



## ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN RELATION TO THEIR LOCALITY AND GENDER

### Education

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of inclusive education has been promoted internationally for more than a decade; multiple barriers remain to the full participation of children with disabilities in education. Lack of information, combined with discriminatory attitudes towards persons with disabilities at all levels of society, contributes to the continued neglect of their right to education. It is conservatively estimated that less than 10 percent of children with disabilities in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region are in schools internationally, and this calls for the relook at the concept of inclusive education. It appears that the area of inclusive education is neglected by the researchers and it requires attention and it would be of great loss to the students, who have disabilities if this area is not exploited fully. Hence the present investigation is undertaken with an objective of knowing the influence of locality and gender on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. A five point Attitude scale developed by Raghava, R (2014) was used for the present study. A sample of 120 secondary school teachers representing all categories of secondary schools in Chittoor District by following the standardized procedures 't' test was employed for the analysis of the data. Locality and gender influenced the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. Female and urban secondary school teachers have more favourable attitude towards inclusive education than their counterparts.

### KEYWORDS

Secondary school teacher, Inclusive education, Locality and Gender.

### Introduction

The genesis of special needs education in India can be traced back to pre-independent India. There are examples in Indian history that show that people with disabilities had educational opportunities, and that disability did not come in the way of learning. However, during the colonial period, India increasingly looked at educational models existing outside the country. Parents of children with disabilities, mainly from urban areas and with exposure to approaches prevalent in western countries, started schools for their children. Since the government had no policy on the education of children with disabilities, it extended grants to these private schools. This approach of setting up separate schools, mostly residential, spread across the country, although it was concentrated in urban areas. However, for a country like India, the facilities provided for inclusive education are negligible. For over a century, these special schools offered the only education available to children with disabilities because of the widespread belief that children with special needs could not be educated alongside others. This allowed a small number of children to have access to education but did not help these children to enter the mainstream community after completing their education.

After independence, the Indian Constitution directed the state to ensure provision of basic education to all children up to the age of 14 years. The education of people with disabilities was, however, not explicit in the early constitutional provisions except for guaranteeing similar rights for people with disabilities as other members of society. The Education Commission of 1966 (Kothari Commission) drew attention to the education of children with disabilities. In 1974, for the first time, the necessity of integrated education was explicitly emphasized under the scheme for Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). In pursuit of the goal of providing basic education for all, the National Policy on Education (1986) and its follow-up actions have been major landmarks. The World Declaration on Education for All adopted in 1990 gave further boost to the various processes already set in motion in the country. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1992 initiated a training programme for the development of professionals to respond to the needs of students with disabilities. The enactment of the People with Disability Act in 1996 provided legislative support. This act makes it mandatory to provide free education to children with disabilities in an appropriate environment until the age of 18 years. In 1999, the government passed the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act for the economic rehabilitation of people with disabilities. These acts have been instrumental in bringing about a perceptible change/improvement in the attitude of government, NGOs and people with disabilities. In

recent years, two major initiatives have been launched by the government for achieving the goals of universalization of elementary education (UEE): the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994 and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2002. Programmes launched in the recent past have been able to make only a limited impact in terms of increasing the participation of children with disabilities in formal education. This situation needs to change; a focused effort is required. Keeping in view recent initiatives on inclusive education, a comprehensive review is necessary to understand the present status of education of children with disabilities, and how inclusive education can be promoted. Some of the studies related to the present investigation are highlighted below.

Reddy, Lokanadha, G., Jayaprabha, R and Sujatha Malini, J (2005) found that in most of the disability aspects in children, the school teachers possessed only moderate and low awareness and attitude with moderate competency. Sharma and Desai (2007) reported that Australian teachers were significantly more in favour of including students with disabilities in to regular class rooms than Singaporean counter parts. Australian teachers were more positively disposed to include students with disabilities who required physical and social accommodation. Mohanty, Susanta (2008) mentioned that regular teachers were asked to teach special needs students without receiving any formal training as well as administrative assistance; but inclusive education demands the class teacher to be innovative flexible, creative, ready to learn from the learners and capable of initiating active learning. Usha Rani, V (2008) reported that the awareness of teachers of inclusive education for the disabled was average. Female teachers had more awareness than their counter parts. No significant difference in awareness was reported according to groups such as a) head teachers and assistant teachers, b) junior and senior teachers c) secondary grade, B.T. and P.G. teachers. Raghava, R (2014) found that gender and experience have significant influence on the attitude towards inclusive education of primary school students. The discriminatory attitude towards persons with disabilities at all levels of society, contributes to the continued neglect of their right to education. It is conservatively estimated that less than 10 percent of children with disabilities in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region are in schools internationally, and this calls for the relook at the concept of inclusive education. It appears that the area of inclusive education is neglected by the researchers and it requires attention and it would be of great loss to the students, who have disabilities if this area is not exploited fully. Although the researchers made sporadic efforts in the area of inclusive education, still there is a vast scope to exploit and to strengthen the inclusive education programme. In this order the present investigation has assumed importance.

**Objective of the Study:** To study the influence of locality and gender on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

**Hypotheses of the study**

1. There would be no significant influence of ‘locality’ on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.
2. There would be no significant bearing of ‘gender’ on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

**Tools for the Study**

A five point attitude scale developed by Raghava, R (2014) was adopted. The tool was highly reliable for the investigation and it contains 50 items representing the teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education. Personal data sheet for recording the students’ name, Locality and Gender was prepared by the investigator.

**Data Collection**

The sample for the investigation consisted of 120 Secondary school teachers in Chittoor district. The stratified random sampling technic was used for the data collection. The investigator personally visited schools and collected the data with the permission of the head masters of the schools. The Secondary school teachers who attended to the school on the day of collection of data were considered for the purpose of the investigation. The Secondary school teachers were given necessary instructions about the instruments and motivated to respond genuinely to all the items. The attitude scale and personal data sheet were administered. The data on each variable in the investigation is properly coded to suit for computer analysis. The analysis was carried out on the basis of objectives of the investigation and hypotheses formulated by employing appropriate statistical techniques. The inferential statistical technique ‘t’ – test was employed to test hypotheses.

**Results and Discussion**

**1. Locality**

The relationship of attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education with their locality is studied in the present investigation. On the basis of locality, the secondary school teachers are divided into two groups. The locality of secondary school teachers is rural form with the Group – I and Group – II forms with the locality of secondary school teachers are urban. The attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education of the two groups was analyzed accordingly. The mean values of attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education of the two groups were tested for significance by employing ‘t’ - test. The following hypothesis is framed.

**Hypothesis – 1**

There would be no significant influence of ‘locality’ on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

The above hypothesis is tested by employing ‘t’ - test. The results are presented in **Table – 1**.

**Table – 1: Showing the results of t test**

S. No.	Locality	N	Mean	S.D.	't' – Test
1.	Rural	60	140.23	35.62	2.864**
2.	Urban	60	151.34	39.26	

\*\* Indicates significant at 0.01 level

It can be observed from the above table that computed value of ‘t’ (2.864) is greater than the critical value of ‘t’ (2.60) for 1 and 118 df at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the Hypothesis – 1 is rejected at 0.01 level. Therefore it is concluded that the locality of the secondary school teachers has influenced their attitude towards inclusive education. Urban school teachers have more favourable attitude towards inclusive education

**2. Gender**

The relationship of attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education with their gender is studied in the present investigation. On the basis of gender, the secondary school teachers are divided into two groups. The male secondary school teachers form with the Group – I and Group – II forms with the female secondary school teachers. The attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education of the two groups were analyzed accordingly. The

mean values of attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education for the two groups were tested for significance by employing ‘t’ - test. The following hypothesis is framed.

**Hypothesis – 2**

There would be no significant bearing of ‘gender’ on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

The above hypothesis is tested by employing ‘t’ - test. The results are presented in **Table – 2**.

**Table – 2: Showing the results of t test**

S. No.	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	't' - Test
1.	Male	60	139.56	31.48	3.146**
2.	Female	60	152.34	36.98	

\*\* Indicates significant at 0.01 level

From the above table it can be seen that computed value of ‘t’ (3.146) is greater than the critical value of ‘t’ (2.60) for 1 and 118 df at 0.01 level of significance. Hence the Hypothesis – 2 is rejected at 0.01 level. Therefore it is concluded that the gender has significant influence on the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

**Findings:** Locality and Gender of the secondary school teachers influenced their attitude towards inclusive education.

**Conclusions:** The urban teachers’ attitude towards inclusive education is better than their counter parts. Further female teachers attitude towards inclusive education is highly favorable than their opposite sex.

**Educational implications**

The findings of the present research have raised some important questions related to the educational needs of the secondary school teachers with special reference to their attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

1. ‘Locality’ highly influenced in attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. Urban secondary school teachers have favourable attitude towards inclusive education than the rural secondary school teachers. The administrators have to provide good amenities to rural secondary school teachers.
2. ‘Gender’ has equally influenced in attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. Female secondary school teachers have better attitude towards inclusive education than the male secondary school teachers. The administrators have to provide facilities to male secondary school teachers to deal the problems.

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