

Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Education is an essential building block of any civilisation. Today inclusive education is a widely accepted approach of the 21st century because it helps unfold the hidden potential of the students, ensures the rights of every individual without discrimination and creates a universal inclusive environment for the maximum development of children, as we all have equal rights despite many differences. Inclusive education fosters the idea of acceptance and promotes wider social acceptance, peace and cooperation. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the attitudes towards inclusive education among primary school teachers in Lucknow. The success of inclusive education depends on various factors, of which a teacher is the most important one. To become a competent and successful inclusive teacher, it is necessary to have the required knowledge, skills, democratic attitude, positive attitude and an attitude of collaboration and networking classroom. Therefore, to assist the regular education teacher, knowledge and understanding of their attitudes or perceptions towards inclusive education is critical. Hence, this study aims to find out the knowledge and attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education. The present study is a descriptive survey method and data has been analysed quantitatively. The study included a sample of 200 primary school teachers who were surveyed using a standardised tool. A total of 33 primary schools were randomly selected for this study (15 private primary schools and 18 government primary schools). The study assesses the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education in relation to their gender and type of institute. The statistical technique of 't-test' was used to analyse the attitudes towards inclusive education scores of private primary school teachers and government primary school teachers. The attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education may be influenced and developed within an educational system that can provide some specific conditions conducive to practice in this field.

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INTRODUCTION

India is the largest democratic country in the world. As a nation with federal characteristics, the core qualities of its constitution, which are mentioned on the very first page, i.e., preamble are justice, liberty, equality and fraternity for all the citizens of the country. These core qualities would only be attainable by integrating people and all sections of society, by providing them with inclusive education. Inclusive education aims to promote democratic principles, values and beliefs relating to equality and social justice to all. UNESCO's action in the field of inclusive education has been set explicitly within the inclusive education framework adopted in 1994. Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic, or other conditions (Article 3, Salamanca Framework for Action).

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Moreover, they provide effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (Article 2, Salamanca statement). Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 26).

Inclusive Education

This education system accommodates all learners, children and young people with or without disabilities in a common education system to learn together in a conducive environment. It also talks about all stakeholders in the system such as learners, parents, community, teachers, administrators and policymakers, to be comfortable with diversity and take it as an opportunity rather than a problem. Inclusive education is not only associated with targeting excluded sections of societies or children but also it welcomes diversity, benefiting all learners, providing equal access to education and making appropriate provisions for certain categories of children without excluding them. The definition highlights the point that inclusion is not about meeting the needs of the disabled at the expense of the non-disabled but it is a reciprocal process that benefits both (UNESCO, 2009).

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Today, inclusive education is widely accepted as a twenty-first century approach because it helps unlock student's hidden potential, ensures the rights of every individual without discrimination, and creates a universally inclusive environment for children's maximum development. We recognise that despite our many differences, we all share equal rights. Inclusive education promotes acceptance, broader social harmony, peace and cooperation. While inclusive

education remains a subject of debate nationally and globally, it is considered the only path to a future education, a better society and a brighter world. Given that teachers are the primary providers of this system, it is essential to assess teacher's attitudes towards inclusive education. The proper functioning of inclusivity relies heavily on the involvement and cooperation of teachers, parents and community leaders. A positive attitude is essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education whether it originates from society, peers, parents of the children, teachers or administrators. The key to successful inclusion in the classroom primarily hinges on the attitude of teachers. Therefore, it is not enough to prioritise inclusive education as an integral part of the education system, equally important is the attitude of teachers toward inclusion. Teacher's attitude plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of inclusive education and has a significant impact on the teaching-learning process in a classroom (Sharma et al., 2008; Hattie, 2009). Therefore, the need for this present study is evident.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is stated as 'Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education'.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

2. To study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education in relation to gender.
3. To study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education in relation to the type of institute.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference between male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education.
2. There is no significant difference between the government and private primary school teachers towards inclusive education.

METHODOLOGY

Method

The method used in the present research is a descriptive survey method and quantitative in nature.

Sample

The sample contained 200 teachers from different areas of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Further 200 teachers selected randomly from the selected 33 primary schools constitute the sample for the study. The sample of the study has been taken from the 15 private primary schools and 18 government primary schools of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

Tool for the Study

For the present study Dr Vishal Sood and Dr Arti Anand (2011),

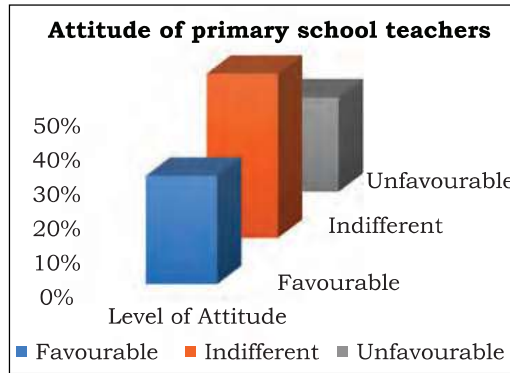
“Teacher Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education”. The tool consists of 47 items having 29 favourable and 18 unfavourable items along with a three-point scale of agree, undecided, and disagree carrying a weighted of 3,2,1 for favourable items and just reverse in case of unfavourable items.

Analysis and Interpretation

To fulfil the objectives of the present study, the researcher analysed and interpreted the obtained data on the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education using the statistical technique of the ‘t-test’. Results are being presented objectively.

Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education

To study the attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education. Percentage-wise divided the score of teachers of primary school towards inclusive education. The results have been tabulated below.



towards inclusive education. We can see that 31 per cent of teachers have favourable attitude and 47 per cent of teachers have an indifferent attitude, 27 per cent of teachers have the unfavourable attitude.

Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Relation to Gender

To study the attitude of male and female primary school teachers towards inclusive education ‘t-test’ was applied to attitude scores of teachers of primary schools towards

Table 1
Percentage Shows the Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education.

Range of score	Categories	No. of teachers	Percentage
116 and above	Favourable	62	31%
80 –115	Indifferent	84	42%
79 and below	Unfavourable	54	27%

Table 1 illustrates that most of the teachers have an indifferent attitude

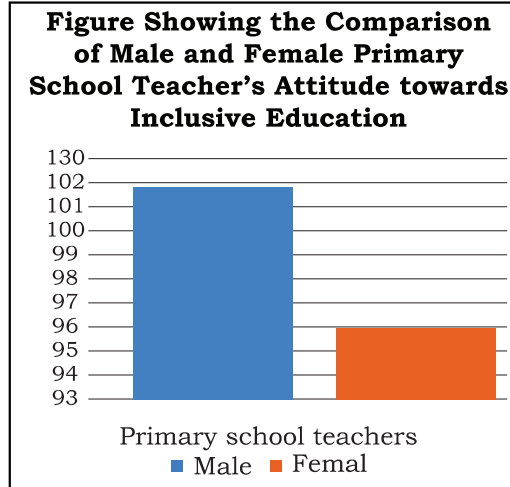
towards inclusive education. The results have been tabulated below.

Table 2

‘t’ Values Showing Significance of the Difference in Attitude Scores of Male and Female Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education

Primary school teachers	N	M	S.D.	Df	t-value	
Male	100	101.75	26.40	198	1.5455	Not significant
Female	100	96.01	25.85	198		

Table 2 illustrates that t-value for attitude towards inclusive education on attitude scale for male and female primary school teachers has come as 1.5455. It is insignificant at 0.05 level. So, the above taken hypothesis has been accepted that, male teachers and female teachers of primary school have no variance in regards to their attitude about inclusive education. The mean value for male teachers $M = 101.75$ is higher than the female teacher’s $M = 96.01$ but is not so high so as to make significant difference. So, null hypothesis is accepted.



Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Relation to Type of Institute

To study the attitude of private and government primary school teachers towards inclusive education ‘t’-test was applied to attitude scores of teachers of primary schools towards inclusive education. The results have been tabulated below.

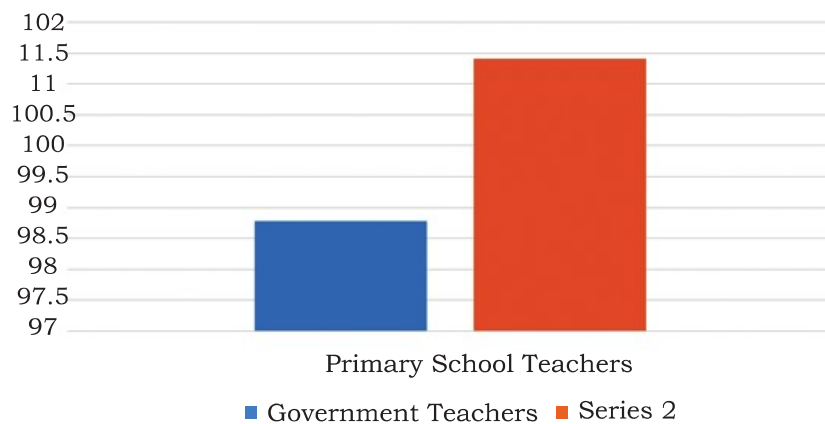
Table 3 shows that the t-value in the case of government and private school teacher’s attitude towards inclusive education has come out to be 0.7133. which is not significant at both levels of confidence. So, it is verified that government and private school teachers have equal attitudes. They kept similar attitudes towards inclusive education. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3

‘t’ Values Showing the Significance of the Difference in Attitude Scores of Private and Government Primary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education

Primary school teachers	N	M	S.D.	df	t-value	
Government teachers	100	98.77	25.72	198	0.7133	Not significant
Private teachers	100	101.41	26.61	198		

Figure Showing the Comparison of Government and Private School Teacher's Attitude towards Inclusive Education



FINDINGS

After analysing the data collected from the target sample through various techniques and describing the personal views on different dimensions of teaching life.

1. There was no significant difference between male and female primary school teachers in attitude towards inclusive education.
2. There was no significant difference between private and government school teachers in attitude towards inclusive education.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that the majority of teachers have a moderate to favourable attitude towards inclusive education.

Attitudes are often shaped by a complex interplay of factors such as personal beliefs, experiences and professional training. Therefore, assuming that gender directly impacts attitudes without supporting evidence would be an oversimplification. Both male and female primary school teachers. Typically undergo similar training and educational programmes to become teachers. They often work together in the same teaching environments, sharing experiences and insights related to inclusive education. This exposure to similar teaching conditions can lead to the development of similar attitudes and approaches. In this particular study, it was found that gender does not significantly impact teacher's attitudes towards inclusive education. Teachers in both private and government schools undergo

similar teacher training programmes, where they are introduced to the concept of inclusive education. Thus, on a foundational level, they receive similar preparation for inclusive classrooms. The curriculum and policies governing education, including inclusive education, are often standardised at the national or regional level. Additionally, in this particular study, it was found that the type of institute does not significantly impact teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.

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