



## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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### Abstract:

*Providing Quality Education for All children in inclusive setting has been identified as the most challenging, yet the most important issue in education across the world Inclusive Education is the practice of educating students with disabilities alongside children without disabilities in general classrooms. Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 attempts to provide an enabling environment for all disabled children to enter school, attend and complete elementary education on par with other children. Successful and effective implementation of Inclusive Education depends upon teachers' knowledge and positive attitudes towards it. The main aim of this study was to find out the attitudes of elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education. The Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) was administered to 78 teachers working in elementary schools in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. It was found that elementary school teachers had a positive attitude towards Inclusive Education. Significant differences were found in the scores of attitude towards Inclusive Education with respect to gender, locality ,age, educational qualification and teaching experience etc.*



**KEYWORDS:** *Inclusive Education, Elementary Education, Teacher Education, Children With Special needs(CWSN), Attitudes*

### INTRODUCTION

#### Full Text:

Education is a powerful instrument of social change, and often initiates upward movement in the social structure there by helping to bridge the gap between the different sections of society. Inclusive Education denotes that all children irrespective of their strengths and weaknesses will be part of the mainstream education. Inclusive Education is for all, irrespective of any social community, caste, and class gender and (dis-) ability of the child. Inclusive Education is brought about by having all children of society to become students of the same school. So, Inclusive Education means, "the act of ensuring that all children despite their differences, receive the opportunity of being part of the same classroom as other children of their age, and in the process get the opportunity of being exposed to the curriculum to their optimal potential". Providing Quality Education for All children in inclusive setting has been identified as the most challenging, yet the most important issue in education across the world. The situation is much more glaring in India, where country is striving hard to Universalize Elementary

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Education (UEE) specially for providing education to disadvantaged group, marginalized section of the society, i.e. Children With Special Needs (CWSN).

According to the *World Report on Disability* of the World Health Organization (2011) the number of children aged 0–14 years experiencing disability is estimated at 95 million, with 13 million children experiencing severe difficulties. In spite of their disability, most of these children are victims of some form of inequality. They face obstacles in terms of access to education, health care in general and rehabilitation and reintegration in society. Education for All including the Education for Disabled Children as a human right is recognized and affirmed in United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) Universal Declaration on the Rights of the disabled Persons (1975); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien Thailand 1990), Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (Salamanca, Spain 1994); The World Education Forum, (Dakar, Senegal, 2000) and in the more recent Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Indian Society is naturally more inclusive than segregationist in nature. Starting from Gurukul System to western model of day-care system efforts has been made to bring people in, rather than to keep them out. In 1974 the Government of India launched the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC). The scheme aimed at providing educational opportunities to learners with disabilities in regular schools, and to facilitate their achievement. The National Policy on Education (1986) recognizes education of disabled as a human resource development activity and not merely a welfare activity. The policy emphasizes the removal of disparities, and ensuring equalization of educational opportunity for the Children with Special Needs (CWSN). Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1995 directs the government and local authorities to assure that every child with a disability should have access for free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years and promote the integration of students with disabilities in normal schools. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education brought out by National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT, 2000) has made significant recommendation for inclusive schools as a measure towards achieving quality education for all learners. "Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with impairments. Societal requirement is that learners with special needs should be educated along with other learners in inclusive schools, which are cost effective and sound pedagogical practices. Therefore, it promotes participation of all learners without any discrimination in regular schools". In 2002, through the 86th Amendment Act, Article 21(A) was incorporated in the Indian Constitution which made education a fundamental right. *Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009* attempts to provide an enabling environment for disabled children to enter school, attend and complete elementary education on par with other children. National Curriculum Framework, (NCERT, 2005) reiterates the importance of including and retaining all children in school through a programme that reaffirms the value of each child and enables all children to experience dignity and the confidence to learn. It States "Schools, therefore, have a responsibility of providing a flexible curriculum that is accessible to all students. Teaching and Learning processes in the classroom should be planned to respond to the diverse needs of students. Teachers should explore various strategies to provide education for children having disabilities". The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) a centrally sponsored Scheme is implementing many Programmes and innovative Practices with an aim to fulfill the objectives of Universalisation and Quality in education. SSA also focuses to ensure that every differently abled child, irrespective of kind,

category or degree of disability, is provided with quality education in an appropriate environment Hence, Inclusive Education in schools for Children With Special Needs (CWSN)) is given top priority under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA).

**Need for the Study:**

Schooling is vital to child's development. It is therefore important that a child must attend school where his/her abilities are respected, educational needs are met and potential is realized. Inclusive Education is the practice of educating students with disabilities alongside children without disabilities in general classrooms .If teaching is effective and responds to both students needs and strengths, there is a possibility for all children to learn (Lindsay, 2003). Academic success depends on how much a student learns from teachers, whether they have disabilities or not (Young, Wright & Laster, 2005). Teacher attitude is one of the most important variables in the education of children with disabilities (Smith, 2000).Successful and effective implementation of Inclusive Education depends upon teachers' knowledge and positive attitudes towards it (Loreman, Deppler & Harvey, 2005). Hence the investigator made a study to know the attitudes Elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education.

**Statement of the Problem:**

A Study on the Elementary School Teachers' Attitude Towards Inclusive Education in Visakhapatnam district.

**Objectives**

- To measure and understand the elementary school teachers attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- To study whether there exists any difference in the attitudes of elementary school teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education. in respect of their Gender, Locality, Age Educational Qualification and Teaching Experience etc.

**Hypotheses :**

- 1) There exists no significant difference between male and female elementary school teachers in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- 2) There exists no significant difference between rural and urban elementary school teachers in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- 3) . There exists no significant difference between the elementary school teachers below and above 30 years age in their attitude towards Inclusive Education. .
- 4) There exists no significant difference between the elementary school teachers having D.Ed and B.Ed qualification in their attitude towards Inclusive Education
- 5) There exists no significant difference between the elementary school teachers below and above 10 years of professional experience in their attitude towards Inclusive Education

**Methodology :**

The present study is descriptive in nature, made on the basis of data gathered to find out the attitude of elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education.

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**Sample:-**

The sample for this study was 78 teachers working in elementary schools selected randomly of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. This sample of 78 teachers working in elementary schools is found to have the following sub-samples: (i) male teachers (N=43), (ii) female teachers (N=35), (iii) Teachers working in Rural schools (N=46), (iv) Teachers working in Urban schools (N=32),

**Tools:-**

The instrument for data collection used in this study was a questionnaire that was divided into two parts. Part one of this instrument was designed to obtain participants' professional and demographic data. Elementary School teachers were asked to provide information about different demographic variables such as Gender, Locality, Age, Educational Qualification and Teaching Experience etc.. Part two of the questionnaire was taken from the Attitudes toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) developed by Wilczenski (1992) containing 16 items. It was designed to elicit participants' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with various disabilities into regular classrooms. This 16-item scale measured participants' attitudes toward four aspects of Inclusive Education: social, physical, academic and behavioral. Participants rate their responses on a Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 =disagree somewhat, 4= agree somewhat, 5 =agree, 6 =strongly agree). The scale yields a total score that may range from 16 to 96, with a lower score indicating a less favorable attitude and a higher score indicates a most favorable attitude. The ATIES is a widely used instrument for measuring teachers' attitudes or views towards Inclusive Education.

**Collection of Data:**

The data was collected by the investigator from elementary schools in Visakhapatnam district. The teachers were explained the purpose of this research and requested to respond to the Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES). They were also asked to fill up the personal data sheet.

**Delimitations of the study:**

The study was subjected to several delimitations. Due to the time constraint the investigator had chosen a limited sample and it was confined to collect the data from the teachers working in elementary schools of Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh state.

**Analysis and Interpretation of Data:**

The collected data was computed and the results were interpreted to check whether there exists any significant difference in the mean scores of the attitudes of elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education with respect to their Gender, Locality, Age, Educational Qualification and Teaching Experience etc.. The means, standard deviations and t-ratio were calculated. Data and results of the test of significance of the difference between mean scores of the attitudes of elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education based on the relevant subsamples of interfering variables has shown in the following table.

**Table showing the significance of difference between mean scores of Attitudes Elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education based relevant subsamples of interfering variables.**

Category	variable	N	Mean	S.D.	CR Value t-test	Remarks
Gender	Male	43	73.13	7.24	*2.977	<i>Significant at 0.01 Level</i>
	Female	35	78.39	8.36		
Locality	Rural	46	80.22	9.53	*4.272	<i>Significant at 0.01 Level</i>
	Urban	32	71.34	8.25		
Age	Below 30years	23	71.45	9.68	*3.469	<i>Significant at 0.01 Level</i>
	Above30 years	55	80.13	10.23		
Educational Qualification	D.Ed	19	79.35	8.64	*3.551	<i>Significant at 0.01 Level</i>
	B.Ed	59	72.16	7.35		
Teaching Experience	Below 10 years	31	73.49	8.07	*2.464	<i>Significant at 0.05Level</i>
	Above 10 years	47	78.07	9.14		

- From the above table it was understand that there exists significant difference between the attitudes of elementary school male and female teachers towards Inclusive Education. The mean value of male teachers is 73.13 and mean value of female teachers is 78.39.The CR value for gender category is 2.977which is significant at 0.01 level. It clearly indicates that male and female teachers differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- With regard to the locality of the school the mean value of the teachers working in rural elementary schools was 80.22 and the mean value of teachers working in urban elementary schools was 71.34 the CR value is 4.272 which is significant at 0.01 level. It clearly shows that rural and urban teachers working in elementary schools differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- With regard to age of the respondent teachers the mean value of the teachers below 30 years age was 71.45 and the mean value of teachers above 30 years age was 80.13 The CR value is 3.469 which is statistically significant .Hence we can conclude that teachers below and above 30 years age working in elementary schools differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
- With regard to the Education Qualification of the teachers the mean value of the D.Ed qualified teachers was 79.35 and the mean value of B.Ed qualified teachers was 72.16 .The CR value is 3.551 which is significant at 0.01 level..It clearly shows that D.Ed and B.Ed qualified teachers differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education
- With regard to the Professional Experience of the teachers the mean value of the teachers having below 10 years of teaching experince was 73.49 and the mean value of the teachers having more than 10 years of teaching experince was 78.07.The CR value is 2.464 which is significant at 0.05 level. It clearly shows that the professional experience of the teachers significantly influence in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.

### Findings of the Study:

The findings of the study are summarized as follows.

1. It is observed that in general the teachers working in elementary schools had shown favorable attitude towards Inclusive Education.
2. The male and female teachers working in elementary schools differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.Female teachers had shown more positive attitude towards Inclusive Education at elementarylevel level.

3. The teachers working in rural and urban elementary schools differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education.
4. The teachers below and above 30 years age working in elementary schools differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education ‘
5. The D.Ed qualified and B.Ed qualified teachers working in elementary schools differ significantly in their attitude towards Inclusive Education. The D.Ed qualified teachers had shown more favourable attitude towards inclusive education .
6. The professional experience of the teachers had significant influence on the attitude of the elementary school teachers towards Inclusive Education.

**Conclusion:**

On the basis of the results of the data the following conclusions are drawn. The Elementary school teachers had shown more favorable attitude towards the Inclusive Education. It was found that female teachers had more positive attitude than male teachers towards Inclusive Education. It is also concluded that teachers working in rural schools had favorable attitude towards Inclusive Education when compared with teacher working in urban schools . The age qualification of the teachers professional experience of the teachers had significant impact on the elementary school teachers attitudes towards Inclusive Education. It is because the D.Ed qualified had studied Inclusive Education as a subject in their training period. The study has greater educational importance. Inclusive Education should be made as a compulsory subject at curriculum of teacher Education .Orientation programmes should be conducted for in-service teachers on Inclusive Education to create awareness among elementary school teachers.

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