



Attitude of Special Education Teachers towards inclusive Education through Distance Mode

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Introduction

Damage in any one of the organs of human beings/children may give rise to problem in receiving education and undertaking of social activities, and then the child treated as special child. The special child can be defined by the accumulation of the resultant effect of Impairment, Disability and Handicap. Their education has taken a forefront in the context of RTE. The key objective of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) which has been further facilitated by the constitutional (86th Amendment) Act, making free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right, for all the children in the age group of 6 to 14 years has given a new thrust to the education of children with special needs, as without their inclusion, the objective of UEE cannot be achieved. Hence, SSA has adopted a “Zero Rejection Policy”. This means that no child having special needs should be deprived of the right to education and taught in an environment, which is best, suited to his/her learning needs.

Recent international and national legislation has cast increasing spotlight on the philosophies of inclusion and inclusive schooling. Grounded in UNESCO’s Education policy, adopted at Salamanca Conference in 1994 (UNESCO, 1994), inclusive education is progressively being adopted as an effectual means by which biased attitudes towards students with disabilities may be reduced.

Inclusive Education through Open & Distance Mode

Education of disabled people has marched a long way; from special to integrated and now, from integrated to inclusive. “Education for all” is the slogan of this millennium. Providing education to the unreached including people with various disabilities is one of the prime goals of all conventional, correspondence and distance education institutions. The educational needs of people with various disabilities can be addressed through open and distance learning system to a large extent. Distance Education is to provide education to anyone, at anytime and anywhere with the use of multiple media and technology. Open educational institutions are moving towards making education individualized and need based for the people with special needs.

Many students with disabilities wish to enroll in primary and secondary education using distance learning, or continue with some form of post-secondary education through distance learning. Students with disabilities may participate in distance learning opportunities for various

reasons. Some students may be unable to leave home or hospital. Others may participate in such programs due increase flexibility regarding scheduling and due to increase control over the environment in which they perform their academic work. Distance learning may be an option which would permit the students to access educational alternatives in order to pursue and academic degree or attain other educational goals.

Need and Importance of the study:

Teachers in inclusive schools are now expected to rise to the challenge of an increasingly diverse classroom (Peterson & Beloin, 1992) adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate varying learning styles (Kortman, 2001), and to be psychologically and practically prepared to take on the dynamic role of inclusive educator (Mullen, 2001). With teachers being viewed as the primary agents in the implementation of the philosophy of inclusive education (Cant, 1994; Haskell, 2000; whiting & Young, 1995), as it is likely that these perceptions mat influence their behavior towards and their acceptance of students with disabilities (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). Further, the attitudes of mainstream educators may have some bearing on the success of inclusive educational programs (Van Reusen, shoho, & Barker, 2001).

This study mainly intends to measure the attitude of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode. Students with disabilities may participate in distance learning opportunities for various reasons. Some students may be made unable to leave home or hospital. Others may participate in such programs due to increase flexibility regarding scheduling and due to increase control over the environment in which they perform their academic work. Distance learning may be an option which would permit the students to access educational alternatives in order to pursue an academic degree or attain other educational goals. Open educational institutions are moving towards making education individualized and need based for the people with special needs. Here, an attempt has been made to explore attitude of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode.

Objectives of the study:

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To study the attitude of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode.
2. To find whether there is any significant difference among male and female special education teachers in their attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.
3. To find whether there is any significant difference among special education teachers with above five years and below five years of teaching experience in their attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.

Hypothesis of the study:

The following are the hypothesis of the study.

1. There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode of male and female special education teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode of special education teachers with above five years and below five years of teaching experience.

Methodology:

The present study was taken to investigate the attitude of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode. Descriptive survey method of study was followed.

Variables of the study:

The following are the variables of the study Main variable: Attitude of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode.

Background variables: Gender and length of experience

Sample of Study:

The study was conducted on a sample of 50 special education teachers of Hubli-Dharwad city. The selection of teachers was done on the basis of random sampling method.

Tools used for collection of Data:

Attitude scale of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode: It was constructed by the investigator. Scale contains 20 positive and negative statements represent inclusive education through distance mode.

Procedure for Data Collection:

Data for the study was collected by administering the Scale of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode to selected sample by the investigator.

Analysis and interpretation of the study:

The analysis of data interpretation and discussion of the results are presented below:
 Objectives 1: To study the attitude of special education teachers towards inclusive education through distance mode.

Analysis related to objective 1 is presented in table no. 1

Table No. 1: Table showing the percentage of special education teachers with respect to favorable and unfavorable attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.

Special Education Teachers	Attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode		Total
	Highly favorable attitude	Less favorable attitude	
Frequently	10	40	50
Percentage	20	80	100

Table no.1 reveals that a majority of special education teachers that is 80% of them having less favorable attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode. It is also seen that only 20% of the special education teachers having highly favorable attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.

No 1: There is no significant difference in attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode of male and female special education teachers.

‘t’ test was calculated to test the hypothesis 1. The results are presented in table no.2.

Table No.2: Summary table of ‘t’ test of attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode of male and female special education teachers.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ Value	df	Level of Significance
Male	18	70.52	7.83			
Female	30	67.76	6.94	1.30	48	NS

NS: Not Significant

Table no.3 shows that the obtained ‘t’ value of 0.018 is less than the tabled ‘t’ value of 1.67 at 0.05 level of significance for degrees of freedom 48. Therefore the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between special education teachers with above five years

and below five years of teaching experience in their attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode is accepted and it is concluded that there is no significance difference between special education teachers with above five years of teaching experience in their attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.

Findings of the study:

It is found that

1. A majority of special education teachers that is 80% of them are found to possess less favorable attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode and only 20% of the special education teachers are found to possess highly favorable attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.
2. No significant difference was found between male and female special education teachers with respect to their attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.
3. No significant difference was found between special education teachers with above five years and below five years of teaching experience in their attitude towards inclusive education through distance mode.

Conclusion:

No one can anticipate everyone's needs, but one can let them know that he or she is willing and prepared to work with him/her for accommodating them to the best of his/her ability. It may take time to learn and adapt the new methods and special techniques needed to educate the challenged under distance mode but it needs to get started somewhere. Responsible bodies should not wait until a disabled person applies to do a course/programme or tries to use a service; rather they should think about what reasonable adjustments could be made beforehand. They should anticipate the requirements of disabled students and should make the necessary adjustments for giving them better accessibility. Therefore, it is needed to spread the information that the doors of distance educational institutions are open to everyone in the community.

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