

Effect of Special Education Training Programme on the Attitudes of General Education Teachers regarding Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in General School

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Abstract – In this experimental investigation researcher studied the efficacy of special education training program for general education teachers on their understanding about the inclusion of the children with different abilities in Panchkula district of Haryana. The sample (n-100) comprised of two groups, with 50 participants in both experimental as well as in control group. Purposive sampling technique has been used to pick up sample. Data was collected with the help of questionnaire constructed by the investigator i.e. "Attitude of teachers toward the inclusion of children with different abilities in govt. schools of Haryana". Scores are compared and analysed by using the descriptive as well as inferential statistical procedure. In the results researcher found that there is a significant difference in the pre-test post test scores of experimental group (within) with t value 62.86 and between the groups post-test comparison was also significant with t value 49.26. So it is concluded that there is a significant effect of the special education training on the attitudes of the general education school teachers of the Panchkula district of Haryana.

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INTRODUCTION

As our society is changing, the ways to educate the children also change. It is now usually acknowledged that to achieve the goal of universal education in India and in order to fulfil provisions laid out in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 the education of differently able children cannot be put on the back burner. Inclusion or the education of differently able children in regular classrooms must be adopted both as an ideology and as a practical solution to support the Education for All adages, and to bring about equity in education in India.

After 1970 the inclusive education has gain momentum. Inclusion means the fusion of general education with special education. To fulfill the aims of inclusive education schools have to accommodate all children including differently abled and arrange education according to their needs. All those children whose needs arise out of their different abilities are known as Children with Special Education Need. For these children education should be provided with the majority of normal children. Many students with mild to severe disabilities are no longer being separated from their peers when it comes to education.

The goal of inclusive education is to break down the barriers that separate general and special education and make the included students feel like, and actually become an active member of general education classroom.

Inclusion is about minimizing exclusion and fostering participation for all students in the culture within a wider framework of support for all children in ordinary schools (Alur, 2002). Inclusion is based on a value system that celebrated diversity (Mittler, 2006). This is viewed as never ending process that depended on continuous pedagogical and organizational development within the mainstream. Inclusion encompasses curriculum flexibility, pedagogy, infrastructural changes, sensitization of parents and peers as integral components of the accommodations that schools must make (Ainscow, 1999).

Studies have shown that attitude of teachers is an important factor in the success of integrative practices in special education. Research on the attitude and perceived knowledge of mainstream and special education teachers of primary and secondary schools towards inclusive education in Malaysia results that general, teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusive education. They agreed that inclusive education enhances social interaction and inclusion among the students and

thus, it minimizes negative stereotypes on differently able students (Ali, Mustapha and Jelas, 2006).

Another study, which consisted partially of a survey of attitudes of mainstream high school teachers, indicated secondary teachers were tolerant of the thought of placing students with different abilities in their classrooms, but ultimately would prefer not to include them. This preference is due in large part to the set up of high schools in general, which normally consists of a large number of students within teachers' classrooms (Zigmond, Levin, and Laurie, 1985).

In Alabama it is found that regular educators were positively inclined towards teaching students with different abilities, were confident about their skills and sufficiency of time to carry out the mainstreaming programme in the regular classroom, and about the effects of teacher inputs in the educational programme (Diebold and Trentham, 1987). In another investigation it is found that two factors are important in the formation of positive attitudes towards inclusion, namely, increased knowledge and information about school inclusion and disabilities (Zambelli and Bonni, 2004). It is accomplished that both factors are important as well as legally mandated, to make modifications for those students who need it, to benefit from the educational environment (Galis and Tanner, 1995).

The present study aimed to investigate the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education and reported that teachers look forward to teaching in an inclusive environment and are ready to face the challenges.

METHOD

Participants:

Present study is a pre-test post-test control group design intended to see the Effect of Special Education Training Programme on the Attitudes of General Education Teachers regarding Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in General School. The sample for the present study was picked from a target population of teachers working in govt. Schools of Panchkula district of Haryana with the ethical clearance and permission of concerned administrator and informed consent of participants. A purposive sample of teachers was acknowledged by the investigator and participants that matched the sample frame were recruited to participate in the study. Total participants in this study were 100 JBT and TGT general teachers working in the different Govt. schools of district Panchkula. All teachers were working in the schools having inclusive setup for the children with different abilities. The majority of participants were male (64) and all participants including female are falling between the age group 30-45. More than half of participants have prior experience to teach the student with different abilities. Out of 100 teachers first 50 (32M & 18F)

teachers were put under group-A and were provided with the special education training and other 50 were in group-B and remained without any training.

Instrument:

Instrument used in the present study was a questionnaire namely "Attitude of teachers toward the inclusion of children with different abilities in govt. schools of Haryana" developed by the researcher. Item pooling for the questionnaire were done by taking the reference of different tools already developed to measure the attitudes of teachers toward the inclusion of children with different abilities. Experts' opinion had been taken for the validity. At last 15 questions were selected for the final questionnaire according to the suggestions provided by the experts. Questionnaire was provided with the option of Agree/Disagree/No decision. The required demographic information of the participants is also included in the questionnaire. For the decision of agree 2, disagree 1 and no decision 0 scores were given to the participants on the questionnaire. Questionnaire is developed in both Hindi as well as English language.

Procedure

Prepared questionnaire was given to all participants and were asked to fill it without any assistance from any secondary parties in the school hours. After baseline information through pre-testing 50 Participants were exposed to the training of special education for the inclusion of children with different abilities and other 50 were not exposed to any training. The investigator conducted a total 20 sessions of special education training of 60 minutes duration for all 50 participants. For the training projector, activity cards, charts and demonstration material was used. After completion of the above said intervention same tool was re-administrated for the post-testing and the obtained scores were compared and interpreted by using SPSS.

RESULTS:

A descriptive quantitative approach was adopted for the purpose of analysing data. In this study, the independent variable was special education training program for general teachers and dependent variable was attitudes of teachers about the inclusion of children with different abilities.

Table 1: Comparison of pre-test post-test scores of teachers who got the special Education training: (With in Group)

Domain		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value, df& p-value
Over all	Pre test	50	12.70	1.65	t=62.86, df=9, p<0.01
	Post test	50	24.68	1.57	

Table 1 indicate the pre test post test mean scores of the experimental group. It is clear from the above table that pre test mean scores is 12.70 and standard deviation is 1.65 and post test mean scores is 24.68 and standard deviation is 1.57. Difference between pre test and post test mean score is 11.98, which indicates that there is an improvement in the scores of teachers. In the above table calculated value of t is 62.86 ($p < 0.01$). Hence null hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level. So it is concluded that there is a significant improvement in the scores of teachers.

Table 2: Comparison of pre-test post-test scores of teachers who did not got the special Education training (Within Group)

Domain		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value, df& p-value
Over all	Pre test	50	10.84	1.43	$t' = 2.456$, $df = 9$, $p < 0.01$
	Post test	50	11.38	.90	

Table 2 indicate the pre-test post-test mean scores of the experimental group. It is clear from the above table that pre test mean scores is 10.84 and standard deviation is 1.43 and post test mean scores is 11.38 and standard deviation is 0.90. Difference between pre test and post test mean score is minimal, which indicates that there is no improvement in the scores of teachers. In the above table calculated value of t is 2.456 ($p > 0.01$). Hence null hypothesis is accepted at 0.01 level. So it is concluded that there is no significant improvement in the scores of teachers.

Table 3: Comparison of post-test scores of both the groups: (Between Groups)

Domain		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value, df& p-value
Over all	Post-test (E)	50	24.68	1.57	$t' = 49.27$, $df = 9$, $p < 0.01$
	Post-test (C)	50	11.38	.90	

Table 3 indicate the post-test mean scores of the experimental group and control group. It is clear from the above table that post test mean scores of experimental group is 24.68 and standard deviation is 1.57 and post test mean scores of control group is 11.38 and standard deviation is .90. Difference between both the scores is 13.30, which indicates that there is much difference in the scores of teachers. In the above table calculated value of t is 49.27 ($p < 0.01$). Hence null hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level. So it is concluded that there is a significant difference in the scores of both the groups.

DISCUSSION:

Overall, the study shows a predominantly positive effect of special education training programme on the attitudes of general education teachers regarding inclusion of children with special needs in general school. It can be inferred from the results of the current study, the attitudes of participants toward

instructing children with special needs in general school significantly improved on completion of special education training programme for general education teachers. The current study indicates significant between scores of the participants of group-A and group-B. To analyze the data of both groups SPSS package is used and the t -test is used to infer the decision.

These finding are similar to the outcome obtained in the study that reported an overall increase in the positivity of attitudes of participants after completing an introductory course on exceptionalities (Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey & Simon, 2005). One another investigation revealed teacher perceptions regarding curricular and instructional changes that were made as inclusive programs for students with mild disabilities shows more positive view of participants who completed a single course on disabilities regarding the inclusion of student with different abilities (Mc-Leskey & Waldron, 2002)

In other words, there is increase in positivity of attitude of participants who had prior interaction with people with disabilities was significantly larger than the corresponding increase of those who had no such interaction. Other research reported that teachers acknowledged that since inclusive school programmes were developed, their roles were altered, as more teaming and collaboration occurred (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000)

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded from the above discussion that special education training to the general education teachers is significantly improves the attitudes of the teachers of different grade in general schools for the inclusion of the students with different abilities. Although the study is limited up to the single district of the state but replication of the study in different states can be promoted for the emerging change in the attitudes of the general education teachers towards the inclusion of the students with special abilities in to general schools.

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