

Attitude Towards Inclusive Education Among Secondary School Teachers In Aizawl City In Relation To Their Gender And Professional Status

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education has become the talk of the town in the modern educational scenario; and, more and more efforts are being made to upgrade infrastructure so as to be able to house an inclusive environment. Likewise, our mindset and attitudes also play a vital role in sustaining inclusive education as a development that can be taken forward to greater heights. The present study investigates the attitude of secondary school teachers of Aizawl city in relation to their gender and professional (trained vs untrained) status; and, it was noted in that there is no significant difference in both the cases.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Attitude, Gender, Professional Status, Secondary School Teachers*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education is a new approach towards educating children with various disability and learning difficulties and marginalized students along with that of the average functioning children inside the same classroom. It seeks to address the learning needs of all children with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. The central theme of Inclusive Education implies all learners - with or without disabilities, will be able to learn together by giving access to common schools and community educational setting with appropriate network of support services. This is possible only in flexible education system that includes the needs of different types of learners and adapts itself to meet their needs.

It is based on fundamental human rights. Inclusive education means that schools should include all children regardless of the physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. It should include all types of children such as gifted, backward, and mentally retarded, learning disabilities, Socio-economically disadvantaged students etc. It is an approach that fulfils the learning needs of all children, youth and adults who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion from the educational system. Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Karim et al. (July, 2012) in their study “Attitudes of Trained and Untrained Teachers in Disability towards Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Schools” took 30 regular classroom teachers selected randomly from Jorhat and Kamrup districts of Assam – 15 teachers were untrained and 15 were trained in disability. Trained Teachers were those who participated in orientation or awareness programs, seminars, workshops or any training program recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India. The findings of the objective reveal that there are attitudinal differences between untrained and trained teachers towards students who required social and physical accommodation, However, there was no significant attitudinal differences amongst untrained and trained teachers towards students who required academic and behavioural accommodation. Hence, training in disability facilitates positive attitude in teachers towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular classrooms.

Bhatnagar & Das (2014) measured the attitudes of secondary regular school teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in New Delhi. A total of 470 teachers was taken for study and their results revealed that the teachers of Delhi had favorable attitudes for students with special needs. Male young teachers (i.e., less than 40 years of age) with less teaching experience (i.e., less than 10 years) were found to be more in favor of this policy.

Bhakta and Shit (2016) in their investigation titled “Assessment of School Teachers’ Attitude towards Inclusion of Special Educational Need (SEN) children in Regular Classroom” noted that trained teachers have a more favorable attitude towards inclusive education than that of non-trained teachers; and, overall analysis revealed that majority of school-teachers have moderate favourable attitude, only few of them have high level of attitude.

Prasad and Rao (2017) conducted a study on “Attitude of Secondary School teachers towards Inclusive Education in relation to their Locality and Gender” and the study revealed that female and urban Secondary School teachers have more favourable attitude towards Inclusive Education and their counterparts.

Paramanik et al. (2018) conducted a study entitled ‘Attitude of Secondary School teachers towards Inclusive Education’ and their study indicated that the attitude of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education is being neither favorable nor unfavorable that is Moderate. Besides, the study indicates that there is no significant difference basis gender on their attitude towards Inclusive Education. Likewise, the study also noted that there is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards Inclusive Education with respect to their experience.

Fanai et al. (2019) in their investigation titled ‘A Study on the Attitudes of Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Mamit District, Mizoram’ revealed that with reference to the professional qualification, untrained teachers have more favourable attitude towards Inclusive Education than those of trained teachers.

Aferdita and Stankovska (2019) in their investigation titled ‘Attitudes of Teachers towards Inclusive Education’ concluded that the youngest teachers had a more positive attitude towards the provision of adequate support and assistance in educational work than their older colleagues and newly qualified teachers hold more positive attitudes to the teachers with experience in teaching practice. Their studies also revealed that female teachers had slightly more positive attitudes towards inclusion than male teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the significant difference between the attitude of male and female Secondary School teachers towards Inclusive Education.
2. To find out the significant difference between the attitude of trained and untrained Secondary School teachers towards Inclusive Education.

NULL HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female teachers towards Inclusive Education.
2. There is no significant difference between the attitude of trained and untrained secondary school teachers towards inclusive education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, PROCEDURE AND DESIGN

The investigator used survey method of study and performed a descriptive analysis to interpret the scores. After the questionnaire was administered, raw scores were calculated; from the raw scores Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated and ‘t’ test was applied to find out the significant differences, if any. Conclusion was drawn basis the data analysis and interpretation.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The investigators used stratified random sampling to select the sample that constituted of 160 secondary school teachers from 10 Government Schools and 10 Private Secondary Schools within Aizawl City.

TOOL.

For the present study, the investigators used the “Teachers Attitude Scale Towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE-SA)” which was developed and standardized by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr (Mrs) Arti Anand in the year 2011.

FINDINGS.

The present study attempts to find out the level of significant differences with regards to the teachers’ attitude

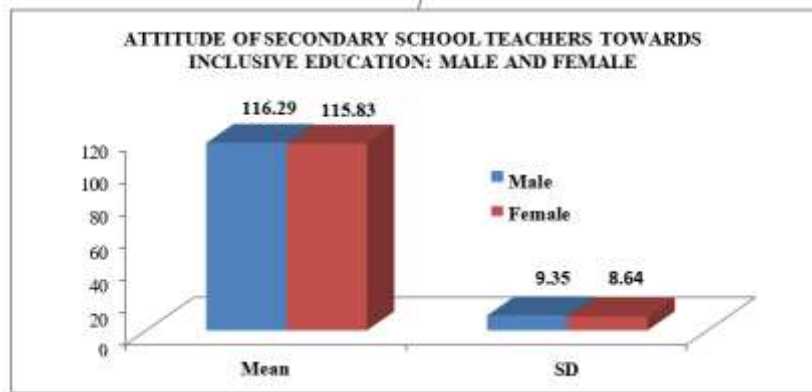
towards Inclusive Education among the Secondary School Teachers in Aizawl City in relation to their gender and professional status (Trained Teachers vs Untrained Teachers). The findings of the present study may be examined as follows:

i) Data analysis and interpretation in relation to the level of attitude towards Inclusive Education between Male and Female Secondary School Teachers of Aizawl City.

Table-1 Comparison of data in relation to the significant difference between attitude of Male and Female Secondary School Teachers in Aizawl City towards Inclusive education

| Gender | No. of Teachers | Mean | Standard Deviation | t-Value | Level of Significance |
|--------|-----------------|--------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Male | 73 | 116.29 | 9.35 | 0.46 | Not Significant |
| Female | 87 | 115.83 | 8.64 | | |

Fig 1: Graphical representation of the mean scores and standard deviation obtained with reference to the male and female teachers' attitude towards Inclusive Education among secondary school teachers in Aizawl City.



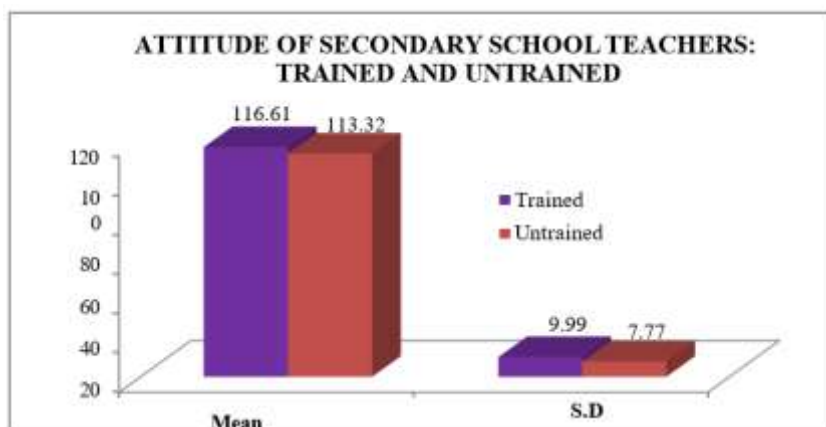
Data analysis on **Table-1** shows that the 't' value obtained is 0.46. The required 't' value to be significant at both 0.05 and 0.01 are 1.97 and 2.60 respectively. However, the 't' value obtained between the mean scores of males and females secondary school teacher with reference to their attitude towards inclusive education is 0.46. The calculated 't' value is lower than the 't' value even at the 0.05 level; therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant differences in the level of attitude towards inclusive education among the teachers of secondary schools in Aizawl City is accepted.

ii) Data Analysis and interpretation on the level of attitude towards Inclusive Education between trained and untrained Secondary School teachers in Aizawl City

Table-2. Significant difference in the Level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education among Trained and Untrained Secondary School teachers in Aizawl City

| Professional Status | No. of Teachers | Mean | Standard Deviation | t-Value | Level of Significance |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Trained | 132 | 116.61 | 9.99 | 1.93 | Not Significant |
| Untrained | 28 | 113.32 | 7.77 | | |

Fig-2: Graphical representation of Mean value and Standard Deviation with regards to the attitude of Trained and Untrained Secondary School Teachers towards Inclusive Education.



The above Table 2 showed that the t-value was found to be 1.93; whereas the required 't' value to be significant at either 0.05 and 0.01 are 1.98 and 2.61 respectively. Therefore the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the attitude of Trained and Untrained Secondary School teachers towards Inclusive Education is accepted. Hence, there is no difference in the level of attitude of Trained and Untrained Secondary School teachers towards Inclusive Education.

DISCUSSION.

From the analysis and interpretation of the data, as seen on Table-1, it is evident that there is no significant difference in the level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education in relation to gender. This finding is consistent with the findings made by Paramanik et al. (2018) and Panda, M. (2024) where they also noted that there is no significant difference in the level of Teacher's Attitude towards Inclusive Education in relation to gender. However, the findings made by Prasad and Rao (2017); and, Aferdita and Stankovska (2019), Kalita, L (n.d.) contradicted the findings of the present study, and both the studies detected a significant difference where female teachers have a higher level of attitude as compared to male teachers. Therefore, it may be said that the findings of different studies on attitude towards inclusive education in relation to gender has a mixed result. The findings of the present study do not lean significantly towards any particular trend (towards either Female Teachers or Male Teachers) in relation to their attitude towards Inclusive Education. Therefore, as per the present findings, it may be understood that the level of attitude of Secondary School Teachers of Aizawl city towards Inclusive Education is not affected by gender. The possible reason could be that, the compassionate and understanding attitude of the teachers towards inclusion might have even been molded unknowingly in a positive manner through the practices prevalent in the Mizo society/culture/family towards the differently abled and marginalized section of the society. This is again complemented by the teacher training course which all aspirant teachers have to pass before they could become a teacher. Therefore, this could be thought of as one hypothetical reason for the lack of a significant difference between male and female teachers of Aizawl City in relation to their attitude towards Inclusive Education.

The findings shown on Table-2 shows that the professional status (Trained VS Untrained) of the Secondary School Teachers of Aizawl City does not create any statistically significant difference in the level of their attitude towards Inclusive Education. The investigators noted a difference but it failed to create a statistically significant difference on the attitude of Trained Secondary School Teachers and Untrained Secondary School Teachers. This finding contradicts the findings made by Karim et al. (2019) where they noted a significant difference in the attitude of Secondary School Teachers in disability towards Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Schools in relation to their Professional Status (Trained VS Untrained). Bhakta and Shit (2016) also noted a significant difference in the attitude of trained and untrained Secondary School Teachers in favor of those who are trained. Though, the finding of the present study also noted a mean difference in the attitude towards Inclusive Education between trained and untrained teachers, with the trained teachers having more of a positive attitude but the difference is not statistically significant. As per the present findings and previous findings, it may be concluded that trained teachers foster a more positive attitude towards Inclusive Education.

CONCLUSION

As per the findings it may be concluded that there is no significant difference in the level of attitude towards Inclusive Education between male and female secondary school teachers in Aizawl City. Though the mean score is in favor of male secondary school teachers, the difference is not wide enough to be significant. Likewise, the difference observed in the level of Attitude towards Inclusive Education, in the present study, with regards to the professional status of the Secondary School Teachers (Trained VS Untrained) is not statistically significant.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. Regular and timely training of teachers and refresher courses on Inclusive Education should be organized so as to foster a positive attitude towards Inclusive Education.
2. Skill training programs and workshops should be conducted where the teachers would learn how to function in an Inclusive Set-up.
3. Awareness programs at the students level also needs to be organized as they are all part of the inclusive set-up of a school.

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