



A comparative study on attitude of pre-service general and special educators toward inclusive education

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Abstract

The achievement of inclusive education is largely dependent on teachers, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of different stakeholders.

Objective: This study examined the comparison on attitude of pre-service general education teacher and pre-service special education teacher towards inclusive education.

Sample: A survey was conducted on 100 pre-service education teachers in a teacher training program in Chandigarh i.e. Govt. College of Education, Sector – 20 A and Govt. Rehabilitation Institute for Intellectual Disabilities, Sector -31 C respectively. The study involved 50 pre-service special education teachers and 50 pre-service general education teachers.

Design: The study used survey research design for present study.

Tool: The study was done with the help of Fathi Rezk El-Ashry's tool which was developed by him during his research work titled as survey of general education pre-service teacher's attitude toward inclusion. The t-test and ANOVA statistical analysis has been used in study.

Result: The findings revealed that the attitude of pre-service general education teacher and pre-service special education teachers towards inclusive education does not have significant difference. The findings also revealed that majority of general education teachers are enthusiastic and willingness to include children with disabilities into their classroom as compare to special education teachers in Chandigarh, U.T.

Conclusion: The conclusion of the study is that attitude is vary with situation, persons or groups etc. This study reveals the attitude of pre-service special and general educators which vary with respect to system, infrastructure, training, resources, readiness or willingness to teach CWSN. Moreover experience, material status, environmental factors which are accessible to achieve inclusive education in general system should be importance.

Keywords: pre-service general and special education teacher, inclusive education, attitude, children with special needs

Introduction

Attitude is a settle way of thinking or feeling about something. A predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. Attitude influences an individual's choice of action and responses to challenges, incentives and rewards.

G.W. Allport (1935) rightly observes, "The concept of attitude is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology." Attitude is the single most powerful tool that anyone has in any situation. But the power can be used in a variety of skillful and unskillful ways with a commensurate variety of outcomes.

Attitudes play a significant role in determining behavior (Azjen & Fishbein, 1977). A good attitude can overcome all barriers and a bad one can defeat every advantage. Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school.

Scarcity of awareness gives birth to conservative and ill attitude towards the education of children with special needs in a regular classroom. Various researches in the area of inclusion say that teachers are the key to the success of inclusion in schools as they are the one who deals with

curriculum and teaching (Cant, 1994). Findings of various researches on attitude of teachers towards inclusion in India have also highlighted facts that teachers also have negative and unfavorable attitude towards including children with disabilities in schools.

High-quality teachers need to consider cost-effectiveness in deciding on the specific combination of pre-service and In-service training experiences needed in order to deploy enough teachers for growing education systems. Thus the pre-service educator's acceptance depends upon the attitude of his own.

Julka, A. (2004) ^[1] has mentioned that the attitude of the teachers, teacher educators and educational administrators is very important. Till the teachers themselves believe in including children with SEN in the education process, they would not devise any instructional adaptations for reaching all the children in the class.

Pre-service teacher preparation programs, also called as initial teacher training or teacher education courses, vary greatly across countries. The structure, coursework and field experiences of pre-service programs are consider important when designing or reforming teacher training because they all contribute to level of preparation. Pre-service teachers are would be teachers and have to serve in general and inclusive education set-up. Pre-service teachers are the

stakeholder which will play an instrumental role in Inclusive Education with positive attitude in true sense.

In India two apex organizations namely National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) are responsible for providing Guidelines, regulating and supervising the Teacher Education Programs (TEP) in general and special education. The NCTE takes care of TEP at various levels whereas the RCI is responsible for addressing special needs through Teacher Education. In the light of recent developments in the areas of School Education and teacher education a need has been felt by Department of Education of Groups with Special Needs (DEGSN), NCERT to identify the existing gaps in teacher education programs from the perspective of inclusive education. And accordingly the Department has taken initiative to develop guidelines for existing Inclusive teacher education.

Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 also states that children with disability should be integrated in mainstream schools to the extent possible. It can be clearly observed that there has been very weak link between teacher education pedagogy and implementation of inclusive education.

SSA also plays an important role in capacity building program at National Level for Development of Inclusive Education such as:

- Responding to Children with Special Needs– A Manual for Planning & Implementation of Inclusive Education in SSA- This document is a guide on how to implement IE in SSA
- NGO Initiative in Inclusion: SSA Experience- A compilation of the range of activities in which NGOs are involved in different states to promote Inclusive Education at Local Level.
- Discovering New Paths in Inclusion: A Documentation of Home Based Education Practices for CWSN in SSA – Efforts to capture processes of Home Based Education in 8 States of India
- Bi- Annual Newsletter on IE- 3 issues published so far

Need and Significance of the study

The value of inclusion and inclusive education is increasing day by day with efforts of Central and State Government. Thus conventionally there are many in-service teachers who have not undergone such type of schooling or practical experience which can make them aware about practices of inclusive education in schools. So the attitude of them varies with educational policies and facts of people. This study looks towards the attitude of pre-service general educator and special educator toward inclusive education as Government is promoting inclusive education in India. Long back in India PIED was launched in collaboration with NCERT and UNICEF and several other initiatives came up with support of Govt in India like SSA and IECYD (Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities) Pre-service general and special educators both studies general education and special education papers as a part of their curriculum. So estimation of attitude is important among prospect teachers. In the present research comparison has also been made so that attitude and perception of prospective educators can be determined critically. This study can make a spark in the minds of pre-service teachers that whether they possess or ready towards welcoming the practice of inclusive education.

Objectives of study

- To investigate the attitude of pre-service special educator toward inclusive education with respect to Educational Qualification and Gender
- To draw the attitude of pre-service general educator toward inclusive education with respect to Gender and Educational Qualification

Method

Sample

Survey research design was followed by researcher in the present study covering two teacher training colleges in Chandigarh i.e. Government Rehabilitation Institute for Intellectual Disabilities, Sector – 31 C and Government College of Education, Sector – 20 A including 100 sample those who were willing, including both genders pursuing teacher education programs in Special and General Education courses. Pre-service special and general educators belonging to other specialization area has not been included in this study. Sample was classified on two parameters i.e. gender and class and further divided into male-female and course such as B. Ed and M. Ed.

Sample and further distribution

Table 1

		Pre-Service Special Educators	Pre-Service General Educators
Source	Value Label	N	N
Gender	Male	12	14
	Female	38	36
Educational Qualification	B. Ed	38	39
	M. Ed	12	11

Inclusion Criteria

- Willingness of subject to participate in the present study
- Both genders are included in the study i.e. Male and Female

Exclusion Criteria

- The pre-service teachers who are non-working and have completed their training has not included in study.
- Trainees belonging to other specialization other than education and special education are excluded from study.

Design

The study used survey research design for present study

Tool

In the present study researcher has used a tool which was developed by Fathi Rezk El-Ashry (2009) titled as a survey of general education pre-service teacher’s attitude toward inclusion.

Participants completed the Pre-service Teachers’ Attitudes towards Inclusion questionnaire. The tool consists of three parts, demographic information, secondly 33 statements which respondents rank on 5 points (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree), and a set of questions that require written responses about pre-service teachers’ perspectives towards inclusion. For the second part of the tool, although all items are mixed together, scoring of 13 items (i.e., 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, and 26) is reversed so that a higher total

score for the questionnaire reflects positive pre-service teacher attitudes towards inclusion. The three parts of the tool take approximately 25 minutes to complete.

Results

Table 2: Comparison between mean scores of attitude of pre-service general and special educators towards inclusive education.

Attitude of Informants	N	Mean	t-value	df	P-value
Attitude of Pre-service General Educator	50	110.3	0.81	98	0.41 p > 0.05
Attitude of Pre-service Special Educator	50	112			

A perusal of table above shows comparison of attitude between pre-service general and special education teachers using t-value. When the values are obtained and examined it was found that the attitude of pre-service teachers i.e. general education teachers and special education teachers vary significantly thus finding disagrees with the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the attitude of pre-service special educator and pre-service general educator towards inclusive education and hypothesis that there will be significant difference in attitude of pre-service general educators and pre-service special educators towards inclusive education is rejected.

Table 3: Comparison of pre-service special educators with respect to their educational qualification and gender

Sources	Sum of squares	F	Sig.
Gender	518.38	3.67	0.06
Educational Qualification	85.93	0.60	0.43

A look at above table exhibits values measuring difference in attitude of pre-service special educators toward inclusive education with respect to educational qualification and gender using F-value. Numerical values obtained shows that the difference between attitude of pre-service general or special educator is not significant hence findings agrees with the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in attitude of pre-service special educator with respect to gender and qualification towards inclusive education. Both the group of prospect teaching professionals has encouraging and affirmative attitude towards inclusive education. Hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in attitude of pre-service general educators toward inclusive education with respect to educational qualification and gender is rejected.

Table 4: Comparison of pre-service general educators with respect to their qualification and gender

Source	Sum of squares	F	Sig.
Gender	8.46	0.10	0.74
Educational qualification	75.22	0.97	0.33

Table above depicts values, showing difference in attitude of pre-service general educators towards inclusive education with respect to educational qualification and gender using F-value. Values calculated under sub-variables gender and qualification exhibits that attitude does not varies, thus findings of the present study are similar with the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in attitude of pre-service general educator with respect to gender and qualification towards inclusive education. The hypothesis

formulated that “There will no significant difference in attitude of pre-service general educators toward inclusive education with respect to educational qualification and gender” is accepted.

Discussion

Findings of study reveal that attitude of pre-service general educator and pre-service special educators towards inclusive education do not have significant difference when it compared. The level of educational qualification does not have any significant impact on attitude of pre-service special educators toward inclusive education. The result also indicated that gender does have any significant impact in determining the attitude of pre service special educators towards inclusive education. Similarly the attitude of pre-service general educators towards inclusive education is not influenced by the factors such as qualification and gender. The finding of 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. Evangeline Kern (2006) [30] found his study that overall, teachers believe in the concept of inclusion is positive. On the basis of training acquired by the pre service educators, belonging to general education it can be concluded that they are willing to cater the needs of Children with Special Needs in mainstream schools. This study exhibits that special educators are prepare to teach students with different disabilities having diversified learning needs into inclusive education system. The findings of this study can also be supported by study conducted by Toole & Burke (2013) on pre-service educators who positively showed their attitudes to educate children with disabilities in general classes. Teachers belonging to both cadres (special and general) have expressed about the fact that mainstream school have sufficient resources which are adequate and will help them to serve the needs of children with disability into inclusive education setup whereas only few special educators agrees with the fact as compared to general educators. Some general education teachers thought that children with special needs might become the reason behind pessimistic classroom environment, evenly it was observed by the researchers that special educators also supported this fact, as they are aware that a teacher has to equally deal with the problem behavior of CWSN in the inclusive classroom. Majority of general educators are enthusiastic and willingness to include CWSN into their classroom as compare to special educators. Lastly, Hattie (2009) highlighted the importance of teacher’s attitudes as an important factor contributing toward student having diverse learning needs of their influence that teacher attitudes have on teaching practices and the classroom environment.

Delimitation

- The study has a small number of sample hence it will not be appropriate to generalize findings on large group of sample.
- The findings of the study will not be applicable on other professionals of special education belonging to other area of disability specialization.
- Similarly findings of study will not be applicable on other professionals of general education belonging to other teacher education courses like yoga, physical

educations, music, dance etc.

- Geographical region has not been considered.

Conclusion

Pre-service general and special educators are prospect teachers who will be teaching students with and without disability and will become professionals later on in future. Hence the attitude of educators is very important factor in teaching and including students with special needs in future also. Attitude towards inclusive education is formed with respect to situations, persons or groups with which individual come in contact while pursuing course and development of his personality. If attitude of beginners (pre-service teachers) is positive then they form the base of further implementation of inclusive education policy and can also act as eminent stakeholder in their profession. If attitude of future teachers is negative or neutral then they will never be able to accept disability and will not be able to prepare others to accept person with disability in society. In spite of having less number of sample this study will be able to create a spark in to the minds of pre-service educators as a result leading to some sort of positive internalization towards inclusive education. The present study reveals the attitude of pre-service special and general educators varying with respect to system, infrastructure, training, resources, readiness or willingness to teach children with special needs, experience, marital status, environmental factors which is accessible to achieve inclusive education within general education system in India. Finally it can be concluded that pre-service special educators are very much concerned about practicing inclusion in education and it is evident also whereas pre service special and general educators too have well coming attitude but it is lesser than to pre-service special educators which is apparent. Therefore it is desired that trainees as prospective teachers who will continue working with their positive mind sets in future also when they will enter into their professional field.

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