

## Teachers' attitude towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular Secondary Schools of Andhra Pradesh

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### Abstract

The inclusive approach refers to the type of education that allows students with diverse needs to find their own place and to receive their education in regular schools and classrooms. Inclusive education means education of all students, where all students are equal participants in the learning process. It is the placement of students with disabilities in the general education classroom with peers without disabilities. The pedagogy of inclusion is the current trend for the education of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs). The present study is intended to examine the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of Children With Special Needs (CWSN) in the regular secondary schools in relation to certain demographic variables, viz., gender, age, teaching experience and location of the institution. Descriptive Survey method has been adopted in this study. The sample consisting of 480 teachers (250 Male and 230 Female) from 80 secondary schools of Visakhapatnam district has been selected using Stratified Random Sampling method. The data were collected using a questionnaire developed and standardized by the researchers. The tool consists of 45 items (15 items from each one of the three areas) to find out the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools. The data were analyzed using different statistical techniques like means, standard deviations, t-test and one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The major findings of the study revealed that the variables - gender, age, teaching experience and location of the institution have no influence on the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools. The study has suggested that the teachers should have a positive attitude towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools.

**Key words:** *Inclusion, Inclusive Education, Children With Special Needs (CWSN), Persons With Disabilities (PWDs)*

### Introduction

Education is a powerful instrument of social change; and often initiates upward movement in the social structure. It helps to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. The educational scene in the country has undergone major changes over the past several years resulting in better provision of education and better educational practices. 'Education for all' is the global movement led by the UNESCO aiming to meet the learning needs of all the children, youth and adults. Disability has been viewed differently in different documents. Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 considered blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, mental illness, locomotor impairment and leprosy as indicators of disability; whereas the National Trust Act, 1999 for Welfare of Persons with Disability included autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities to the list. The emphasis on education of children with disability has been shifted from 'no education at all' to 'inclusive education' to achieve the national goal of providing education for all. Therefore, with a view to develop inclusive society (learn to live together), inclusive education is the approach to include all children to receive education irrespective of their diversity in the general school environment.

The World Conference on the need for special education held at Salamanca, Spain in 1994 with the help of UNESCO stated: "School should accommodate all children irrespective of their physical, emotional, intellectual, social and linguistic or other conditions". Children with disabilities may be considered as children with special needs. Every child is special and unique in his/her educational needs; and each one has the right to receive quality education. To meet these needs, 'inclusive education' emerged under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) with "zero rejection policy".

**The concept of 'Education of Children with Special Needs' (CWSN):**

Children with Special Needs (CWSN) are those who have some type of disability – physical, sensory, developmental or emotional; and require exceptional care and extra help. The special needs of these children depend on the nature of their disability.

In the 1970s, the government launched the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). The scheme aimed at providing educational opportunities to learners with disabilities in regular schools; and to facilitate their achievement and retention. The objective is to integrate children with disabilities in the general community at all levels as equal partners, to prepare them for normal development and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. A cardinal feature of the scheme was the liaison between regular and special schools to reinforce the integration process.

### Review of Related Studies

The studies carried out earlier by the other researchers that aim at finding out the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in regular secondary schools have been examined; and a brief review of the same is provided in the following paragraphs.

**Susmita Hazarika (2020)** made an attempt to identify the level of attitude of high school teachers towards inclusive education. The sample of the study comprised of 200 high school teachers (100 male and 100 female) of Amguri education block under Sivasagar district. Here, purposive sampling technique was incorporated to select the necessary sample. An attitude scale, namely, Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE) standardized and validated by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand was administered to collect data. Statistical techniques such as mean, median, mode, S.D., were calculated to analyze and interpret the data. The study revealed that the high school teachers of Sivasagar district have a positively high attitude towards inclusive education.

**Harvinder Kaur (2020)** conducted a study to find out the 'Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education'. One hundred teachers from various Government and Private schools situated in rural and urban areas in Kapurthala and Ludhiana were taken as sample of the study. Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education by Vishal Sood and Aarti Anand (2011) was used to collect the data. Descriptive statistics were applied. 't' value was calculated to find out the differences, if any existing in the attitude of Teachers belonging to different groups towards Inclusive Education. The results show that there is significant difference between private and government teachers towards inclusive education. Private school teachers expressed more favorable attitude towards inclusion as compared to Government school teachers. The results also revealed that there is significant difference between male and female teachers towards inclusive education. Female teachers exhibited more favorable attitude towards inclusive education as compared to their male counterparts. It has been further found that there is significant difference between rural and urban teachers towards inclusive education. Teachers from urban schools have more favorable attitude towards inclusive education as compared to their rural counterparts.

**Sunita Bera (2019)** conducted a study to highlight the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. It is a descriptive survey type research. In this study, the population were all the teachers under WBCHSE (West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education), Government aided, Bengali Medium, Higher Secondary Schools. A total of 50 teachers were selected from 5 schools which were both from rural and urban. From the study, it is concluded that 10 teachers (20%) possess most favorable attitude towards Inclusive Education. 20 teachers (40%) possess above average attitude, 11 teachers (22%) possess moderate attitude, 8 teachers (16%) possess below average unfavorable attitude and finally 1 (2%) teacher possesses most unfavorable attitude towards inclusive education. The study revealed that no teacher possesses extremely favorable or extremely unfavorable attitude towards inclusive education.

**Anil Kumar (2016)** conducted a study to explore the attitudes of university and school teachers towards inclusive education system. One hundred teachers having equal number of male and female population was included in the study. Participants were administered an attitude scale, viz., 'Attitude towards Inclusive Education Scale' (ATIES) developed by Wilczenski (1992) to determine teachers' attitude about the inclusion of students with special needs into regular classroom in mainstream setting. The data were analyzed by using Means and Standard Deviations. The investigator also applied t-test to compare the groups. The results of the study revealed that there is a significant difference in the attitude of teachers in relation to teaching level, gender, residence and their experience. The

findings suggest that the university and female teachers appeared to hold more positive attitude as compared to school and male teachers respectively.

### **Need and Importance of the study**

Inclusive education is an approach to promote full and active participation of all children (with and without disabilities) together under a single umbrella providing them all curricular and co-curricular activities. This is a challenge for the teachers and all stakeholders to handle the diverse needs of all the students in the same environment. Attitude is a cognitive function of human beings that is expressed through the affective domain. It is considered as an individual's interpretation, general feelings or liking and disliking on any person or event continuously. Among all the challenges, the negative attitude of teachers towards inclusion is a big barrier or obstacle to implement inclusive education in schools successfully. The researchers felt that it is the need of the hour to assess the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in the main stream of the educational system. Further, the study aims at finding out the influence of different demographic variables, viz., gender, age, teaching experience and location of the institution on the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in the regular secondary schools. The present investigation is an attempt in this direction.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.
2. To examine the influence of demographic variables – gender, age, teaching experience and the location of the institution on the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in rural and urban areas towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.

### **Limitations of the study**

The study is limited to find out the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in the secondary schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Further, the study is confined to find out the influence of four demographic variables, viz., gender, age, teaching experience and location of the school on the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in the regular secondary schools.

### **Methodology**

#### **(a) Method of Research**

The researchers followed the Survey Method of the descriptive research for the present investigation.

#### **(b) Sample**

The sample of the study consists of 480 teachers (250 Male and 230 Female) from the selected secondary schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique.

#### **(c) Research Tool**

The researchers used a well prepared and standardized questionnaire to collect data for the present investigation.

#### **(d) Administration of the Tool**

The research tool consisting of 45 items on three different attitudinal dimensions, viz., the Teachers' concern for inclusive education, the Teachers' efficacy for inclusive practice and the Teachers' stress coping strategies, is administered to 480 teachers working in 80 selected secondary schools in Visakhapatnam district of

Andhra Pradesh.

**(e) Statistical Techniques Used**

The investigators used different statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, the 't'- test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for data analysis and interpretation.

**Table showing Mean, SD and 't'- values on the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in regular secondary schools**

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio/ F-value	Result
1	Gender	Male	250	151.02	33.97	0.54*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		Female	230	152.24	33.83		
2	Age	Below 40 yrs.	310	153.71	33.26	0.93*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		40 yrs. & above	170	150.97	30.37		
3	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 yrs.	360	150.93	33.55	0.19*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		10 yrs. & above	120	151.58	32.37		
4	Location of the institution	Rural	330	153.33	33.03	0.35*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
		urban	150	152.21	32.29		

**Findings of the study**

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers working in rural and urban areas towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.

## Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that the gender, age, teaching experience and the location of the institution have no influence on the attitude of teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular secondary schools.

## Recommendations

The study has suggested that the teachers should possess a favourable attitude towards inclusion of children with special needs in the regular secondary schools.

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