Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level: A Study of Attitude of Integrated Child Development Services Functionaries and Parents


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Abstract

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is a significant scheme that works for rehabilitation of different categories of children including special needs children at pre-school level in India. For rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level, the ICDS functionaries and parents (of the children) play the vital role. For developing the favorable attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level, it is important to study the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Hence, in this study an attempt was made to study the attitudes of ICDS functionaries (Child Development Project Officers, Supervisors and Anganwadi workers) and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The study was a descriptive survey-cum-comparative type research. 36 Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs), 108 Supervisors, 108 Anganwadi workers (AWWs), and 216 parents under thirty six ICDS projects from nine administrative districts of Assam were taken as participants of the study. A self-developed attitude scale was used to collect data from the participants. Mainly quantitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze the data of the study. The major findings of the study indicated that all the ICDS functionaries and parents have shown high attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level; and CDPOs possess better attitude than the supervisors, and parents possess better attitude than the supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. And from the study, it is also found that the background variable ‘experience’ of the supervisors acts as a determining factor in determining the attitude of the supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school whereas no other background variable of the supervisors and none of the background variables of the CDPOs, AWWs and parents acts as a determining factor in determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

Keywords: Rehabilitation, Special Needs Children, Pre-school, Attitude, Integrated Child Development Services functionaries, Parents.

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Introduction

Many special needs children are identified in terms of abnormal/sub-normal development or developmental delays, and are excluded from the mainstream society. They are also considered children with disability or disabilities. Children with disabilities include those with impaired health conditions like cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy, traumatic spinal cord injury, down syndrome, and children with hearing, visual, physical, communication and intellectual impairments (WHO and UNICEF, 2012). Many times the children with disabilities are regarded as inferior and this exposes them to increased vulnerability; for example, the discrimination based on disability has manifested itself in marginalization from resources and decision making, and even in infanticide (United Nations CRC, 2006; WHO and World Bank, 2011; Jones et al., 2012). Children with disabilities as well as their families are confronted by many barriers which include inadequate legislation and policies, negative attitudes, inadequate services, and lack of accessible environments (WHO and World Bank, 2011). Children with disabilities become vulnerable to negligence, abuse and violence because of exclusion of them and discrimination against them from others.

Children with disabilities who are younger or at pre-school level are more likely to be abused than their peers without disabilities (Algood et al., 2011; Stalker and McArthur, 2020). Identification of disabilities of the children from their pre-school or early age level and provision of proper rehabilitation for them from their pre-school or early age level are very much important for their development as pre-school or early age level of a child is the foundational stage of his/her life. Education and rehabilitation of children with disabilities is an integral part of international discourse of education (UN, 2015). Adrienne and Kizzy (2019) indicated that pre-school early language and literacy skills utilize multiple assessments to identify young children who require additional multi-tiered instructional support. Early childhood education to promote child development, learning and well-being is a field of education and research that has attracted political interest in recent years at local as well as national and international perspectives (OECD, 2012, 2017; Palla and Vallber Roth, 2018). The National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (2013) reiterates proactively for addressing the inequalities and discriminations based on disability, gender and social identity towards fulfillment of right to free and universal pre-primary education. In this direction the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) 2013 is a significant initiative which aims at early identification and early intervention for children from birth to 18 years to cover 4 ‘D’s, i.e., defect at birth, deficiencies, disease and developmental delays including disability. Thus, exposure to appropriate learning experiences for special needs children from early infancy through the pre-school years can benefit the special needs children as well as the society.

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is a flagship scheme of Government of India launched in 2nd October 1975, and the scheme intends to achieve the holistic development of 0-6 years of age group children and pregnant and lactating mothers from disadvantaged sections. A package of supplementary nutrition, immunization, health checkup, referral services, pre-school (non-formal) education and health nutrition education are provided by the ICDS scheme. It started on an experimental basis in 33 Development Blocks in 1975, and, now it covers about 90 percent of all blocks in the country (Programme Evaluation Organization, Planning Commission, 2011). As on 2016, total 7076 number of ICDS projects was operational for providing benefit to 13.7 million children as well as pregnant and lactating mothers. The ICDS programme offers health, nutrition, and hygiene education to mothers, pre-school education to children up to 6 years of age, identification and intervention of disability in children and supplementary feeding services for all children (Kant et al., 1984). One of the significant goals of ICDS is to enhance the survival and development of children from the vulnerable section of the society (Patil and Doibale, 2013; Sandhyarani and Rao, 2013). There are different functionaries associated with ICDS projects like Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs), Supervisors and Anganwadi workers (AWWs), etc. who plays the vital role to make the ICDS projects successful. The role of parents (of the children) targeted in the ICDS projects is also equally important like the role of different functionaries in the projects to make the projects successful. Anganwadi or Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) are the centers where the different benefits under ICDS projects are provided to the target group children in terms of education, health facilities and many other benefits. Anganwadi workers play the main role for functioning of Anganwadi centres. The Anganwadi workers are the frontline community health worker assigned to work for identifying the children with disabilities in the community and creating awareness among the public about the various rehabilitation facilities along with discharging the ICDS services (Johnsey et al., 2013). The AWW also acts as an agent of social change by mobilizing the community support for...
better care of young children of both normal and special needs (Poon et al., 2010).

The better awareness or attitude of ICDS functionaries and the parents (targeted in the ICDS projects) regarding the special needs children at pre-school level plays the key role for the better rehabilitation of the special needs children at pre-school level. But, in many cases it is observed that ICDS functionaries and the parents have little awareness or attitude regarding rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The evaluation of ICDS scheme by the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development puts on record the absence of awareness about disability among the anganwadi workers and total lack of intervention and referral service relating to disability (NIPCCD, 2009). The scheme strongly recommends training of AWWs on skills required for early detection of disability/children at risk and primary prevention. Lack of facility for children with disabilities in different types of pre-schools is noticed (Kaul et al., 2015). Behera and Gowramma (2016) observed that children with disabilities, though enrolled, are not attending anganwadi centres due to lack of awareness among the community people concerning the facilities and importance of early intervention. Gobalakrishnan (2013) found that officials and AWWs are not aware of government schemes which are introduced for the welfare of the physically challenged except the financial assistance and provision of material benefit mainly due to isolation of children with disabilities from the mainstream.

For better rehabilitation of special needs children, there is need to develop positive attitude among the personnel who deal with the special needs children. In this context, Salovita (2020a) mentioned that positive attitude of teachers is essential for the success of rehabilitation of special needs children when they are placed into mainstream classrooms. Teachers who support inclusive practice personally and accept the concept of inclusion can more readily adapt the learning environment for the diverse needs of students and use a variety of approaches and teaching strategies for the diverse needs of students (Ryan, 2009). The attitude of the general education teachers is considered as one of the most significant factors for implementing successful inclusion of students with special needs (De Boer et al., 2011). For better rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level there is need to develop positive attitude among the personnel dealing with the special needs children at pre-school level. Besides the ICDS functionaries like CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs, the parents perform significant role for rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Hence, there is need to develop positive attitude among the ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children. For developing positive attitude among the ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level, at first, there is need to study the attitude among the ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. But, the review of literature in the field of special needs children at pre-school level indicates that hardly study has been carried out to study the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards the rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Hence, this study was planned to study the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The study was designed to achieve these objectives:

1. To study the distribution of the scores of attitude of the ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.
2. To compare the attitude of ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.
3. To compare the attitude of ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables.

Key Terminologies Used

The key terminologies used in this research and their operational meanings are given below:

**Special needs children:** Special needs children refer to those children who are deviated from normal children in the physical, intellectual and emotional aspects and many other aspects of behaviour. The special needs children include disabled as well as gifted and creative children. In the present study, ‘special needs children’ is delimited to the different categories of disabled children (i.e., visual impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded, etc.).

**Rehabilitation of Special needs children:** Rehabilitation of special needs children in the present study refers to the provision of different kinds of facilities for the special needs children for fulfilling their needs in different dimensions of life like physical, social, educational, medical, psychological, economic, etc. so that they can maximize their capacity to lead normal life.

**Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):** ICDS is a national level scheme or programme of India which was at first launched

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in 1975. The scheme has its concentration on the areas of health, hygiene, nutrition and education of children and mothers. A team of workers like District Programme Officers, Child Development Project Officers, Supervisors, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi helpers, etc. mainly make the scheme functional.

**Pre-school Level:** Pre-school level in the present study refers to a level or stage of learning/development covering basically the children of 3-6 years.

**Background Variables and their Definition**

In the study the attitude of ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level are compared in relation to their background variables (in respect of the third or last objective of the study). The different background variables used for ICDS functionaries and parents along with their definition are presented below.

Background Variables of CDPOs (Gender, Age, Qualification and Experience): (i) Gender: Male and Female, (ii) Age: High Aged (45 years or above) and Less Aged (below 45 years), (iii) Qualification: More Qualified (having Master degree or above qualification) and Less Qualified (having up to Bachelor degree qualification), and (iv) Experience: More Experienced (having 15 years or above working experience) and Less Experienced (having less than 15 years of working experience).

Background Variables of Supervisors (Age, Qualification and Experience): (i) Age: High Aged (40 years or above) and Less Aged (below 40 years), (ii) Qualification: More Qualified (having Master degree or above qualification) and Less Qualified (having up to Bachelor degree qualification) and (iii) Experience: More Experienced (having 12 years or above working experience) and Less Experienced (having less than 12 years of working experience).

Background Variables of AWWs (Age, Qualification and Experience): (i) Age: High Aged (35 years or above) and Less Aged (below 35 years), (ii) Qualification: More Qualified (having Bachelor degree or above qualification) and Less Qualified (having IX standard to Higher Secondary qualification) and (iii) Experience: More Experienced (having 10 years or above working experience) and Less Experienced (having less than 10 years of working experience).

Background Variables of Parents (Gender, Age, Qualification and Socio-Economic Status): (i) Gender: Male and Female (ii) Age: High Aged (30 years or above) and Less Aged (below 30 years), (iii) Qualification: More Qualified (having Bachelor degree or above qualification) and Less Qualified (having up to Standard XII qualification), (iv) Socio-economic status: Above Poverty Line or APL (having Above Poverty Line status as per Government record) and Below Poverty Line or BPL (having Below Poverty Line status as per Government record).

**Methodology**

The study was basically considered under the scope of descriptive survey-cum-comparative research. The study was considered under the descriptive survey research, because, in this study a survey on participants of the sampling area was made in order to know/study the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Further, the study was considered under comparative research, because, in this study the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level was compared through comparative method to achieve different aspects of the study.

**Locale and Participants**

This research work studied the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The study was conducted in the state of Assam (India) covering nine administrative districts from all the three socio-geographic regions of Assam, namely, Upper Assam, Lower Assam and South Assam. In the state of Assam, currently 218 ICDS Projects are functioning and under these projects, total 62,153 anganwadi centres are providing various services to 36,24,973 beneficiaries. The study covered 36 ICDS projects, and 36 anganwadi centers under the 36 ICDS projects of Assam. 36 CDPOs, 108 supervisors, 108 anganwadi workers and 216 parents (of the children who were attending anganwadi centers) from the 36 ICDS projects were taken as the participants of this study. All the sampling districts were chosen randomly, but, all the sampling institutions (ICDS projects and anganwadi centers) were chosen purposively for the study. The study was conducted on the ICDS projects and anganwadi centers which are meant for caring, educating and rehabilitating the different categories of children including the special needs children in between the age group of 3-6 years or at preschool level. The participants of the study were chosen purposively from the sample ICDS projects and anganwadi centers. The details regarding the description of the participants are presented below.
Table 1.
Description of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No.</th>
<th>Socio-geographic Zone of Assam</th>
<th>No. of Districts</th>
<th>Name of the Districts</th>
<th>No. of ICDS Projects</th>
<th>Name of ICDS Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Upper Assam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dibrugarh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dibrugarh (u) ICDS project, Borboruah ICDS project, Panitola ICDS Project, Lahowal ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sivasagar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sivasagar (i) ICDS project, Demo ICDS project, Gauhati ICDS Project, Amguri ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Golaghat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Golaghat (u) ICDS project, Central Golaghat ICDS project, East Golaghat ICDS project, Kakodonga ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lower Assam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kamrup (R)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rani ICDS project, Rampur ICDS project, Boko ICDS project, Bongaon ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jaleswar ICDS project, Lakhipur ICDS project, Kharmuza ICDS project, Krishnai-Balijana Twin ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dhupri</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jakadahar ICDS project, South- Salmara ICDS project, Birring-Jaru ICDS project, Mahamaya ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>South Assam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Silchar (r) ICDS project, Barjalenga ICDS project, Salchagra ICDS project, Tapang ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Karimganj</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>North Karimganj ICDS project, Ramkrishna Nagar ICDS project, Badarpur ICDS project, Dullavchara ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Halakandi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lala ICDS project, Halakandi ICDS project, Algapur ICDS project, Kaliichherra ICDS project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td>36 108 108 216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tool Used

The research was conducted to study the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards the rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The study was intended to achieve three objectives, and for achieving all the three objectives of the study a self-developed attitude scale titled ‘Attitude Scale (for ICDS functionaries and parents) for studying the attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level’ was used. This tool is a five point Likert type attitude scale developed by the researchers themselves. For developing this tool, at first 55 items were tentatively prepared which included both positive and negative category of items. For the validation of the scale, all the 55 items were discussed and examined with the help of a panel of experts in the concerned field of study. After getting constructive suggestions from the experts, the tool was finalized with 41 items that are positive in nature. All the 41 items touched the different aspects of the area of rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The tool was tried out in a small number of respondents (30 respondents) in order to find out the validity and reliability of the tool. The construct validity of the scale was established.

The split-half reliability coefficient of correlation of the tool is 0.79. Each item of the scale has five options which are: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Out of the five options of an item, a respondent has to put tick mark (√) to only one option which s/he feels correct/ appropriate. The scoring value of the items is like this: 5 for SA, 4 for A, 3 for UD, 2 for D and 1 for SD. Since, the scale includes total 41 items, so the maximum score value of the scale is 205, and the minimum score value is 41. All the items of the scale follows fixed pattern of scoring.

Collection of Data and Analysis of Results

Data for the study were collected personally from the participants (CDPOs, Supervisors, AAWs and Parents) of the sampling institutions (i.e., ICDS projects and Anganwadi centres under ICDS projects) with the help of the scale ‘Attitude Scale (for ICDS functionaries and parents) for studying the attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level’. This scale was administered on 36 CDPOs, 108 Supervisors, 108 AAWWs and 216 parents for the collection of data in respect of achieving all the objectives of the study. Mainly the quantitative approaches of data analysis
were applied to analyze the data of the study. The quantitative methods like percentage, ‘t’ test and graphical representation of data constituted the important parameter for analyzing the results of the study.

Analysis of Results and Findings

Table 2.

Table depicting the distribution of the Scores of Attitude of ICDS Functionaries and Parents towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICDS Functionaries and Parents</th>
<th>Number of Participants having Low Attitude</th>
<th>Number of Participants having Middle Attitude</th>
<th>Number of Participants having High Attitude</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDPOs</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>36 (100%)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>108 (100%)</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWWs</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>108 (100%)</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>00 (0%)</td>
<td>216 (100%)</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (CDPOs, Supervisors, AWWs and Parents)</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low Attitude (Less than 95.66 scores)
Middle Attitude (From 95.66 to less than 150.33 scores)
High Attitude (From 150.33 to more scores)

The table-2 shows the distribution of the scores of attitude of the ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. From the table, it is found that out of total 36 CDPOs, 108 Supervisors and 108 AWWs, all the 36 (100%) CDPOs, 108 (100%) Supervisors and 108 (100%) AWWs have shown high attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Hence, it is revealed that all the 36 CDPOs, 108 Supervisors and 108 AWWs have strongly supported and are in favour of rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. From the table it is also found that out of total 216 parents, all the 216 (100%) parents have expressed high attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school. Hence, it is inferred that all the 216 (100%) parents have strongly supported and are in favour of the rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Out of total 468 ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents, all the 468 (100%) ICDS functionaries and parents have shown high attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. That means, all the 468 ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents have strongly supported and are in favour of the rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The figure-1 depicts the comparison of the scores of attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

Figure 1.

Distribution of the Scores of Attitude of ICDS Functionaries and Parents towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level

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2. Comparison of the Attitude of ICDS Functionaries and Parents towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Level of Comparison</th>
<th>Categories of ICDS functionaries and/or parents</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>‘t’ value</th>
<th>Table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CDPOs and Supervisors</td>
<td>CDPOs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>190.06</td>
<td>10.613</td>
<td>1.769</td>
<td>2.099</td>
<td>1.975</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CDPOs and AWWs</td>
<td>CDPOs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>190.06</td>
<td>10.613</td>
<td>1.769</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>1.975</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CDPOs and Parents</td>
<td>CDPOs</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>189.19</td>
<td>6.821</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>0.644</td>
<td>1.975</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Supervisors and AWWs</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>185.02</td>
<td>13.021</td>
<td>1.253</td>
<td>1.953</td>
<td>1.975</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Supervisors and Parents</td>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>189.19</td>
<td>6.821</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>3.786</td>
<td>1.975</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>AWWs and Parents</td>
<td>AWWs</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>188.01</td>
<td>9.143</td>
<td>0.880</td>
<td>1.306</td>
<td>1.975</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ho is rejected (Significant)  
# Ho is accepted (Not significant)  
N= Number of cases  
M= Mean of the number of cases  
SD= Standard Deviation  
SEM= Standard Error of Mean  
Sign= Significance level  
DF= Degrees of Freedom

The table-3 describes the comparison of attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The ‘CDPOs and Supervisors’ level of comparison of the table reveals that the obtained ‘t’ value is more than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 142 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant difference between the attitude of CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Since the mean score of the attitude of CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level is more than the mean score of the attitude of Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level, so, it is concluded that attitude of CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level is better in comparison to the attitude of Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. From the level of comparison of ‘CDPOs and AWWs’ of the table, it is remarked that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 142 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. So, it is summarized that there is no significant difference between the attitude of CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The ‘CDPOs and Parents’ level of comparison of the table depicts that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 250 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of Parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Supervisors and AWWs’ of the table visualizes that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 214 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. So, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Supervisors and Parents’ of the table states that the obtained ‘t’ value is more than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 322 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. So, it is concluded that there is significant difference between the attitude of Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of Parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Since the mean score of the attitude of Parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level is more than the mean score of the attitude of Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level, so, it is finalized that the attitude of
Parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level is better in comparison to the attitude of Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘AWWs and Parents’ of the table illustrates that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 322 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is summarized that there is no significant difference between the attitude of AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of Parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The figure-2 depicts the comparison of the attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

**Figure 2.**
Comparison of the Attitude of ICDS Functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and Parents towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level through ICDS Projects

### 3. Comparison of the Attitude of ICDS Functionaries and Parents towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level in Relation to their Background Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Level of Comparison (Name of the background variables)</th>
<th>Division of background variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>'t' value</th>
<th>Table value of 't' at 0.05 level of significance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sign.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>190.00</td>
<td>11.036</td>
<td>2.468</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>190.13</td>
<td>10.417</td>
<td>2.604</td>
<td>0.551</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>High Aged</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>190.29</td>
<td>10.856</td>
<td>1.862</td>
<td>0.940</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Aged</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>187.55</td>
<td>8.688</td>
<td>2.619</td>
<td>0.940</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>More Qualified</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>191.29</td>
<td>10.561</td>
<td>1.996</td>
<td>1.315</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Qualified</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>185.75</td>
<td>10.278</td>
<td>3.634</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-4 describes the comparison of the attitude of the CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables. The level of comparison of ‘Gender’ of the table visualizes that the calculated ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 34 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of male CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of female CDPOs.
towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. From the level of comparison of ‘Age’ of the table, it is found that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 34 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is summarized that there is no significant difference between the attitude of high aged CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less aged CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Qualification’ of the table states that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 34 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. So, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of more qualified CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less qualified CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

The level of comparison of ‘Experience’ of the table is found that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 34 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is revealed that there is no significant difference between the attitude of more experienced CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less experienced CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The figure 3 depicts the comparison of the attitude of the CDPOs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level through ICDS projects in relation to their background variables.

![Figure 3](image.png)

**Comparison of the Attitude of the CDPOs towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level in relation to their Background Variables**

**Table 5.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Level of Comparison (Name of the background variables)</th>
<th>Division of background variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>'t' value</th>
<th>Table value of 't' at 0.05 level of significance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sign.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>High Aged</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>186.47</td>
<td>12.610</td>
<td>1.576</td>
<td>1.402</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Aged</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>182.91</td>
<td>13.463</td>
<td>2.030</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>More Qualified</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>181.18</td>
<td>12.484</td>
<td>2.359</td>
<td>1.833</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Qualified</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>186.36</td>
<td>13.012</td>
<td>1.455</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>More Experienced</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>189.18</td>
<td>10.789</td>
<td>1.541</td>
<td>3.154</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Experienced</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>181.56</td>
<td>13.771</td>
<td>1.793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-5 describes the comparison of the attitude of the Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables. The level of comparison...
of comparison of ‘Age’ of the table shows that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 106 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of high aged Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less aged Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. From the level of comparison of ‘Qualification’ of the table, it is found that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 106 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is revealed that there is no significant difference between the attitude of more qualified Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less qualified Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Experience’ of the table determines that the obtained ‘t’ value is more than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 106 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. So, it is summarized that there is significant difference between the attitude of high experienced Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less experienced Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Since the mean score of the attitude of more experienced Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level is more than the mean score of attitude of less experienced Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level, so, it is inferred that attitude of more experienced Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level is better in comparison to the attitude of less experienced Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The figure-4 depicts the comparison of the attitude of the Supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables.

**Figure 4.**
Comparison of the Attitude of the Supervisors towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level in relation to their Background Variables

**Table 6.**
Table depicting the Comparison of the Attitude of the AWWs towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school level in relation to their Background Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Level of Comparison (Name of the background variables)</th>
<th>Division of background variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>‘t’ value</th>
<th>Table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sign.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>High Aged</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>188.70</td>
<td>7.245</td>
<td>0.860</td>
<td>1.095</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Aged</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>186.68</td>
<td>11.984</td>
<td>1.970</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>More Qualified</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>187.47</td>
<td>11.857</td>
<td>2.096</td>
<td>0.538</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Qualified</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>188.24</td>
<td>7.809</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>More Experienced</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>187.58</td>
<td>10.229</td>
<td>1.332</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Experienced</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>188.53</td>
<td>7.708</td>
<td>1.101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-6 describes the comparison of the attitude of the AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables. The level
of comparison of ‘Age’ of the table describes that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 106 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of high aged AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less aged AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Qualification’ of the table states that the calculated ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 106 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it is inferred that there is no significant difference between the attitude of more qualified AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less qualified AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

The level of comparison of ‘Experience’ of the table-6 shows that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 106 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of more experienced AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less experienced AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The figure-5 depicts the comparison of the attitude of the AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables.

Figure 5.
Comparison of the Attitude of the AWWs towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level in Relation to their Background Variables

Table 7.
Table depicting the Comparison of the Attitude of the Parents towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school level in Relation to their Background Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Level of Comparison</th>
<th>Division of background variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
<th>‘t’ value at 0.05 level of significance</th>
<th>Table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sign.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>188.87</td>
<td>6.815</td>
<td>0.553</td>
<td>1.068</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>189.95</td>
<td>6.828</td>
<td>0.853</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>High Aged</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>188.75</td>
<td>6.724</td>
<td>0.523</td>
<td>1.730</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Aged</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>190.53</td>
<td>7.000</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>More Qualified</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>189.38</td>
<td>7.234</td>
<td>1.044</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less Qualified</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>189.14</td>
<td>6.720</td>
<td>0.518</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Socio-Economic</td>
<td>APL</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>190.28</td>
<td>5.937</td>
<td>0.815</td>
<td>1.346</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>BPL</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>188.83</td>
<td>7.065</td>
<td>0.553</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table-7 describes the comparison of the attitude of the Parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables. The level
of comparison of ‘Gender’ of the table visualizes that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 214 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of male parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of female parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Age’ of the table describes that the obtained ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 214 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is revealed that there is no significant difference between the attitude of high aged parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less aged parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Qualification’ of the table states that the calculated ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 214 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of more qualified parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of less qualified parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The level of comparison of ‘Socio-Economic Status’ of the table shows that the calculated ‘t’ value is less than the table value of ‘t’ at 0.05 level of significance for 214 DF. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the attitude of APL parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level and the attitude of BPL parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. The figure-6 depicts the comparison of the attitude of the parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in relation to their background variables.

![Figure 6. Comparison of the Attitude of the Parents towards Rehabilitation of Special Needs Children at Pre-school Level in Relation to their Background Variables](image)

**Discussion of Results**

In this study an attempt was made to know the attitudes of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Some of the significant results of the study are given here. From the study it is seen that all the ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents have shown high attitude towards the rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. From the study it is seen that the attitude of CDPOs is better than the attitude of supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level, and the attitude of parents is better than the attitude of supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level whereas there is no significant difference between the attitude of CDPOs and the attitude of AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level; no significant difference is observed between the attitude of CDPOs and the attitude of parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level; no significant difference is found between the attitude of supervisors and the attitude of AWWs towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level; and no significant difference exists between the attitude of AWWs and the attitude of

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parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. And from the study it is also found that out of the four background variables of the CDPOs (i.e., gender, age, qualification and experience), none of the background variables acts as the determining factor in determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level; out of the three background variables of the supervisors (i.e., age, qualification and experience), one background variable (i.e., experience) acts as a determining factor in determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school; out of the three background variables of the AWWs (i.e., age, qualification and experience), none of the background variables acts as a determining factor in determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level; and out of the four background variables of the parents (i.e., gender, age, qualification and socio-economic status), none of the background variables acts as a determining factor in determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Many other studies have been conducted relating to the present study area and the results of those studies in many ways are related with the results of the present study. The thematic corroboration of the results of some of the studies with the results of the present study is presented below.

Joy, Jisha and Jisa (2020) studied the parental attitude and involvement in caring for their mentally retarded children, and their study revealed that majority (76%) of the parents showed favorable attitude towards the care of their children and most of the parents (67%) were fully involved in the care of the mentally retarded children. The study of Salovita (2020a) focused on the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education, and the study revealed that about 80% of the teachers have strong attitudes for inclusion of special needs children. Pasenika and Schwab (2019) studied the attitudes of parents towards inclusive education and their perceptions of inclusive teaching practices and resources. The results of the study revealed that parents’ attitudes towards the inclusion of a student with a physical disability or learning disability were highly positive. Harnandez, Hueck and Charley (2016) indicated that the attitude of special education teachers towards inclusion were significantly more positive than those of general education teachers. Rao and Kamala (2016) studied the awareness among anganwadi workers about children with developmental delays, and the study reveals that the AWWs had a high level of awareness about the children with developmental delays and their awareness was not influenced by the factors like their age, area of residence, educational level, monthly income, religion and work experience except the type of training undergone by the AWWs. The AWWs who had participated in UDISHA Portage training on early identification of developmental delays exhibited significantly higher mean awareness score than their counterpart. The study of Sahoo, Biswas and Pandey (2015) reported that early diagnosis and intervention in children with learning disabilities makes a substantial improvement in self confidence and social competency which helps them in opening new windows of opportunity in school and in workplace. The study of Mishra and Singh (2013) on inclusion of children with hearing impaired in pre-school identified some factors for success like parental/peer support and positive attitude of teachers. All these studies indicated that parents, teachers and other social and health care workers have positive and favourable attitude towards inclusion of special needs children. The results of the present study reported that all the ICDS functionaries (CDPOs, Supervisors and AWWs) and parents have shown high attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Therefore, the results of the present study substantiate the results of the above mentioned studies.

The study of Gupta and Tandon (2018) highlighted that there was a significant difference in the attitude towards inclusion between urban and rural teacher trainees. However, there was no significant difference in the attitude towards inclusion among the sub-groups of teacher trainees on the basis of qualification, previous awareness about inclusion or familiarity with the disability in the family. The study of Jindal, McDermid, Rosenbaum, Di Rezze and Narayan (2018) reveals that Indian parents were more focused on fixing body structure and function challenges, and independent walking, than Canadian parents (body structure and function). All Canadian children were actively involved in both school and fun activities in the community, but due to lack of accessible services, Indian children had less school and community participation (activity and participation). Sridevi (2016) studied the level of awareness about concession, benefits and rights of the children with hearing impaired provided by the central and state governments, and found a moderate level of awareness among the parents. Fathers showed higher awareness compared to mothers, and the level of education had no impact on awareness among the parents. Salovita and Schaffus (2016) made a comparative study on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusive education in Finland and Brandenburg, Germany, and the study showed that Finnish teachers were more positive towards inclusion than Brandenburg
teachers. Karim, Banik and Bhagabati (2012) in their study reported that trained teachers had a more positive attitude towards inclusion compared to the untrained teachers. Present study corroborates to these studies that in the present study it is found that the background variable ‘experience’ of the supervisors acts as a determining factor in determining the attitude of the supervisors towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school whereas no other background variable of the supervisors and none of the background variables of the CDPOs, AWWs and parents acts as a determining factor in determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

Salovita (2020b) studied teacher’s attitude towards the inclusion of students with support needs, and the study indicated very low support of the teachers towards the inclusion of students with support needs. Attitudinal variables including self-efficacy and child-centeredness, and demographic variables, including age and gender were also associated with attitudes towards inclusion. Due to lack of legislative and legal guarantees, parents expressed more negative attitudes towards the inclusion of children with support needs. Tigere and Mukhubale (2019) in their study on ‘The experiences of the parents of children living with disabilities at Laalaba protective workshop in Sekhukhune district of Limpopo province’ reported that most of the participants had varying understanding on the cause of disabilities of the children. The study also brought the notion of absent fathers as most men do not want to be associated with children who are disabled. The study of Cotton and Paul (2018) indicates that due to limited scope of inclusive education, parents of children with disabilities expressed mixed feelings about the education policy; while some parents applaud the system, others see it as a threat to their children’s integration and future prospects. The study of Bansal (2016) reveals that there exist significant differences in the attitude level of teachers with respect to type of school, educational qualifications and professional experiences. No significant differences have been found in the professional commitment and different years of experiences. Thomas, Rajaram and Nalini (2014) studied psychological challenges of family care and found that parents of children with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy had inadequate understanding of the disease but showed positive attitude towards instrumental and emotional social support. All these studies indicated that the personnel associated with special needs children expressed a mixed attitude (i.e., in some cases favourable attitude, and in some other cases indifferent attitude or unfavourable attitude) towards the inclusion and rehabilitation of special needs children. Hence, the results of these studies are different in some ways from the results of the present study as present study indicates that all the ICDS functionaries and parents have shown high attitude towards the rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

**Conclusion and Implications**

Rehabilitation of special needs children especially from pre-school level is very essential for achieving 21st century competencies and skills in an inclusive manner. From the study it is found that both the ICDS functionaries and parents have shown high attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. From the study it is also found that the CDPOs are better than those of the supervisors, and parents are better than the supervisors in respect of their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level; whereas no significant difference was seen between CDPOs and AWWs; between CDPOs and parents; between supervisors and AWWs; and between AWWs and parents in respect of their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level. Further, from the study it is found that only one of the studied background variables of the supervisors (experience of the supervisors) acts as the determining factor for determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level whereas none of the studied background variables of the CDPOs, AWWs and parents acts as a determining factor for determining their attitude towards rehabilitation of special needs children. The findings of this study provide valuable insights and directions towards the rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level in these ways:

- Steps need to be taken to develop appropriate attitude among ICDS functionaries and strengthening their attitude for rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.
- The factors or variables that contribute in developing positive attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level need to be facilitated.
- The factors or variables that hinder in developing positive attitude of ICDS functionaries and parents towards rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level need to be eradicated / discouraged.
Steps need to be taken to strengthen the ICDS scheme and better implementation of the ICDS scheme for better mobilization of ICDS functionaries and parents in the context of rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

Steps need to be taken to develop proper awareness and attitude among community people or general public towards the better rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

The existing negative attitude of the different personnel including the teachers, social workers, health professionals, etc. who are associated with special needs children at pre-school level needs to be transformed into positive for better rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

Policies, schemes, programmes, etc. need to be formulated to develop positivity among different stakeholders who deal with rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

Orientation, training, workshop, etc. relating to the theme of rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level need to be organized for better rehabilitation of special needs children at pre-school level.

Measures need to be adopted to remove superstitious beliefs of parents/guardians, common people and workers of philanthropic organizations about the special needs children at different levels of development including pre-school level of development.

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