



UNDERSTANDING PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (CWSN) IN CHITTOOR DIST., OF ANDHRA PRADESH.

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ABSTRACT Education is at the essential of equality and empowerment in a society. Though the right to education and equality of educational opportunities is guaranteed by the constitution of India, it is disturbing to find that more than half of the population of children and youth is with disability and varying competencies are denied of these rights and do not receive adequate schooling in an appropriate environment. Inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream education demands the preparation of teachers to suit their needs. The need for teachers who have understating to teach in an inclusive classroom is more significant today than ever before. The aim of the present study was to understand the perspective of primary school teachers towards effective implementation of inclusive education in enhancing quality education in Government primary schools in Chittoor dist. of Andhra Pradesh and to gain more knowledge about the factors that may influence the implementation of inclusive practices in a school system. This study employs mixed method approach and was guided by behaviourisms theory. Respondents were sampled by purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The sample size comprised of 120 respondents. Data were gathered using questionnaire, interview, and observation methods. Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27-2020 and thematic analysis method for qualitative data. Qualitative analysis of the open-ended questionnaire along with Focus group Interview with teachers regarding the education of children with special needs revealed that they are quite ready for educating CwSN in regular classrooms but they face various barriers and challenges that impact the teaching and learning of these children in general classrooms. It was found that there is a difference in understanding levels of primary school teachers' perspective of inclusive education for children with special needs in relation to their gender, locality, teaching experience, professional qualification and number of trainings received by the teachers. The study recommends that, school teachers should be given appropriate in-service trainings on the importance of teacher's role and understating the importance of inclusive education. It improves the perspective of Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs (CwSN) among the said teachers.

KEYWORDS : Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs (CwSN), Quality Education, Behaviourism.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education has become a core concept in education theory discourse over the last few decades. Indeed, various education systems have progressively considered and/or enacted policy reforms and changes to foster the inclusion of students that are diverse and disadvantaged. However, inclusion in education is not a recent concept, it has been the subject of international debate as a driver of progress in educational policy since UNESCO's Salamanca Declaration in 1994.

Teachers are required to include and support children with disabilities in their regular class rooms so they can access the curriculum and become actively involved in the school community. It is believed that for inclusion to be successful, school children ought to have full participation, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other needs, as it took place in Spain (Salamanca Statement, 1994). According to the Universal Elementary Education, children would access schools near their families so that they could be monitored easily even when they did not have a disability. Therefore, inclusion of children with disabilities is a step towards achieving the goal of children with disabilities in the education system. Children with special needs feel as members of the group or class in their school when they participate fully like any other member of the group or class.

The emphasis then was on the need to reform education systems, which is possible only if mainstream schools become capable of educating all children in their local communities. However, this Declaration was exclusively directed towards students with disabilities. It is only recently that inclusive education has begun to be understood as necessary for all learners by responding to current challenges implied by increasing diversity in the classroom and larger society (Ainscow, 2019). This Section attempts to define inclusive education, providing a brief overview of the historic development of the concept and the different conceptualisations that exist, before discussing the possible implications of inclusive education in terms of the benefits and costs for individuals and societies.

Inclusive Education in Relation to their Professional Commitment by showing that there exists significant difference in the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education with respect to the type of school and the number of years in teaching experience.

Education plays an important role in facilitating development, personal growth, and poverty eradication, regardless of barriers of any kind, including disability. The teacher at any stage is expected to nurture and bring out the best in the child and youth and help them to realize their maximum potential- physical, intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual. The teacher education system should ensure adequate supply of professionally trained teachers to guide and facilitate those who study in schools and institutions of higher learning. The main concern is therefore to build teacher capability to translate curricular objectives into appropriate learning experiences for children to enable them to acquire the desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and aptitudes. However, other studies have shown that even after completing staff development training, many teachers still question their ability to teach students with disabilities, and some doubt they will be provided with resources and support necessary for the programs (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Kearney and Durand, 1992). However, few researchers have stated that the implementation of the Inclusive Education programme had never evaluated in primary schools. Various figures quoted above in the introduction and related literature and the status report of India show that we must go a long way in Universalization of Elementary Education, especially the access to education for different categories of children with disabilities.

Julka (2005) study showed that teachers considered teacher training, resource support, planning, pedagogy, partnerships and change in attitude extremely significant for inclusive education. There is a need to understand the teacher related factors that can encourage CwSN to complete their schooling. In fact, teachers need a variety of ongoing opportunities to improve their skills. Inclusion is much more than the placement of a previously marginalised student in a regular classroom. Inclusion requires educators to use innovative and inclusive teaching practices. Inclusive educators anticipate barriers that some students

Bansal (2016) conducted a Study on Attitude of Teachers towards

could face difficulties in their classrooms and use relevant teaching practices to overcome barriers faced by their students (Sanger, 2020). They make learning as accessible, meaningful, and welcoming to all students by employing approaches such as the Universal Design for Learning (Sanger, 2020).

Many studies had focused on the teacher as the sole provider of education, yet there are other challenges such as the nature of curriculum design, socio-cultural challenges, and not to mention parents as contributors to education of children with disabilities. The purpose of this study was to explore primary school teachers' level of understanding in the perspective of inclusive education for children with special needs in Chittoor Dist. of Andhra Pradesh.

OBJECTIVES:

Keeping in the context of foregoing observation, a need was felt to examine with the following objectives;

- To examine the level of understanding primary school teachers' perspective of inclusive education for children with special needs in imparting behavioural skills.
- To identify the best practices of governmental training programs on Inclusive education for CwSN in imparting behavioural skills.

Hypothesis:

To realize the above-mentioned objectives the following hypotheses were formulated.

There would be significant difference in level of understanding among primary school teachers' perspective of inclusive education for children with special needs in imparting behavioural skills in relation to their gender, locality, no. of years of experience, professional qualification and no. of trainings attended.

METHODOLOGY:

For purposes of the present study, 120 samples was collected from Government primary schools in Chittoor district, by using a mixed method approach and was guided by behaviourism theory. Respondents were sampled by purposive and random sampling techniques. The samples included teachers, Head Masters and District Education Officers. Data were gathered using questionnaire and interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2.0 and thematic analysis method for qualitative data.

Procedure:

The present study was conducted in urban, semi urban and rural areas of Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh, India. The study was done in two sessions; the first session was used to develop rapport with teachers, head masters and district education officer concerned. They were informed about the broad purpose of the study and were requested to cooperate. In the second session each subject was met in person and was given questionnaire was explained clearly about it and asked to fill the relevant socio-demographic characteristics followed by the questions. It was also made clear to them that their responses and identity would be kept confidential. It was checked that all the statements are responded by the respondents. After collecting required data from respondents, the scoring of the obtained data was done. Appropriate statistical tests like mean, standard deviation "t" test was used to check the difference between variables. The interpretations of the results obtained are as follows.

Table-1: The Mean, SD, and "t" value of Understanding levels of primary school teachers' perspective of inclusive education for children with special needs (N = 120)

Sl. No	Category	N	Mean (SD)	t value
1.	Gender se			
	a. Female	60	34.62(3.07)	3.64**
	b. Male	60	26.12(3.74)	
2	Locality			
	a. Rural	65	28.15(3.13)	0.92@(axb)
	b. Semi-Urban	35	30.01(3.65)	2.0**(bxc)
	c. Urban	20	35.00(6.12)	4.52**(cxa)
3	Experience			
	a. 1-10 years	22	26.14(3.14)	1.974*(axb)
	b. 11-20 years	43	31.25(3.31)	2.42**(bxc)
	c. 20 and above	55	36.14(4.19)	3.24**(cxa)
4	Professional			

	a. D.Ed./TTC	55	32.18(2.44)	1.91*
	b. B.Ed.	65	27.65(3.34)	
5	No.of Trainings			
	a. Nil	96	16.24(5.14)	0.42**(axb)
	b. 1-3	23	30.15(3.62)	2.02*(bxc)
	c. 3-5	1	36.15(2.80)	4.21**(cxa)
** P<0.01; * P<0.05				

Table1: shows the understanding levels of primary school teachers in perspective of inclusive education for children with special needs, female teachers mean understating score is 34.62, male female teachers mean understating score is 26.12, which indicate female have high understanding level compare the male school teacher, to know whether there are any differences among female and male primary school teacher understanding level of inclusive education t-test was conducted, pertaining 't' value 3.64 which is significant, indicating that there are gender difference in levels of understating among primary school teachers.

Teachers living in rural area mean understating levels is 28.15, living in semi urban area mean understating levels score is 30.01 and living in urban area teacher's mean understating level score is 35.00. It shows that urban living school teacher had high level of understanding and living in rural area teachers had low level of understanding. To know whether there are any differences among locality of primary school teacher understanding level of inclusive education pertaining 't' value (axb) is 0.92, (bxc) value is 2.00 and (cxa) value is 4.52 which is significant, indicating that there is a difference in levels of understating among primary school teachers in relation to their locality.

Teachers service with working experience of 1 to 10 years mean understating levels score is 26.14, experience 11 to 20 years mean understating levels score is 31.25, and 20 and above experience are teacher mean understating level score is 36.14 it shows that 20 and above experienced school teachers had high level of understanding and 1 to 10 years experienced teacher had low level of understanding, to know whether there are any differences among teaching experience of primary school teacher understanding level of inclusive education pertaining t value (axb) is 1.974, (bxc) value 2.42 and (cxa) value 3.24 which is significant, indicating that there is a difference in levels of understating among primary school teachers in relation to their teaching experience.

Teachers with D.Ed. /TTC professional qualification are in their mean understating levels i.e., 32.18, B.Ed professional qualification are in their mean understating levels score is 27.65 it shows that D.Ed./TTC professional school teacher had high level of understanding and B.Ed. professional is teacher had low level of understanding, to know whether there are any differences among professional qualification of primary school teachers' understanding level of inclusive education pertaining t value is 1.91 which is significant, indicating that there is a difference in levels of understating among primary school teachers in relation to their professional Degrees.

Number of in-service teacher trainings attended by primary Teachers is nil/ not attended mean understating levels score is 16.24, teachers with 1 to 3 trainings attended in their service mean understating levels score is 30.15, and 3 to 5 trainings attended in their service teacher mean understating level score is 36.15, it shows that 3 to 5 trainings attended school teachers had high level of understanding and 1 to 3 trainings attended teachers had low level of understanding, to know whether there are any differences among teaching experience of primary school teacher understanding level of inclusive education pertaining t value (axb) is 0.42, (bxc) value 2.02 and (cxa) value 4.21 which is significant, indicating that there is a difference in levels of understating among primary school teachers in relation to their number of trainings attended by them in their service.

CONCLUSION:

When we observe the contribution of gender, locality, number of years of teaching experience, professional qualification and number of trainings received by the primary school teachers, it was found that there is a difference in, understanding levels of primary school teachers' perspective of inclusive education for children with special needs in relation to their gender, locality, teaching experience, professional qualification and number of trainings received by teachers.

It was found that high level of understating among number of trainings received by teachers, more teaching experience, urban locality, male teachers with D.Ed. /TTC professional qualification.

Qualitative analysis of the open-ended questionnaire along with Focused group Interview with teachers regarding the education of children with special needs revealed that they are quite ready for educating CwSN in regular classrooms but they face various hurdles and challenges that impact the teaching and learning of these children in regular classrooms.

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