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Assessment of School Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusion of Special Educational Need (SEN) children in Regular Classroom

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Abstract

Today, inclusion of Special Educational Need (SEN) children in regular classroom has become a "global agenda". It acknowledges that every child has right to receive equal educational opportunity irrespective of their abilities, ethnicity, caste, gender, age etc. with other students under a common roof. Basically, in India SEN children are sent to special school. Now efforts are being made to include them in regular school to get equal opportunity of education. To achieve this mission we need to know the attitude of regular school towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom. So, the investigators attempt to assess the attitude of secondary and higher secondary school teachers towards inclusion of Special Educational Need (SEN) children in regular classroom. 120 school teachers were taken as sample from 3 governments, 5 government-sponsored and 3 private schools of two districts of West Bengal e.g. Howrah and Paschim Medinipur. A standardized questionnaire developed by Latif Ahmed had been used to collect responses from the participants. Collected data was analysed with suitable statistical techniques like t-test, ANOVA etc. through MS-Excel 2010. The result indicates that gender, medium of instruction and type of school have no influence on significant difference among the school teachers attitude towards inclusive education. But significant difference is found between trained and non-trained teachers.

Key Words: Assessment, Attitude, Inclusion, SEN children, Regular classroom.

1. Introduction: In the last few decades, there has been a paradigm shift in Indian education system towards inclusive education to promote Education for all. Instead of segregating students with special needs in special classes and schools, the ideology of inclusive education is about fitting schools to meet the needs of all students. Estimates of global populations indicate that more children with disabilities live in developing and third world countries than in industrialized countries (UNESCO, 1996). In 2011, Census of India estimated that about 2.21% of total population had disability of which about 25% were children of school going age.

In 1970, government of India launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) for integrating students with special needs in regular schools. In the year 1986 National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) with UNICEF launched the Project Integrated Education for Disabled Children (PIED). It was an important step towards inclusion of children with special needs (CWSN) in conventional schools. NCERT in the year 2000 has given special importance to inclusive schools for all students without any reference to

pupils with disabilities. This is being supported by the project like Sarva Siksha Aviyan (SSA) taken by the Department of Elementary Education in 2000 (Dutta & Banerjee, 2013). But, in India, enrolment of SEN children in regular classroom is not satisfactory due to either lack of their parents' and teachers' awareness or they are struggling in regular classrooms without the appropriate supportive services. The United Nations (1994) General Assembly recognized that the effectiveness of classroom process in promoting students learning is to a substantial degree influenced by collaboration among teachers, teacher educators, parents and learners. Teachers play a fundamental role in implementing an open and inclusive environment for all children in the classroom (Costello & Boyle, 2013). Successful inclusion of Special Educational Need (SEN) children in mainstreaming demands teacher's positive attitude and competencies to understanding individual differences of students and their attitude.

Therefore, the present study proposes to explore the attitude of school teachers of Howrah and Paschim Medinipur districts towards inclusive education in regular classroom and find out whether gender, training and medium of instruction have any influence on their attitude.

2. Review of related literature:

Monsen and Frederickson (2004) in his study *Teachers attitude towards mainstreaming and their pupils' perceptions of their classroom learning environment*. The study indicates that teachers who have strongly-positive attitudes to inclusion are perceived by the pupils as higher in satisfaction.

Nayak (2008) observed in his study *Attitude of both parents and teachers towards inclusive education* that teachers who look forward to teaching in an inclusive environment and are ready to face the challenges. Result of the study also showed significant difference in the opinions of teachers of normal school and special school.

Costello and Boyle (2013) made an attempt to study *Pre-service Secondary Teachers' Attitudes towards Inclusive Education*. The study revealed that pre-service teachers were positive in their attitudes towards inclusive education.

Kiriungi et al. (2014) on their study "*The Assessment of Public Primary School Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusion of Children with Hearing Impairment in Central Region of Kenya*" observed that Male teachers were more positive to teach learners with hearing impairment than their female counterparts.

Oluremi (2015) made a study, *Attitude of teachers to students with special needs in mainstreamed public secondary schools in south-western Nigeria*. The study showed that 32 (16.8%) teachers had negative attitude to students with special needs, 146 (76.8%) teachers had positive attitude to students with special needs, while 12(6.4%) teachers had neutral attitude to students with special needs.

3. Objectives:

1. To know the level of attitude of school teachers towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.
2. To know the difference between male and female school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.
3. To find out the difference between trained and non-trained school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.
4. To know the difference between Bengali and English medium school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.

5. To find out the difference between government, government-sponsored and private school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.

4. Hypotheses:

- H₀1: There is no significant difference between male and female school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.
 H₀2: There is no significant difference between trained and non-trained school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.
 H₀3: There is no significant difference between Bengali and English medium school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.
 H₀4: There is no significant difference between government, government-sponsored and private school teachers in their attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom.

5. Methodology: The researchers used descriptive research design.

5.1 Sample: The researchers had taken 120 school teachers of two districts by using random sampling technique.

5.2 Tool: Here the researchers had used a Likert type scale (Measuring Attitude towards Inclusive Education) to assess teachers attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom. It was developed by Latif Ahmed (2012). The reliability by Cronbach's Alpha had been found 0.721. It consists of 32 Likert type attitudinal statements to which respondents indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statements using five point scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

5.3 Procedure of Data Analysis: The tool was administered on the sample by visiting different schools researcher personally. Their responses were collected and suitable statistical techniques were used to interpret the results through MS-Excel 2010.

6. Statistical Analysis:

Table No- 1 Various basic Statistics for the Distribution of Attitude Scores

Sl. No.	Statistics	Value
1	Sample Size	120
2	Mean	117.45
3	Median	117.50
4	Mode	108.00
5	Range	51.00
6	1 ST Quartile (Q1)	111.00
7	3 RD Quartile (Q3)	123.00
8	Quartile Deviation	6.00
9	Standard Deviation	9.35
10	Kurtosis	0.65
11	Skewness	-0.35

Statistics calculated for sample are represented in the above table no.1. It is apparent from the table that the mean, the median and the mode are not same. Therefore, the raw scores indicate that the distribution is negatively skewed. A kurtosis of 0.65 indicates that the distribution is platykurtic because the value is more than the value of normal distribution (0.263).

Table No-2 Frequency and Percent Values of Teachers in Different Levels of Attitude

Categories	Groups		Poor	Moderate	High	Total
Overall		Frequency	32	59	29	120
		%	26.66	49.17	24.17	100
Gender	Male	Frequency	14	36	13	63
		%	22.22	57.14	20.64	100
	Female	Frequency	14	27	16	57
		%	24.56	47.36	28.08	100
Training	Trained	Frequency	21	46	16	83
		%	25.30	55.43	19.27	100
	Non-trained	Frequency	6	18	13	37
		%	16.22	48.64	35.14	100
Medium	Bengali	Frequency	22	46	22	90
		%	24.44	51.12	24.44	100
	English	Frequency	5	18	7	30
		%	16.67	60.00	23.33	100
Type of School	Government	Frequency	5	16	12	33
		%	15.15	48.49	36.36	100
	Government Sponsored	Frequency	12	32.00	11	55
		%	21.81	58.19	20.00	100
	Private	Frequency	10	16	6	32
		%	31.25	50	18.75	100

From the above table it is seen that, most of school-teachers have moderate favourable attitude towards inclusion of SEN children in regular classroom. Same results have been found in each groups. It is clear from the fig no.1 that, overall, about 27% (n=32) and 24% (n=29) teachers have poor and high level attitude towards inclusive education respectively.

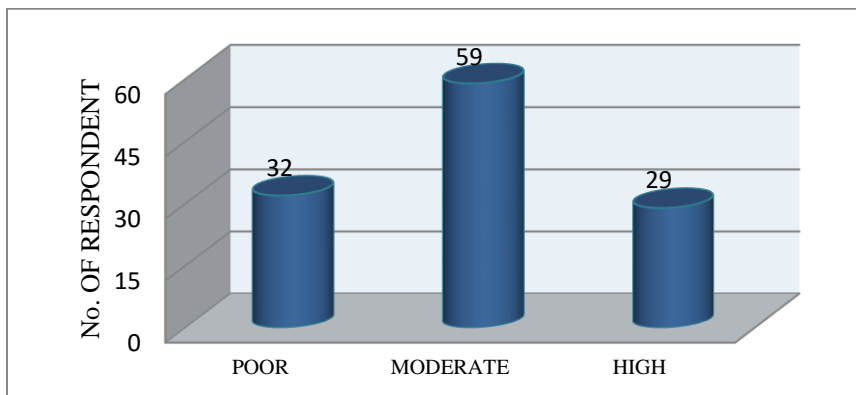


Fig No- 1 Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Attitude Scores

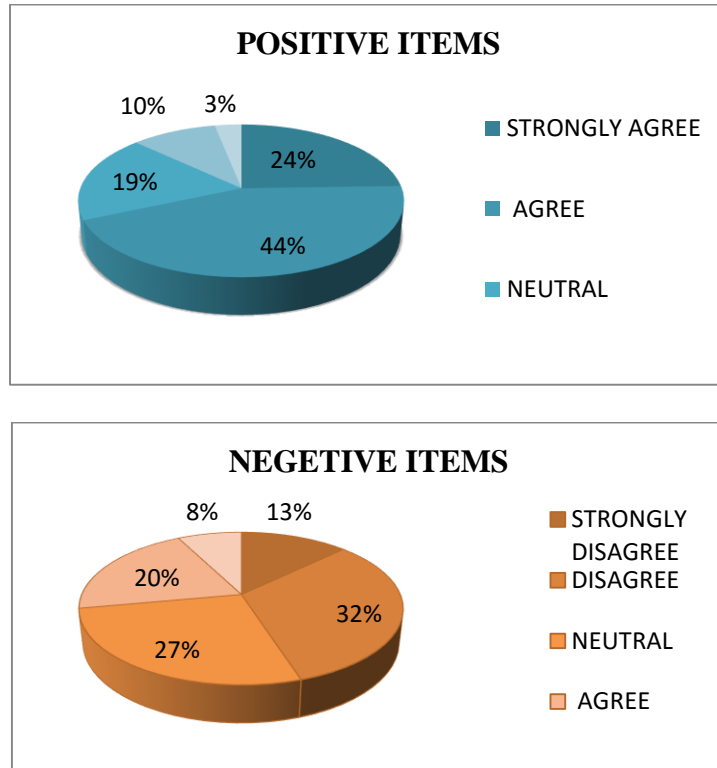


Fig No-2 & 3 Distribution of Respondents on the basis of their Responses in Positive & Negative Items

Table No-3 Difference in the Attitude towards Inclusive Education among School-teachers

Categories	Group	No. of Sample	Mean	df	Obtained t-value
Gender	Male	63	116.9	118	0.63
	Female	57	118.1		
Training	Trained	83	120.2	118	2.22*
	Non-trained	37	116.2		
Medium	Bengali	90	117.2	118	0.50
	English	30	118.2		

*Significant at 0.05 level

From the above table no. 3, it is inferred that the obtained t-values are less than that of the table value 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance except the t-value obtained in terms of the variables Gender and Medium of instruction. It shows that there is significant difference in the attitude of trained and non-trained school teachers towards inclusive education. Hence the framed H₀₂ is rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

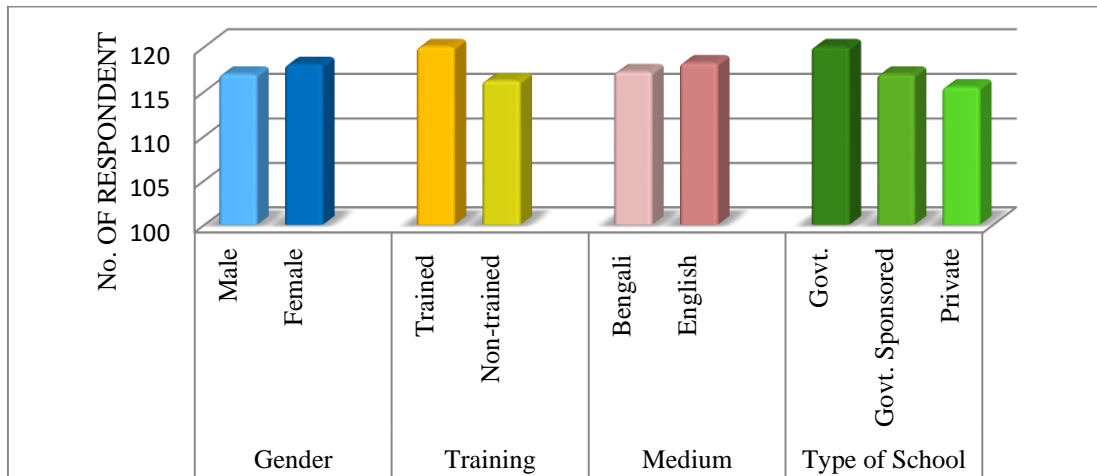


Fig No. 3 Distribution of Mean Scores in Different Categories

Table No-4 Summary of One-way ANOVA Result

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean of Squares (MS)	F ratio
Between Groups	388.4	2	194.2	2.26
Within Groups	10015.2	117	85.6	
Total	10403.7	119		

From the above table no. 4, it is found that the obtained t-values are less than that of the table value 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence the framed H_0 is accepted. It may be concluded that there is no significant difference of attitude among the government, government-sponsored and private school teachers towards inclusive education.

7. Major Findings:

- ✓ Most of school teachers have moderate favourable attitude towards inclusive education.
- ✓ Gender, medium of instruction and type of school have no impact for create significant difference among the teachers attitude towards inclusive education.
- ✓ Teachers-training courses (B.Ed. and D.Ed. /D.El.Ed. etc.) make teachers more conscious about inclusive education.

8. Limitation of the Study: Followings are the delimitations of the present study-

- Population of the present study consists only of secondary and higher secondary school teachers of two districts of West Bengal.
- The study has been conducted on teachers of Bengali and English medium schools.
- All institutions which have been selected for present study are recognized under the W.B.B.S.E., W.B.C.H.S.E. and C.B.S.E. boards.
- Socio-economic status e.g. caste, religion of the respondents is also delimited.

9. Conclusion: Therefore, it can be concluded from the present study that gender, medium of instruction and type of school didn't play any role for create significant difference of school teachers attitude towards inclusion of Special Educational Need (SEN) in regular classroom. But trained

teachers have more favourable attitude towards inclusive education than that of non-trained teachers. We can say that there is a significant influence of teacher-training programme on the attitude of school teachers towards inclusive education. So, it suggests that there is a need of training, orientation course related to inclusive education for non-trained teachers to make their attitude more favourable towards SEN children. Moreover, this requires urgent attention from the Ministry of Education and the Teachers-training University of West Bengal in order to design a comprehensive SEN-oriented pedagogy based curriculum for the training of school teachers. On the other hand, the overall analysis revealed that majority of school-teachers have moderate favourable attitude, only few of them have high level of attitude. This call for change in the curriculum designed at foundation level (B.Ed. / D.El.Ed. courses).

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