

Attitude of B.Ed. Student Teachers towards Inclusive Education

K. Runi Nakro*

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, State College of Teacher Education, Kohima

Abstract – Positive attitude of teachers towards inclusion is essential for the success of inclusive education. This paper investigates the attitude of student teachers undergoing the two year Bachelor of Education programme in secondary teacher education institutions of Kohima town under Nagaland University. Descriptive survey with simple random sampling was employed for selecting 94 student teachers from both Government and private colleges for the study. Mean, S.D, and t-values between the different variables were computed using SPSS. The findings revealed that there is significant difference in the attitude of pre-service and in-service student teachers. No significant differences were found between male and female, graduate and post graduate student teachers. The study revealed that a majority of 65% of the student teachers hold positive attitude towards inclusive education whereas 17% had negative attitude towards inclusive education. The rest 18% of student teachers had a neutral attitude towards inclusive education.

Key Words: Attitude, Inclusive Education, Children with Special Needs, Student Teachers.

-----X-----

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, we have witnessed the changes in the policies and programmes of governments and other organizations towards inclusion of children of varying needs into the regular school systems. The success of these programmes will depend immensely on the positive attitude of the teachers who will implement in their classroom-teaching every single day.

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) attempted to meet the 'education for all' demand, which can only be satisfied through the inclusion of all students in the general school. According to this Statement, the general school with inclusive orientation combats discrimination, creates open communities and helps to develop an inclusive society. The differences among people are recognized as normal and each child has specific characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs, while the emphasis should be on the strengths rather than deficits. Therefore, schooling should be actualized in accordance with the specific needs of each child, rather than attempting to adapt them in the specifications of the existing curriculum (Peters 2007; UNESCO, 1994).

Since the adoption of 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948' education formally recognized as a basic human right which is not only emphasize in making education accessible, it also focus on the quality improvement of education as well as

educational environment to lift the potential of all learners including marginalized groups for girls and women, remote rural groups, street children, migrant and nomadic populations, disabled, linguistic and cultural minorities. Now it considered as an imperative and burning issue to achieve the education for all throughout the all international communities.

Therefore, 'Education for all' is considered and established as a millennium goal of education at Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990 led by UNESCO with its aims to meet the educational needs of all children, youth, and adult and also reaffirmed with few identified specific goals at the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar.

In India, the persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities which is refers to protection of rights and full participation Act, 1995 enjoins upon the Government to ensure that every disabled child has access to free education in an appropriate environment till the age of the 18 years and integrate and provides for setting up of special school with specially trained teachers, facilitation for imparting special education through different modes of education like open schools/ universities to disabled children or organizing teacher training programmes, taking steps for adaptation of curriculum, reform of examination system, promoting research and providing various facilities to disabled children.

Indian constitution also committed to provide free and compulsory education to all up to the age of 14 years which was expected to be achieved by 1960 but remains elusive even now. Sargent reports 1944 first raised the issue of education of children with disability then Kothari commission 1964-66 addressed the issues regarding educational equity and equality in perspective of children with disability irrespective of their diversity in caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition and social status and stated that each child must have the access and approach to participate in education and stressed to open the doors of classrooms for all, so that all learners could achieve according to their potential. As per the recommendation and suggestion of Kothari commission, National policy on Education (NPE) 1968 implemented 'Integrated education program' to enable students with disabilities to study in regular schools and after that NPE 1986 promote mainstreaming of mild to moderate disabilities (Mondal & Mete, n.d.). In Indian constitution where article 45 is committed for the provision of free and compulsory education to all up to the age of 14 years, the 86th amendment to the constitution is committed to make education as a fundamental right to all children under the age 14 years. In addition of that the PWD act 1995 ensure the provision of free of cost education to all disabled till the age of 18 years old and the National Trust act 1999 seeks to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, who are tend to be more marginalized than others groups of children (Kumar & Kumar, 2007).

Finally to achieve education for all 'Right to Education' Act 2009 (RTE) was enacted by Indian government to ensure free and compulsory education to all in their neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education. Hence, our schools and classrooms need to reflect this constitutional and legal right in their action and should prepare themselves to welcome all children from different background or with different needs in their educational processes and practices. India has initiated and implemented number of educational programs over the years to promote the education of children with special needs and most popular programs were IEDC and PIED. Instead of these programs around half times more CWD are likely to be out of schools as per analysis of national sample survey 2002 of India. At national and international levels different government and non government organizations have put their efforts to make education accessible and approachable to all across different culture and boundaries, even then children with disabilities are more likely to be out of school than any other group of children (Walker, n.d.).

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Smitha and Acharya (2010) concluded that the overall attitude of the teachers towards inclusive education for the disabled was unfavourable. The

attitude of teachers towards inclusive education in terms of gender was found to be significant. Female teachers were found to have more favourable attitude towards inclusive education compared to their male counterpart. Professional experience of teachers in terms 10 years and below was found to be not a significant factor.

Khan, A. T. (2011) investigated secondary school teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge about inclusive education in Bangladesh and found that secondary school teachers have mostly favourable or supportive attitudes towards children with special educational needs. This study also brought to light that Bangladeshi secondary school teachers had positive feelings about the inclusion of such children in the mainstream classes.

Das, A. & Bhatnagar, N. (2013) has conducted a study on Attitude of secondary school teachers' toward inclusive education in New Delhi. The study revealed that the male teachers in Delhi had more positive attitude than female teachers. This study also indicates that teachers in Delhi have positive attitude toward the inclusion of students with special needs.

Galovic, D. & Brojcin, B. & Glumbric, N. (2014) studied the attitude of teachers toward inclusive Education in Vojvodina and concluded that in general teachers held neutral attitude towards inclusive Education. This study also reveals that both the high school and preschool and those teachers who with positive experience working in an inclusive environment showed more positive attitude toward inclusive education.

Kaur, M. & Kaur, K. (2015) studied the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive Education and found that there was significant difference based on gender and locality of secondary school teachers with respect to their attitude towards inclusive education.

Kumar, A. (2016) from the study on Exploring the Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education System found that there is significant difference between teachers from different locality, gender and of different teaching experiences.

Studies have shown that there exist no difference in the attitude of male and female teachers (e.g., Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Chhabra, Srivastava, 2010). On the contrary, other studies has shown that female teachers have more positive attitude towards inclusion than the male teachers (e.g. Alghazo & Naggat Gaad, 2004; Alquraini, 2012; Bowman, 1986).

Teacher attitudes and the success of inclusive education have been found to have a high relation (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Teachers with favourable and positive attitude towards creating

an environment of inclusion for varying categories of students in the classroom, were found to be more successful in the implementing inclusive practices Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Attitude of Teachers

According to Allport (1935), 'an attitude is a mental or natural state of readiness, organized through experience, existing a directive or dynamic influence upon the individuals response to all objects and situations with which it is related'.

The success of any educational programme depends on the right attitude of the teachers who plays the pivotal role in it. Given that one key factor for the success of inclusive education lies greatly on teachers' attitude and acceptance of varying students of special needs. The goals of inclusive education can be achieved only if teachers are sensitive, committed and have a favourable attitude towards their profession.

The role of teachers in inclusive education diverges from its traditional role. Inclusive teachers must be sensitive to the variety of modern classrooms and must be able to adjust their teaching strategies in accordance with the diversity of learning styles within the classroom (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2013). Teachers need to adapt or modify the content of their lessons and their teaching methods as well as make adjustments to classrooms management in order to support students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Research studies indicate that while teachers are in favour of an inclusive environment, they lack confidence relating to instruction, use of resources and classroom management (Florian, Young, & Rouse, 2010). While inclusive education has changed the role of the teacher, the experience of the students is also affected.

Research findings have shown that the attitude of teachers is of paramount importance for successful inclusive education (Sharma, Forlin & Loreman, 2008). According to Ryan (2009), teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were affected by the nature and type of special educational need. Centre and Ward's 1987 study (as cited in Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000) indicated that teachers' attitude were only positive about integrating students whose special educational need would not require extra instructional skills on the part of the teacher.

The success of inclusive education would rest on the right attitude of teachers toward inclusion of children with special needs (Cochran, 1998). Since the attitudes of these teachers will play a crucial role in the success of school inclusion and therefore, the factors which influence these attitudes in a positive manner need to be examined.

3.2 Inclusive Education

Inclusion, as an idea, which is commonly identified with the concern towards disabled students or children having special educational needs, but it is also reducing barriers to learning and participation for all learners. It is about reducing discrimination on the basis of gender, class, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity and family background.

Inclusion is not only giving students with disabilities a new placement. The individual school concepts, which focus on a more inclusive practice, change fundamentally (see Lütje-Klose, Miller, Schwab & Streese, 2017; Studien-kommission der Pädagogischen Hochschule Steiermark, 2013).

M. Mannivannan (2001): Inclusive education is the implementation of policy and process that allows all children to participate in all programme. Policy means that disabled children should be accepted without any restrictions in all educational programme meant for other children's. The process of inclusion denotes the way in the system, makes it welcoming to all.

Alqurani & Gut (2012): Inclusive education when all students, regardless of any challenges that may have, are placed in age-appropriate general education classes that in their own neighbourhood schools to receive high quality instruction, interventions and supports that enable them to meet success in the core-curriculum.

UNESCO- defines inclusive education "as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education". So education involves changes and modifications in the content, approaches, structures and strategies with the certainty that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children.

Inclusion in India is viewed from three perspectives: Physical, Social and Cognitive inclusion. Physical Inclusion receives consistent promotion, support and facilitation from the government. The government policy and regulation are made education free and compulsory. No institution can deny admission to a child on account of his or her disability. Social inclusion refers to the inclusion of socially excluded communities such as the Dalits, Tribals and Muslims particularly the women to exercise their rights of citizenship and live a life of dignity, free from discrimination. Cognitive inclusion refers to those children who have either handicap in mentally and educationally learning disability.

IV. OBJECTIVES

1. To compare the attitude of Male and Female Student Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education.
2. To find out the difference between the Graduate and Post Graduate Student Teachers' regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education.
3. To find out the difference between Pre-service and in-service Student Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

V. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

H01: There is no significant difference between male and female Student Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

H02: There is no significant difference between the Graduate and Post Graduate Student Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

H03: There is no significant difference between Pre-service and in-service Student Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.1 Method of the Study: The present study used the descriptive type survey method in the present study. The investigators have used different tools, techniques, strategies and method of descriptive survey research to collect, analyze and interpret the data.

6.2 Population of the Study: Student teachers undergoing the two year B.Ed programme of 2018 batch in the secondary teacher education institutions in Kohima district of Nagaland (India) comprised as the population of the study.

6.3 Sample of the Study: sample consisted of 94 Student teachers with 31 male and 63 female student teachers.

6.4 Sampling Technique: For the selection of the sample, Simple Random sampling technique was used.

6.5 Tool of the Study: The investigator used a self developed questionnaire as a tool for collecting the data in the present study. The Scale consists 30 items with the combination of Positive items (12) and Negative items (18). The scale has been constructed followed by five point Likert's scale i.e. Strongly Agree (S.A.), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

6.6 Techniques of Data Analysis: The present study investigator has used Mean, SD, and t-test for analyzing of data.

6.7 Procedure: Giving prior information to the student teachers, the investigator sent 120 questionnaires and out of which 94 questionnaires were received back. The data was analyzed using the SPSS software finding the Mean, SD. and t-test.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H01: There is no significant difference between male and female Student Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education

Table-1: Gender-wise Mean, S.D and t-values of Attitude of Student Teachers

Group	N	M	S.D	t-value	Result
Male	31	96.58	7.34	1.15	NS at 0.05 level
Female	63	94.33	9.61		

From table-1, it can be observed that the t-value of the attitude scores of male and female student teachers is 1.15 which is lower than the table value of 't' 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance with 92 degrees of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference between male and female student teachers regarding their attitude towards inclusive education is accepted. The mean value of male is 96.58 which is slightly higher than the mean of female counter part whose mean is 94.33 with S.D for male 7.34 and 9.61 respectively for female student teachers. But the difference in the mean shows that male has more favourable attitude towards inclusive education than the female student teachers.

H02: There is no significant difference between Graduate and Post Graduate Student Teachers regarding their Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Table-2: Qualification-wise Mean, S.D and t-values of Attitude of Student Teachers

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Result
Graduate	34	96.74	5.407	1.36	NS at 0.05 level
Post-Graduate	60	94.13	10.364		

Table-2 shows that the t-value 1.36 which is not significant at 0.05 level with df=92. It indicates that the mean scores of attitude of graduate and post graduate does not differ significantly. Thus the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean scores of graduate and post graduate

student teachers is accepted. The mean score of graduate teachers is 96.74 which is slightly higher than the mean of post-graduate whose mean score is 94.13. Hence, it may be concluded that graduate student teachers have more favourable attitude towards inclusive education than the post-graduate student teachers.

H03: There would be no significant difference between Pre-service and in-service Student Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education.

Table-3: Service-wise Mean, S.D and t-values of Attitude of Student Teachers

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Result
Pre-Service	33	92.15	11.657	2.387*	Sig. at 0.05 level
In-Service	61	96.66	6.666		

*Significant at 0.05 level

From table-3, it can be observed that the t-value 2.387 which is significant at 0.05 level with df=92. It indicates that the mean scores of attitude of pre-service and in-service student teachers differ significantly. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant in the mean scores of attitude of pre-service and in-service student teachers is rejected. Further, the mean scores of attitude of pre-service student teachers is 92.15 which is significantly lower than the mean of in-service whose mean is 96.66. It may therefore, be said that in-service student teachers were found to have significantly higher attitude as compared to the attitude of pre-service student teachers towards inclusive education.

The study examined the attitude of student teachers towards inclusive education in terms of gender, qualification and service category. The study found that the difference in the attitude of male and female teachers were insignificant which implies that the attitude of both male and female student teachers have the same favourable attitude towards inclusive education. The findings of the present study agrees with the findings of Kaur, M. & Kaur, K. (2015) that there was no significant difference between male and female secondary school teachers with respect their attitude towards inclusive education but contradicted to the findings of Smitha and Acharya (2010) found that male possessed more unfavourable attitude than the female teachers towards inclusive education for the disabled. Attitudes of graduates and post-graduate student teachers do not differ significantly with regard to inclusive education. On comparison, the graduate student teachers have slightly more favourable attitude towards inclusive education than the post-graduate student teachers. The difference in the attitude of pre-service student teachers and in-service student teachers towards inclusive education were found to be significant. The results suggested that majority of the student teachers possess favourable attitude towards inclusive education. The study revealed that 65% of the student teachers hold

positive attitude towards inclusive education. These student teachers were optimistic towards facilitating inclusion with respect to administration, physical and material resources, extension services, teachers' skills and competency level and their confidence in handling children with disability and other diversified characteristics. Another 18% of student teachers had a neutral attitude towards inclusive education. This group of student teachers were not sure with respect to different components of educational institutions viz. administration, the infrastructure, the student support services, competence of teachers and so on. The third group 17% had negative attitude towards inclusive education. They feel that educational program will be negatively affected in relation to time, discipline, workload, inadequate facilities, academic performance, etc. They also feel themselves inadequate with the required skills and competencies to handle children with different disabilities.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Inclusive education is essential in our present day schools to provide equal educational opportunities to all children. An inclusive learning environment caters for all pupils, irrespective gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background or special need (Chen, 2015). For a better tomorrow, we need a school, a society and a nation which is accommodating and caring for children who have different learning needs. And this can be carried forward if teachers hold favourable attitude towards its inclusion and reach out to children with special needs. Despite the fact that different researches have brought forth contrast findings with regard to the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education, this attitude could be shaped through proper orientation of teachers. It is very pertinent that teachers need to develop the knowledge, skills and the competencies required to effectively deal with this new educational endeavours towards inclusion. Thus, we need humane teachers who will be compassionate towards his/her students of any disability or diversity in culture, caste, class, creed, religion, etc. to achieve the goals of inclusive education.

REFERENCES

1. Al-Zyoudi, M. (2006). 'Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education in Jordanian Schools'. *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol 21 No.2, pp. 55-62.
2. Avramidis, E. & Norwich, B. (2002). 'Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: a review of the literature'. *European Journal Of Special Needs Education*, 17(2), pp. 129-147. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08856250210129056>

3. Bansal Sneha (2016) 'Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Relation to their Professional Commitment'. *Indian Journal of Educational Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 2016, Vol.3, No.1, 96-108
4. Bryant P. Diane, Bryant R. Brian and Smith D. Deborah: Teaching Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Classrooms. Published by Sage Publication Ltd.
5. Elshabrawy, E. & Hassanein, A. (2005). Inclusion, Disability and Culture Vol. 28, Sense Publisher, AW Rotterdam, The Netherlands.
<https://www.sensepublishers.com/>
6. Galaterou, J. Antoniou: Alexander-Stamatios, *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol 32.
7. Kalita Utpal (2017). 'A Study on Attitude of Primary Teachers towards Inclusive Education'. *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research*, Vol 2, Issue 3; May 2017; Page No.127-130.
8. Kumar, S. And Kumar, K. (2007). 'Inclusive Education in India.' *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, vol. 2 (2), pp 1-16.
9. Loreman, T. Deppeler, J and Harvey, D. (2011). Inclusive Education- Supporting Diversity in the Classroom. Published by Allen & Unwin 83 Alexander Street Crow's Nest NSW 2065, Australia.
10. Mondal, Ajit. & Mete, Jayanta., (n.d). 'Education of Children with Disabilities in India: Concern and Policy Perspective, pp 56-58. online access.
11. Paramanik Nepal, Barman Pranab (2018). 'Attitude of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education'. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences* Vol.8, Issue 7, July 2018.
<http://www.ijmra.us>.
12. Schwab, S. (2018) 'Attitudes Towards Inclusive Schooling- A study on students', teachers' and parents' attitudes'. Published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek.
13. Smitha N.R. & Acharya Sujatha (2010). 'Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education for the Disabled'. *Edutracks.*; 10 (3): pp. 42-45.
14. Stow, L. Selfe, L.: Understanding Children With Special Needs. Published by the Academic Division of Unwin Hyman Ltd. 15/17 Broadwick Street, London W1V 1FP, UK.
15. The Salamanca Statement (1994). The Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education: Salamanca, Spain.
16. UNICEF (2007). A Human Right Based Approach to Education For All. UNESCO. New York, ppX1 www.unicef.org.

Corresponding Author

K. Runi Nakro*

Assistant Professor, Department of Education,
State College of Teacher Education, Kohima

rnakro@gmail.com