

TEACHER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

In regular classrooms, the attitude of regular teachers' towards inclusive education is a crucial issue. The paper presents the findings of the attitude of teachers towards this aspect. The purpose of this study investigate at the attitudinal differences on the basis of gender and types of schools at elementary level. The sample consists of 100 elementary school teachers. The results showed significant differences in the attitude of male and female teachers as well as and in private and Government Schools.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Teachers Attitude, Elementary Level*

INTRODUCTION

Remarkable anticipation for successful inclusion is based on the principles and demands of positive and receptive attitude of regular teachers. Various Acts like The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) and The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) etc. allowed millions of special education students across the country to access into regular classrooms for either a part of the day or the entire school day. Regular classrooms as well as the attitude of regular teachers' towards inclusive education are a crucial issue indeed for successful inclusion. Teachers are perceived to be integral part of the implementation of inclusive education (Haskell, 2000). So to find out the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education is central point of discussion of the present study. A good no of research studies revealed about the increased pressures of school teachers due to the inclusion policy (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Clayton, 1996; Forlin, 1997; Long, 1995; McKinnon & Gordon, 1999; Paterson & Graham, 2000; Schloss, 1992). Teachers have varied in their responses to these challenges (Westwood & Graham, 2003). According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) an attitude can be defined as an individual's viewpoint or disposition toward a particular object which may be cognitive, affective and behavioral components. Some research studies point out that teachers' attitudes to inclusive education are typically positive, (Avramidis et al., 2000; Kuester, 2000). Several factors which affects the teachers attitude towards inclusive education can be listed under following points as gender(male/female), types of school(Government/ Private/Aided), age, teaching experience and teachers' qualifications, class size, level of confidence, the severity of a student's disability and support from administrative staff. In the present study factors like gender and types of school has been taken into consideration. A good no of research studies discussed about the no significant differences between male and female (gender) towards inclusive

education (Avramidis et al., 2000; Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1998; Kuester, 2000; Van Reusen et al., 2001; Harvey (1985) . However, some other studies revealed that female teachers are inclined to have more favorable attitudes than male teachers (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001; Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, & Mellblom, 1992, Ode & Jansma, 2000). Further, type of schools (PVT./Govt.) also affects the teachers attitude towards inclusive education. In order to assist the regular education teacher, knowledge and understanding of their attitudes or perception of having special education is critical. School administrators need to understand not only those regular education teachers attitudes or perceptions, but also more importantly, understand and acknowledge the reason(s); why an administrative stand point, knowledge of regular education teacher's perception of inclusion is very valuable information. School administrators, especially school level principal “Must not only keep abreast of the trends and changes in the field, but must take an active leadership role” (Patterson, Marshall & Bowling 2000, p.14). The Principals have the “power” or ability to truly assist in the inclusive practice. So the present study emphasized on the attitudes of teachers and the various variables affected the attitude towards inclusive education. Further this will help in the development and implementation of policies for inclusion in a effective and systematic manner.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study were divided in to two groups viz Primary and Secondary objectives. These are given below:

Primary Objectives

- To study the attitude of teachers towards inclusion in elementary level.
- To study the differences between male and female teachers attitude towards inclusive education.
- To study the differences in teacher's attitude towards inclusive education between private and government schools.

Secondary Objectives:

- To study the enrollment status of differently challenged children in various inclusive settings.
- To adopt suitable test for use to study this research study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of the study is stated as “ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION”.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

- **Teachers Attitude-** It is a teacher's state of mind regarding a concept, object, value it can be accessed through a positive or negative expression toward a person, place, thing, or event which in turn influences the individual's thought and action. In the

present study teachers attitude was taken into consideration specifically on inclusive education.

- **Elementary Level-** In the present study the elementary level was from class-I to VII.
- **Inclusive Education** – It refers to the education provided to all where inclusion policy is followed. As mentioned in the Salamanca report, inclusion refers to provision of equal educational opportunities to all regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or any other disabled conditions. It also includes disadvantaged and marginalized groups like street children, working children, children from remote areas, minority groups, and different types of special needs groups and gifted.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Following are the limitations of the present study:

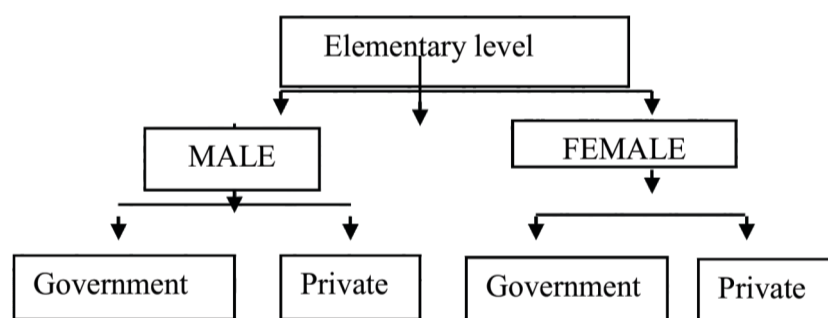
- It is confined to 100 Elementary school teachers.
- Samples of the study were confined to Delhi only.
- It is limited only to two variables i.e. Gender and type of school.

METHOD

For the present study, Descriptive survey method was employed by the researcher.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The figure given below is indicative of the elementary school teachers' attitude towards inclusion with respect to gender and types of school.



POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The present study deals with purposive cum convenience sampling, which is an appropriate and accurate technique. . The present study was based on a sample of 100 elementary school teachers selected randomly from both Government and Private schools of Delhi, which was further subdivided into male and female aspect too.

VARIABLES

The variables included in the study are primarily divided into independent and dependent variables. In the present study Teachers' attitude is considered as an

independent variable; whereas gender and type of school are considered as dependent variables.

HYPOTHESES

Considering the problem under investigation and the objectives of the present study, the following hypotheses have been formulated.

- There exists no significance difference in the attitude of teachers towards inclusion in elementary level.
- There exists no significance difference between male and female teachers attitude towards inclusive education.
- There exists no significance difference in teacher's attitude towards inclusive education in between private and government school

TOOLS USED

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study and limitation of time and resources the researcher adopted the standardized tool developed by Cochran(2000) named as the Scale of Teachers Attitudes towards Inclusive Classrooms (STATIC). The tool specified the collected scores'ranges from a low of 0 to a high of 100. Higher score on the STATIC reflects attitudes that are more positive of the practice of inclusive classrooms. Subjects who scored lower on the scale, tended to hold less positive or more negative attitudes towards inclusive classrooms.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The following statistical techniques were used for analysis of data

- Mean and S.D. were used to measure the average and deviation from mean scores.
- t-test was used to see the significance of difference between two groups.

FINDINGS

The main purpose of the present study was to find out the elementary school teachers' attitude towards inclusive education especially in consideration with types of school and gender. On the basis of statistical analysis, following findings can be drawn. For a clear comprehension objective wise presentation of findings has been attempted.

Table-1 Significance of difference between the mean attitude scores of Female and Male

Variable	Gender	N	Mean SD	SEd	't'	Significant Level
Overall attitude towards inclusion	Female	50	185.36 22.57	5.16	5.19	0.01
	Male	50	158.52 28.74			

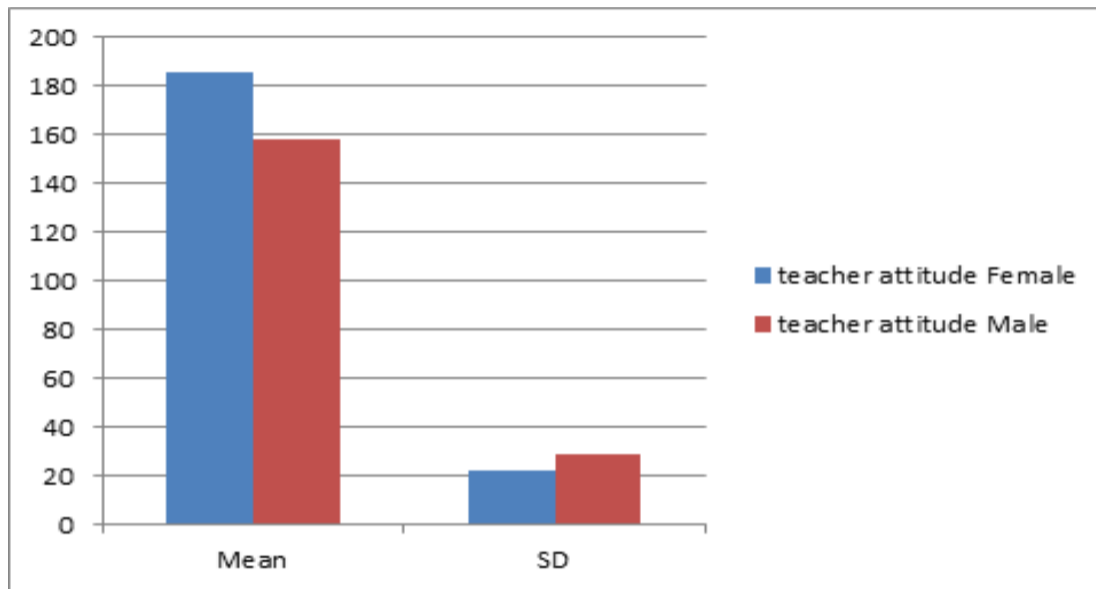


Table 1 shows mean scores of overall attitude of Female and Male i.e. 185.36 and 158.52 respectively. The 't' ratio computed is 5.19, which is significant at 0.01 level. This means that Female and Male are found to be differing significantly with respect to overall attitude on inclusive education. It is also observed from the table that the deviation of the scores from mean of Male is more than Female whereas the mean score is higher of Female than that of Male.

Therefore the null hypothesis no 2 that there exists no significance difference in the attitude of teachers with special reference to Female and Male towards inclusion in elementary level is rejected. It means both the groups differ in terms of overall attitude towards inclusive education.

II) Table-2 Significance of difference between the mean attitude scores of Private and Govt. school teachers

In this sub-section the differential analysis has been done with the help of mean scores and t value of Private and Govt. School teachers' on attitude towards inclusive education

Table-2: Significance of difference between the mean attitude scores of Private and Govt. school teachers

Variable	Settings	N	Mean	SD	SEd	't'	Significant Level
Types of school	Private	50	50.12	4.49	0.99	4.36	0.01
	Government	50	45.76	5.44			

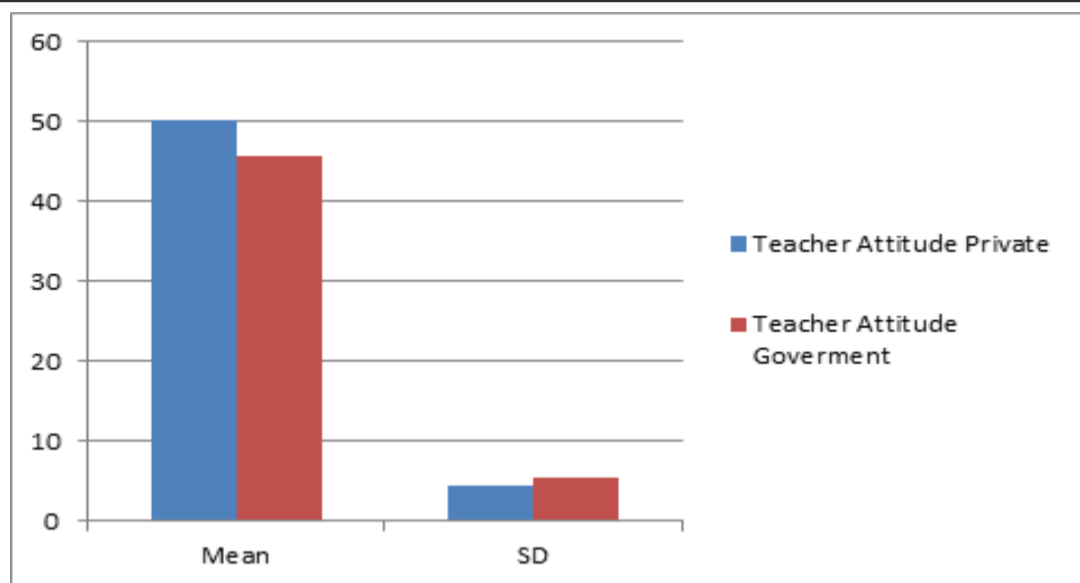


Table-2 shows that the mean scores on types of school of Private and Govt. are 50.12 and 45.76 respectively. The 't' ratio is 4.36, which is significant at 0.01 level. This means that the Private and Govt school teachers differ significantly with each other with respect to attitude towards inclusive education. It is also observed from the table that the deviation of the scores from mean in Private school is less than Govt. school whereas the mean score is higher in private school than Govt. schools.

Therefore the null hypothesis no.3 that there exists no significance difference in teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in between private and government school is rejected. It means both the settings differ on attitude towards inclusive education.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The present study as pointed out above is an attempt to investigate the differential attitude of teachers towards inclusive education with special reference to gender and types of schools. The present study has the following educational implications:

- The major objective of the present study was to find out the differences in the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education with special reference to Female and Male. The findings revealed that there exists significant difference in the attitude of both male and female towards inclusive education. It implies that the institutional authorities, school/college heads, special educators, teachers, and clinical psychologists are required to take appropriate measures to develop the positive attitude towards inclusive education. Proper environment should be provided to the teachers to improve their attitudes.
- Another most important finding of the present study is the difference between two settings i.e. Private and Govt. school teachers towards inclusive education. Significance differences were found between private and government schools. So it

should be the responsibility of the schools and curriculum setters to modify curriculum with reference to appropriate modifications as well as planned activities to improve the attitude towards inclusive education.

- Teacher educators need to be more sensitive to the sensitivity of differently challenged students so that they get due regard in the process of education. Counseling is a major issue in this area. So not only the teachers but also the entire human resources connected with these setting should be properly counseled.
- The government can provide orientation programme and training packages to the special teacher educators and regular teachers to properly handle the special needs individual.
- Government has been taking so many measures to improve the primary education of special needs children. It is also the secondary and higher education which need equal attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

On the basis of the findings of the present study, discussed in this chapter, the following areas needs further study:

- The study is limited only to the Delhi. Other rural and semi urban cities can be taken up for such a study.
- In terms of level, only elementary level was taken into consideration. So other level can also take up for further study.
- The study is limited to gender based male and female criteria only. Further study could be conducted on the basis of experiences.
- Some more variables related to attitude of teachers may be taken up for further study. Personality, motivation and cognitive factors may also be added.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of above discussion, it can be concluded that the differential analysis between male /female and private/ Govt. are positive and significant. Further we can say that, as inclusion is a very sensitive and crucial concept introduced in schools, it should be handled in a proper and empathetic manner. So that the attitude of teachers will always be in positive and progressive manner rather than filling burdened.

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