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An Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Of In-Service Educators

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Abstract

An attitude of educators significantly influences the successful implementation of the educational syllabus. The attitude of the teacher plays a crucial role in the implementation of inclusive education. This study explored the attitude of in-service educators with respect to inclusive education. The study was conducted among in-service educators in the Nagpur Urban area, including both males and females. The Attitude with regard to Inclusive Education scale, constructed by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand, was utilized to gather data. A total of 60 in-service educators from various high schools in Nagpur were analyzed for this study. The findings revealed a notable non-equivalent attitude inclination among male and female high school in-service educators, as female in-service educators demonstrated a more favorable attitude toward inclusive education than their male counterparts.

Keywords : Attitude, inclusive education, in-service educators

Introduction :

Education prominences the well-rounded development of children i.e. social, emotional, cognitive etc. According to Article 21 A of the Indian Constitution, advocates education as a fundamental right of all children between the 6-14 years age group. Despite strong constitutional guarantees and several educational initiatives, certain sections of Indian society such as scheduled castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs), other backward classes (OBCs) and children with disabilities, continue to remain marginalized in the field of education. Although policies like the Right To Education (2000), Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, and inclusive education programs aim to ensure equal opportunities, systematic inequalities and social barriers prevent these groups from fully participating in the mainstream school system.

Inclusive education

Inclusion essentially refers to the approach to teaching and learning to all children and by bringing them together into one common classroom. Inclusive education means 'education for all, in a supportive environment that values every learner's potential. It is an approach of teaching and learning to provide equal educational opportunities to all students regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or any kind of disabilities. Inclusive education is not only associated with marginalized communities to learn together but also it welcomes diversity and the removal of barriers to learning. It also focuses on adaptation of teaching methods and resources, providing equal access to education and making appropriate provisions for every categories of students without excluding them. So that they can achieve up to their utmost potential.

Rationale of study :**Inclusive Education in the 21st Century**

In today's world, inclusive education is seen as one of the best approaches because it brings out the hidden abilities of students, protects the rights of every child without discrimination, and builds a learning environment where all children can grow together. It is based on the idea that everyone deserves equal opportunities, no matter what their differences are.

Inclusive education encourages acceptance, respect, and cooperation, which also promotes peace in society. But its success depends on the active support of educators, parents, and community leaders. A positive attitude from all groups—society, peers, parents, administrators, and especially educators—is necessary to make inclusion work effectively.

Educators play the most important role. Their attitudes directly affect the teaching–learning process and the overall success of inclusive practices. Studies by Sharma et al. (2008) and Hattie (2009) have shown that teacher attitudes make a big difference. Similarly, Costello and Boyle (2013) and Goddard and Evans (2018) found that trainee educators usually had positive views about inclusion, which grew stronger as they progressed in their training.

Monje (2017) described three types of views: Believers, Non-Believers, and True Believers. Believers and True Believers supported full inclusion, while Non-Believers felt that not all children with disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms. Negative teacher attitudes can reduce the effectiveness of teaching and become barriers to inclusion.

Therefore, simply making inclusive education a part of the education system is not enough. Developing a positive attitude among educators is equally important. When educators believe in inclusion and practice it with commitment, inclusive classrooms can truly succeed and help every child achieve their best.

Educators' Attitudes and Inclusive Education

Inclusive education can be successful only when all stakeholders—government, parents, educators, and community members—work together. Among these, educators play the most important role. Their attitude toward inclusive education decides how well it can be applied in the classroom. If educators are not ready to acknowledge children with disabilities, then it becomes arduous to make inclusion work at the ground level.

Studies have shown that many educators feel they cannot teach children with special needs along with other children in the same class (Chhabra et al., 2010). They also believe that they have not received proper training to manage inclusive activities (Hay et al., 2001). Other studies (Gal et al., 2010; Cassady, 2011; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012) prove that a negative attitude among educators creates obstacles and prevents effective implementation of inclusion.

Similarly, researchers (Minke et al., 1996; Balboni & Pedrabissi, 2000; Opdal & Wormnaes, 2001; Wall, 2002; Agbenyega, 2007; Das & Kattumuri, 2011) have also found that educators' perceptions and attitudes are the key factors for the success of inclusive education. Therefore, it is important to study educators' attitudes carefully in order to strengthen inclusive education practice

Objective of the Study :

- 1) To assess the overall level of attitude towards inclusive education among in-service high school educators.
- 2) To compare the attitudes of male and female secondary school educators with respect to inclusive education from the Nagpur Urban area..

Hypothesis :

There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female in-service educators from the Nagpur Urban area.

Methodology :

The descriptive survey method was administered for this study. Male and female in-service educators from Nagpur city's English medium high school were investigated in this study.

Tool Used :

The Attitude regarding Inclusive Education scale, authored by Vishal Sood & Arti Anand (2011), was used to collect data. The inventory encompasses multiple domains, namely Psychological and Behavioral aspects, Social and Parental involvement, Curriculum and Co-Curricular dimensions, and the Administrative attitude towards Inclusive Education."

Sample :

The researcher used convenience sampling for data collection. The total sample of this study was 60 educators, comprising 30 male educators and 30 female in-service high school educators

Data Collection :

Datasheets were supplied and analyzed with the help of scoring keys.

Statistical Techniques used :

The collected data were analyzed by using statistical techniques - mean, standard deviation (S.D.), percentage analysis, and t-test.

Analysis and Interpretation:

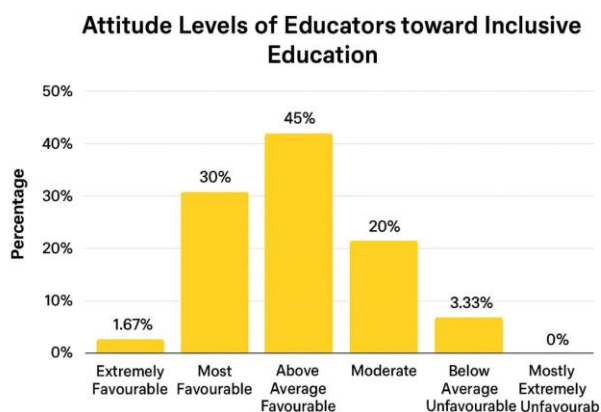
The collected data were tabulated and presented here to interpret the Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Objective 1 : . To assess the overall attitude of secondary school educators towards inclusive education.

Table 1: Educators Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Sr. No.	Level	No. of Educators	Percentage
1.	Extremely Unfavourable	0	0%
2.	Most Unfavourable	0	0%
3.	Below Average Unfavourable	2	3.33%
4.	Moderate Favourable	12	20%
5.	Above Average Favourable	27	45%
6.	Most Favourable	18	30%
7.	Extremely Favourable	1	1.67%

Table 1 illustrates the overall level of attitude towards inclusive education among in-service high school educators, ranging from 'Extremely Unfavourable' to 'Extremely Favourable.' The findings reveal that 1.67% of the educators demonstrated an extremely favourable attitude, 30% exhibited a most favourable attitude, 45% showed an above average favourable attitude, 20% reflected a moderate attitude, and 3.33% expressed a below average unfavourable attitude. Notably, no educators were found to hold either a mostly unfavourable or an extremely unfavourable attitude towards inclusive education."



Findings- The study revealed that 76.67% of in-service high school educators held favourable attitudes towards inclusive education, while 20% showed moderate and only 3.33% showed unfavourable attitudes. Overall, the findings indicate a predominantly positive outlook, though training is needed to strengthen weaker attitudes.

Objective 2 : To compare the attitudes of male and female secondary school educators with respect to inclusive education from the Nagpur Urban area.

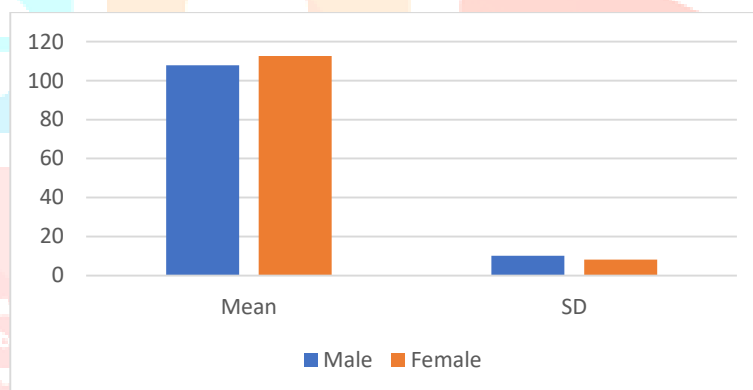
H0 : There is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female in-service educators from the Nagpur Urban area

Table 2 : Comparison of Male and Female High School In-Service Educators' Attitude

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Remark
Male	30	107.9	10.12	58	2.02	Significant at 0.05 level
Female	30	112.67	8.08			

“From Table 2, it is observed that the calculated t-value (2.02) exceeds the critical t-value (1.98) at the 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a significant difference in the attitudes of male and female in-service high school educators towards inclusive education. The mean score of female educators was higher than that of male educators, suggesting that female in-service educators exhibited a more favourable attitude towards inclusive education compared to their male counterparts in Nagpur city.”**

Findings- The calculated t-value (2.02**) is greater than the critical t-value (1.98) at the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected



Findings :

The findings of this study indicate that in-service high school educators in Nagpur city generally hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education. As shown in Table 1, 1.67% of educators demonstrated an extremely favourable attitude, 30% exhibited a most favourable attitude, 45% showed an above-average favourable attitude, 20% reflected a moderate attitude, and only 3.33% expressed a below-average unfavourable attitude. Importantly, no educators displayed mostly or extremely unfavourable attitudes, suggesting that the majority of educators are receptive to implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms. This overall positive orientation may be attributed to increasing awareness of inclusive policies, teacher training programs, and government initiatives promoting equitable education.

Table 2 highlights a significant gender difference in attitudes toward inclusive education. The calculated t-value (2.02) exceeded the critical t-value (1.98) at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that female educators hold more favourable attitudes than their male counterparts. This could be linked to differences in empathy, teaching approaches, or prior exposure to inclusive practices, which may influence receptivity to diverse learning needs.

Conclusion :

The analysis of the data from this study indicates a notable difference between male and female in-service educators regarding their attitudes with respect to Inclusive Education. Female in-service educators demonstrate a more positive or favorable attitude toward inclusive education than their male counterparts.

Discussion :

Inclusive education is all about creating a learning environment where every child feels welcomed, valued, and supported. It encourages friendship, builds strong relationships, and promotes mutual respect between students and educators. Instead of trying to fit students into a one-size-fits-all system, inclusive education focuses on designing schools, classrooms, and lessons in ways that allow every child—regardless of their background or abilities—to participate, grow, and thrive together. Educators play a crucial role, holding both rights and responsibilities in creating an inclusive classroom environment. This study highlights the positive attitudes of teacher trainees towards curricular areas and their motivation to help all children reach their full potential.

Implications and Suggestions :

The generally positive attitudes among educators are encouraging for the effective implementation of inclusive education. However, to further enhance inclusivity in schools, it is recommended that:

1. Targeted Professional Development: Regular training workshops should be organized to equip educators with practical strategies for supporting students with diverse abilities.
2. Gender-Sensitive Support Programs: Considering the gender differences in attitudes, male educators could benefit from mentorship or collaborative learning programs that foster greater awareness and confidence in inclusive practices.
3. Policy Reinforcement: School administrators and policymakers should continue to strengthen inclusive education policies, providing necessary resources and infrastructural support to make classrooms more accessible.
4. Community Engagement: Parents and community members should be actively involved in promoting inclusion, creating a supportive environment for all learners.

Overall, the study underscores that positive teacher attitudes are crucial for the success of inclusive education, and strategic interventions can further enhance educators' readiness to embrace diversity in the classroom.

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