with. Transformative approach is a key to inclusive education. Adequate transformation of regular school system is required so that mainstream schools are given an improved capability to reach out to all learners in a continuous and effective manner that becomes an ongoing process. Inclusion in this sense means that children with special needs need an opportunity to be educated together with peers in the same environment. (De Boer et al., 2011) inclusive education is thus defined as "an education system that includes a large diversity of learners and which differentiates education for this diversity"

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education brought out by the NCERT has recommended inclusive schools for learners with special educational needs by making suitable modifications in the content, presentation and transaction strategies, preparing teachers and emerging learning friendly evaluation techniques. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education also recommended inclusive schools for all without specific reference to pupils with SEN as a way of providing quality education to all learners. "This includes children with disabilities, who may need support or more time to complete their consigned tasks.

It would be even healthier if, while planning for such activities, the teacher discusses them with all the children in the class, and guarantees that each child is given an opportunity to contribute. Therefore, educators must pay special attention to ensuring the involvement of all. This would become an indicator of their efficiency as teachers" (J. D. Singh, 2016).

A zero rejection policy has been adopted under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, which ensures that every child with special needs, irrespective of the category, class and degree of disability, is provided significant and quality education. This policy covers the components under education for children with special needs:- Early detection and identification, Educational Placement, functional and formal assessment, Support services, Aids and appliances, Teacher training, Individual Educational Plan, Girls with disabilities, Parental training, Strengthening of special schools, Removal of infrastructural barriers, Monitoring and assessment. Inclusive education has confronted many challenges that appear to bring down the efforts to making it realized by governments globally as a means to boost accessibility to quality education to all. The interventions that can benefit children with disabilities in developing countries to access equal education have been quite a challenge as this has been dominated by their isolation and exclusion (Mitchell, 2017). Some of the factors include; less favourable and enabling policy environment and very little assurance in commencing change through research, poverty and lack of resources (Miles & Singal, 2010). Hence, children with disabilities are left with insufficient or no support to continue their unique abilities in such stimulating learning environments. Regular teachers must be provided with the training and resources they need to meet children's specific learning and behavioral needs for the successful implementation of inclusion. Institutions of higher education in many places do not have training programs for regular teachers of students with disability and adapted curriculum. Therefore, for the successful implementation of inclusive education major challenges like teachers attitude need to overcome beforehand.

## **Literature review**

Adams et al., (2021) carried a study on "teacher's readiness for inclusive education in a developing country: fantasy or possibility". Sample for the study comprised of 628 teachers in 77 government schools. The results from the study displayed positive attitude of teachers towards inclusion and

highlighted the important role of teachers' knowledge, understanding, skills, abilities and attitude in further enhancing the inclusive educational opportunities for students with special needs.

Ginja & Chen, (2021) conducted a study on "conceptualizing inclusive education: the role of teacher training and teacher's attitudes towards inclusion of children with disabilities in Ethiopia". Sample for the study consisted of 125 teachers from 3 teacher education institutions and 6 secondary schools in Ethiopia. This study reports 81–85% of the participants' positive understanding of the overall purpose of inclusive education. Teachers reported a more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Singh et al., (2020) carried a study on "attitude of teachers towards inclusive education". Sample for the study comprised of 108 preservice and in service teachers from 11 institutions. The result displayed that attitude of teachers towards inclusive education was moderate. In addition no significant difference has been seen between attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusive education.

Yildirim & Güler, (2020) investigated "COVID-19 severity, self-efficacy, knowledge, and preventive behaviors predicted mental health". Sample for the current study consisted of 3190 Turkish who completed online self-reported questionnaires. The results showed that COVID-19 severity, self-efficacy, and preventive behaviors uniquely predicted mental health over and above gender, age, and chronic diseases.

Khan et al., (2017) carried out a research study on "inclusive education in government primary schools: Teachers perceptions". Sample for the study consisted of 54 teachers in six randomly selected primary schools. The results of the study revealed that inclusive education is considered to be a desirable practice. Educators were of the view that all learners regardless of degree of disabilities should be in normal classrooms and they showed more favorable attitude towards children with mild disabilities.

Alhassan (2014) conducted study on "implementation of inclusive education in Ghananian primary schools: A look at teacher's attitudes." The purpose of this study was to examine teacher's attitudes in implementing inclusive education in primary and junior high secondary schools in two districts in Ghana (Bole and New juaben). The results revealed differences of teacher's attitudes depending on the type of student's disabilities and disability severity.

Mdikana et al., (2007) carried a research study on "pre service educator's attitudes towards inclusive education". The main aim of this study was to investigate pre service educator's attitude towards inclusion. Sample comprised of 22 students seven male and fifteen females. The Results of the study are significant in the sense that understanding of pre-service educators attitudes is critical for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Ali et al., (2006) carried out a study on "teacher's perceptions towards inclusive education in Malaysia". The purpose of the study was to examine teachers' attitude and their perceived knowledge towards inclusive education in Malaysia. Sample consisted of 235 mainstream and special education teachers in the public primary and secondary schools.

The main finding shows that teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education. The findings also shows that collaboration between the mainstream and the special education teachers is important.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To comprehend the concept of inclusive education.
- To identify and articulate the perception of teachers regarding inclusive education in mainstream schools.
- To assess the attitude of teachers towards children with learning disabilities.

## Hypotheses

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between the teachers' perception and success of inclusive education

**H2:** There is significant association between attitudes of school teachers towards learning disability

## Method

The present study has been conducted through the descriptive method of research. The sample for the present study consisted of 100 teachers who are working in Govt. Middle schools from district Pulwama which have or have not implemented inclusive education served as sample units of the study.

## Tool and technique

This study primarily included semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the teachers to understand their perceptions and beliefs about inclusive education practices. The sample of 100 teachers were selected via simple random sampling technique and all the concerned teachers were interviewed. The selected respondents were approached to conduct interviews at convenience for the date, time and location within the school. The interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and transcribed by the investigator.

## Findings

Total No. of govt. Middle Schools in District Pulwama	Total teachers in govt. middle schools in District Pulwama	No. of Children with Special Needs enrolled	No. of teachers interviewed
230	1578	499	100

## Response of teachers

- Teachers were of the view that students with disability should be treated equally as normal ones to safeguard their self-esteem.
- Teachers of these inclusive schools highly appreciated the concept of teamwork where normal schools and inclusive ones will work together to make the magnificent results of teaching and learning possible.
- There will be a wide scope for both the types of teachers (mainstream and special school teachers) to work beyond the area of expertise.
- The mainstream teachers agreed that students with disabilities needs extra attention and help in the classroom. To make the equality in the learning experience possible frequent training courses should be organized for the teachers.
- Guidance and counselling for the students with special needs has been found in its initial stage where lot is to be done yet.
- Majority of teachers found it suitable to embrace the changes needed on the part of teacher while teaching and proper infrastructure to make sure that the process of teaching and learning is carried out according to the individual abilities of those students.

In general, teachers were found to hold positive attitudes toward inclusion

## **Significance of Study**

Inclusive Education means including the children with disabilities in the regular classroom that have been designed for children without disabilities (J. Kugelmass & Ainscow, 2004). It refers to an education system that accommodates all children irrespective of their physical, social, intellectual, linguistic, emotional or other conditions.

For the development of social skills and better social interaction of the student's inclusive education is the need of education system. Despite of the efforts, many children with disabilities are still denied access to education.

The significance of this study provided an opportunity to identify teacher's role in implementing inclusive education. The findings from this research may help the stake holders and policy makers to boost the teaching and learning environment in the schools that offer inclusive education. This study will also help in describing the need for in-service & pre-service training of teachers and awareness programs among them. It will also help and boost the researchers who are working in the same direction to provide further recommendations in the same domain. Finally, the results of this study will also benefit the special needs students who are presently learning in inclusive settings by providing them with a more conducive learning environment where their needs are being addressed adequately.

## **Conclusion**

The need for inclusive education has been recognized for the development of just society. Inclusive education is a comprehensive term concerning access of same education for all the students under the same roof. Inclusivity in the classroom helps in creating a conducive environment that welcomes an opportunity for the complete development of students. Actual inclusion cannot take place until mainstream teachers change their attitude towards the students with disabilities. Inappropriate attitude of regular teachers can deteriorate them even more for that reason students with special needs find it difficult to attend regular schools. Above all teachers play a vital role in making the success of inclusion possible. Growth of inclusive education will be fourfold by organizing training courses for teachers to address to the learning needs of special children in a regular class.

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