

A Study on Relationship between Awareness of Inclusive Education and Attitude towards Differently ABLED Children among Secondary School Teachers in Kerala

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Abstract

Equity in education is the global motto of education across the globe. Bringing the concept of inclusive education into reality is one of the major medium to achieve this goal. All stakeholders especially teachers should have a mindset to understand that every child possesses unique skills and aspirations. Teachers must have a sound knowledge on the concept and its pedagogy and be competent enough to understand problems of differently abled children and to direct new ways to them. This paper mainly focused on variables viz awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children among secondary school teachers of Palakkad district in Kerala. Researchers adopted a survey method for data collection. 250 secondary school teachers were taken as a sample through randomization technique from various schools of Palakkad district in Kerala & the collected data was statistically interpreted. Percentage analysis, t-test, Karl Pearson's product Moment coefficient of correlation were the techniques used in the study. The study implied that the awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children among secondary school teachers are moderate. It revealed that there is no significant relationship between the mean scores of awareness and attitude of differently abled children among male and female secondary school teachers of Palakkad district in Kerala. The study implied that there is no significant positive relationship existing between attitude and awareness, which also indicates that the teachers who were having sound knowledge on inclusion may not show acceptable attitude towards differently abled children.

Keywords: Awareness of inclusive education and Attitude towards differently abled children.

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I. Introduction

The term inclusion and inclusive education are familiar to all of us from a long time. Still, millions of the vulnerable population have been denied the same due to lack of explicit guidance and lack of clarity in what inclusion exactly is. There are many legislative and constitutional provisions made to promote inclusive education system, but unless and until teachers do not have a proper awareness on the concept, we can't easily realize its practices in real classroom. Better implementation needs a better understanding. Hence the teachers who are supposed to be the real stakeholders of the concept need to have a thorough knowledge on the term's inclusion, inclusive practices and inclusive pedagogy. Years back inclusion was a narrow concept, and it was constrained within the limit of teaching children with disability. Inclusive practice refers to the various actions and activities that professionals in schools and other educational settings do to give meaning to their understanding of inclusion education (Florian 2009). Meanwhile inclusive pedagogy is concerned with an approach to teaching and learning that focuses on extending what is generally available to everybody so that all learners are able to participate in the community of the classroom, as opposed to providing for all by differentiating for some. (Florian and Black- Hawkins 2011, P 815).

Inclusive education is a process of systematic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures, and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preference (United Nations 2016: paragraph 11)

Today, education is treated as a tool for the transformation of the society. NEP 2020 envisions placing teacher education as central considering the vital role of a teacher so as to realize its intended outcomes. The aim of the future is to give professionalism to teacher education. Hence it becomes vital for teachers to become aware on the concept and nature of Inclusive education system and develop an attitude

towards it.

Need and Significance of the Study

Inclusive education is the most effective way to give all children a fair chance to go to school, learn and develop the skills they need to thrive. It means all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools. Article 3, UNESCO 1994 states “Inclusive education has taken public eye all over the world in recent decades, particularly in introducing some reformations to prevent exclusionary practices. School should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions.” There are many existing laws that talk about inclusion but the number of schools that have brought it into practice is very less. The novel concept of inclusive education is introduced to foster social skills rather than academic performances. An inclusive education system will also enable teachers to understand the skills and competencies of the parents of children with physical disabilities and to solve the problems and shortcomings faced by the children. Hence, the study encompasses the need for identifying the special needs for physically deformed children i.e. building the required awareness and developing the right attitude towards all kinds of children.

Variables of the study

Awareness of inclusive education: Awareness generally means knowledge or perception of a situation or fact. In this study awareness of inclusive education means perception of secondary teachers on concept of inclusion, its policies, projects, rights and constitutional provisions of differently abled children.

Attitude towards differently abled children: In psychology attitude is a psychological construct, a mental and emotional entity that inheres in or characterizes a person. In this study attitude towards differently abled children implies pedagogical knowledge and approach of secondary school teachers towards differently abled children in teaching in a real classroom.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the level of awareness of inclusive education among secondary school teachers in Kerala for the whole sample.
- To find out the level of attitude of secondary school teachers in Kerala towards inclusive education.
- To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the mean scores of awareness of inclusive education among sub samples based on gender.
- To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards differently abled children among sub samples based on gender.
- To find out the extent of relationship between awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children among secondary school teachers.

Hypotheses of the study

- There exist different levels of awareness on inclusive education among secondary teachers in Kerala.
- There exists different levels of attitude towards differently abled children among secondary school teachers of Kerala.
- There exists significant difference in the mean scores of awareness of inclusive education for the sub samples of male and female of secondary school teachers.
- There exists significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards differently abled children for the sub samples of male and female secondary school teachers.
- There exists a significant relationship between awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children.

II. Methodology

Methodology of the study comprises of the precise description of sample for the study, the appropriate tools and statistical techniques required for the study. Survey method was used for the present study. Data was collected from 250 secondary school teachers by random sampling method. The study was conducted with the help of Google form. The study was based on evaluation of available data.

Tools used

- Awareness test on educational policies & various projects involving inclusive education, various types of disabilities found in an Inclusive education system.

- Attitude scale to assess the attitude of secondary school teachers towards differently abled children. The questionnaire comprises of 20 different questions assessing the attitude of teachers in various aspects of Inclusive Education.

Statistical Techniques used

Percentage analysis, Test of significant difference between mean scores (t -test), Karl Pearson’s product moment coefficient of correlation were the statistical techniques used.

Analysis and Interpretations of the Results

The data collected from a sample of 250 secondary school teachers from Palakkad district in Kerala, from various schools consisting of sub samples based on gender. The data was sorted and compiled for statistical analysis. The data was used for descriptive as well as relevant for inferential statistics leading to the testing of hypotheses.

Table1: Basic statistical details for the variables of the total sample (N 250)

Items	Awareness of inclusive education	Attitude towards differently abled children
Mean	9.5	82.6
Median	8	82
Mode	8	82
SD	3.55	6.78
Skewness	0.434	0.298
Kurtosis	-1.04	-0.509

- Awareness on inclusive education
Table 1 presents the measures of central tendency viz. mean, median and mode are 9.5, 8 and 8 respectively. The standard deviation is 3.55. The measures of central tendency are not highly deviated from one to another. The value of skewness shows that the distribution is fairly symmetrical (range is between -0.5 and 0.5). The kurtosis value being negative reveals that the distribution is slightly platykurtic for the total sample.

- Attitude towards differently abled children
Table 1 presents the measures of central tendency viz. Mean, median and mode are 82.6, 82 and 82 respectively. The standard deviation is 6.78. The measures of central tendency are not deviated considerably from one to another and almost same scores. The value of skewness shows that the distribution is symmetrical (range is between -0.5 and 0.5). The kurtosis value being negative reveals that the distribution is slightly platykurtic for the total sample.

Table2: Different levels of awareness of secondary school teachers on Inclusive education.

Awareness of Inclusive education		
Level	Number	Percentage (%)
High	60	24%
Moderate	186	~74%
Low	4	~2%

The data from the whole sample and sub samples was used to categorize the teachers into three groups such as high awareness, moderate awareness and low awareness group with a criteria for high group as those who have scored more than Mean + SD (13.05); for low group as those who have scored below Mean - SD (5.95) and moderate awareness as those who have scored between these two.

Data points in a normal distribution are more likely to fall closer to the mean. In fact, 68% of all data points will be within +/-1SD from the mean, 95% of all data points will be within +/-2SD from the mean

and 99% of all data points will be within $\pm 3SD$ from the mean. We have considered Mean \pm SD for our current hypotheses.

From the table it is evident that 24% of secondary teachers have shown high awareness of inclusive education, ~74% moderate of secondary teachers have shown moderate awareness of inclusive education and only ~2% of secondary teachers have shown low awareness of inclusive education.

Table 3: Different levels of attitude of secondary school teachers towards differently abled children

Attitude towards differently abled children		
Level	Number	Percentage (%)
High	52	~21%
Moderate	155	62%
Low	43	~17%

The data from the whole sample and sub samples was used to categorize the teachers into three groups such as high level of attitude, moderate level of attitude and low level of attitude group with a criteria for high group as those who have scored more than Mean + SD (89.38); for low group as those who have scored below Mean –SD (75.82) and moderate awareness as those who have scored between these two.

Data points in a normal distribution are more likely to fall closer to the mean. In fact, 68% of all data points will be within $\pm 1SD$ from the mean, 95% of all data points will be within $\pm 2SD$ from the mean and 99% of all data points will be within $\pm 3SD$ from the mean. We have considered Mean \pm SD for our current hypotheses.

From the table it is evident that ~21% of secondary teachers have shown high attitude towards differently abled children, 62% of secondary teachers have shown moderate attitude towards differently abled children and ~17% of secondary teachers have shown low attitude towards differently abled children.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Mean Difference in the scores of awareness on inclusive education among sub samples based on gender.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-value	P. value
female	126	9.27	3.51		
				-1.03	0.302
male	124	9.73	3.58		

Table 4 showed that the obtained absolute t value 1.03 is lesser than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, indicating there is no significant difference in the mean scores of awareness on inclusive education among male and female secondary school teachers.

Table 5: Test of Significance of Mean Difference in the scores of attitudes towards differently abled children among sub samples based on gender.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-value	P. value
female	126	82.7	7.06		
				0.184	0.854
male	124	82.5	6.52		

Table 5 showed that the obtained absolute t value 0.184 is lesser than the table value of 1.96 at

0.05 level of significance, indicating there is no significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards differently abled children among male and female secondary school teachers.

Table 6: Pearson's Product moment correlation test to determine the relationship between awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children

Sample	N	correlation coefficient	Significance level
Total Sample	250	-0.083	0.190

The value of correlation co-efficient in Table 6 indicates that a non-significant negative relationship exists between awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children. This may also imply that there are teachers who have a good awareness on inclusive education but may not have an acceptable attitude towards differently abled children. Hence some measures should be taken to foster the cognitive as well as the affective domain of teachers with regard to knowledge level and attitude towards differently abled children.

Major Findings of the study.

- The result pointed out that there existed different levels of awareness of inclusive education among secondary school teachers. It was found that, the awareness of inclusive education of secondary teachers were majorly moderate for the whole sample. ~74% of secondary school teachers showed a moderate awareness towards inclusive education.
- The result showed that there existed different levels of attitude towards differently abled children among secondary school teachers. It was found that the attitude of secondary school teachers towards differently abled children were majorly moderate. 62% of teachers from the whole sample showed moderate attitude.
- The result showed that there was no significant difference existing between the mean scores of awareness of inclusive education among male and female secondary school teachers.
- The study revealed that there was no significant difference existing between the mean scores of attitudes towards differently abled children among male and female secondary school teachers.
- The study revealed that there was no significant relationship existing between awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children.

III. Conclusion

The journey of inclusion starts from the minds of teachers. A famous quote clearly illustrates the meaning of Inclusion as "Inclusion is not tolerance; it is unquestioned acceptance". Most of our teachers have a misconception that the mere physical presence of a differently abled child in the mainstream system of education is Inclusion; but inclusion in the real sense is achieving the desirable objectives fostering the growth of all kinds of children with equity. In an inclusive classroom, every teacher should be trained to teach all types of children. They must be the teachers of everyone. To make teachers competent in such a way requires real understanding of the concept of inclusion and an extremely genuine attitude towards their profession. This study made an attempt to analyze teachers' awareness of inclusive education and attitude towards differently abled children. It brings to light the numerous measures that have to be taken to make teachers aware of these concepts and to inculcate a real attitude within them. Simply, a proper awareness and a real attitude can turn the dream of inclusion into a reality for us

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