

1. INTRODUCTION

A large number of disabled children (now CWSN) are largely out of educational opportunities for primary and secondary schooling. Education is a means to improve human capabilities, to improve their economic status, become aware and develop other opportunities for their overall development. Exclusion results in a staggering loss of freedom and productivity in the labour market. As per census 2011, in India about 2.68 crore persons are disabled which is 2.21% of the total population 65.8 lakhs of disabled persons are in the age group 5-19 years. 61% of children in this group are attending educational institutions. The rate of school attendance is higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas (MOSPI,2016).

With the incorporation of The Right of Children to free and compulsory Education Act,2009 (RTE Act-2009) government is to arrange free and compulsory education for all children aged six to fourteen. Including students with diverse educational needs in mainstream schools is now at the heart of educational policy and planning. The constitution of India guarantees education for all in Article 21A. Despite the legal provision, many children with special needs (CWSN) are unable to attend school. The major breakthrough in education CWSN for implementing right to education, CBSE has made mandatory provision for CWSN. CBSE also identify that teacher play crucial role in an inclusive setup by involving all students in all scholastic and co-scholastic activities as they are the key persons in initiating the process of inclusion (Bhatnagar, N., and Das, A. K. (2013))

1.1 inclusive Education

Inclusive education means all children in the same classrooms, in the same schools. It measures learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded – not only children with disabilities, but speakers of minority languages too. Inclusion also involves restructuring cultures, policies and practices to respond to the diversity of students in their locality, learning and participation of all students vulnerable to exclusionary pressures (i.e. not just students with disabilities), improving schools for staff as well as students overcoming barriers to access and participation, the right of students to be educated in their local community, seeing diversity as a rich resource, not as a problem, mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities and seeing inclusive education as an aspect of an inclusive society. Inclusive education generates and provides acceptance and understanding towards the needs of students and also identifies the differences, diversity and cultural background of the students. A student's characteristic differences are also included, such as the physical, cognitive, literary and social abilities

1.2 Why inclusive education?

Education systems have changed drastically in the last few decades. As educating children with disabilities in regular schools has become an important aspect of the education system in many countries. The idea of mainstreaming SEN in regular school became popular as it was viewed that Special education led to a segregation of students with disabilities from society. This is a violation of students' rights to be educated with their developing peers (Fisher, Roach & Frey, 2002). It was no longer believed that special education provided a better education than regular education which is evident from literature reviewed by Gartner and Lipsky & Gartner (1987)

He found that the academic achievement of students with relatively mild SEN in special and regular education did not differ significantly. Similarly, Kavale&Forness (2000) concluded that the effects of special education on academic as well as social development can be questioned.

1.3 INDIA INITIATIVE FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Sargent Report (1944)

This report recommended that the provision for the disabled should form an essential part of a national system of education and should be administered by the Education Department. It also recommended 10 percent of the budget for basic and high schools had been set aside for the (educational) services of the disabled.

The first education commission in India, popularly known as the Kothari Commission, began the section on handicapped children in the chapter 'Towards Equalization of Educational Opportunities' in its report in a similar tone as reflected in the 1944 post war report. It was evidently in favour of making education of the children with disabilities an integral part of the general education system. The commission suggested educational facilities to be extended to these four categories: The Blind, the Deaf, the Orthopedically Handicapped and the Mentally Retarded. The Education Commission further felt that children would be constrained by two main considerations: lack of teachers and financial resources. Furthermore, the Kothari Commission recommended a Cell, at NCERT, to study in this country and abroad, the work being done in the field of education for the handicapped and prepare material for their teachers.

National Education Policy (1968) The 1968, The National Education Policy followed the commission's recommendations and suggested the expansion of education facilities for physically and mentally handicapped children and the development of 'Integrated Programme' enabling handicapped children to study in regular schools. Eight years later in 1974, a scheme for the integrated education of disabled children for the IEDC was started by the welfare ministry.

National Policy on education, (1986)

The National Policy on Education (NPE) was created in 1986. Continuing in the spirit of the 1974 IEDC, the NPE states that children with "mild" disabilities should be included in mainstream classrooms, whereas children with "moderate to severe" disabilities should be placed in segregated schools. The 1992 Program of Action (POA), created to implement the 1986 NPE, broadens the 1986 definition of who should be included in mainstream schooling, that a child with a disability who can be educated in the general school should not be in the special school. It says that once children with disabilities acquire basic living skills, which would be learned in resource rooms or special schools, that they should be mainstreamed. The POA does not define what constitutes basic living skills. The POA envisioned and expected that schools across India would accept responsibility by sharing their resources with other institutions.

Action Plan for Inclusive Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities (IECYD) 2005

This action plan envisions that all children with a disability will have access to mainstream education. The collaboration between the Rehabilitation Council and the National Council for Teachers' Education, by the government

to facilitate the adequate numbers of teachers trained in inclusive education, along with the proper physical and ideological infrastructure to facilitate inclusion in schools. The main objective is to move from integration towards inclusion, stating, while under the Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children (IEDC) children with disabilities were placed in a regular school without making any infrastructural changes in the school to accommodate and support diverse needs. The revised IECYD, in contrast, aimed to modify the existing physical infrastructures and teaching methodologies to meet the needs of all children, including Children with Special Needs. The different sectors covered in the plan are:

1. Early Childhood Care education
2. Elementary Education
3. Secondary Education
4. Higher and Technical Education and
5. Vocational Training.

The main objectives of Action were:

- (i) To ensure that no child is denied admission in mainstream education.
- (ii) To promote distance education for those who require an individualized pace of learning.
- (iii) To ensure that mainstream and specialist training institutions serving persons with disabilities, in the government or in the non-government sector, facilitate the growth of a cadre of teachers trained to work within the principles of 'Inclusion'.
- (iv) To provide home based learning for persons with severe, multiple and intellectual disability.

(v) To facilitate access of girls with disabilities and disabled students from rural and remote areas to government hostels.

(vi) To ensure that every child would have the right to access an Aanganwadi and school and no child would be turned back on the grounds of disabilities.

(vii) To emphasize job training and job oriented vocational training, and

(viii) To promote understanding of the paradigm shift from charity to development through a measure of awareness, motivation and sensitization campaign.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All)

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is a historic stride towards achieving the long-cherished goal of Universalization of Elementary Education through a time bound integrated approach, in partnership with states. This movement promises to change the face of the elementary education sector of the country, and aims to provide useful and quality elementary education to all children including those with disabilities in the 6-14 age group by the year 2010. It makes a provision up to Rs.1200 per child for integration of disabled children as per specific proposal. The 86th Constitutional Amendment, which has made free and compulsory education a right of all children from 6-14 years of age, has given further thrust to the goal of UEE. The objectives of UEE cannot be achieved without including children with special needs under the ambit of elementary education.

New Education Policy, 2020

The NEP 2020, has moved away from the traditional categorization of the marginalized and, to some extent, has recognized the interconnectedness and multidimensionality of these sites of exclusion. The policy makers have

moved beyond the simplistic understanding of boxing these categories individually and taken crucial inter sectionalist into account by putting them into the broader category of Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). This exhibits an important departure from the previous trends. SEDGs recognised in NEP 2020;

Gender Identities- female and transgender person

Socio-cultural identities – scheduled castes, scheduled tribe, OBCs, Minorities

Geographical identities – students from village, small town and aspirational district

Socioeconomic identities – migrant community, low-income households, children in vulnerable situations, orphans, child beggars in urban areas and urban poor.

Disabilities – 21 recognised categories

1.4 TEACHERS IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Teachers face many disruptions and difficulties while teaching the students with disabilities. Also, the absence of sufficient resources and the lack of Support makes the work of teachers even more difficult. In order to withstand all this, a teacher has to adopt strategies of coping and adjustment. If the ability to cope is low or dependent only on basic and not well-developed coping strategies, this might lead to negative emotional reactions and burnout among teachers (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). Many teachers perceive themselves as being unprepared to address these students' needs. Favourable teacher attitudes towards inclusion of students with disabilities were identified as the strongest predictors of success or failure of inclusion programs (Avramidis& Norwich, 2002). It was also found that favourable

attitudes alone were not sufficient. Teachers also need support from school administrators in the form of additional time for planning, modifying teaching material and teaching aides to ensure implementation of inclusive education successfully. (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The National Education Policy, 2020 has conveyed the structural change in the education system which aims to make India the global knowledge superpower ensuring equity and Inclusion.

The aim of equity and inclusion is now at the heart of the new NEP. In the fields of higher or school education, inclusion involves restructuring the whole system with the aim of ensuring a wide range of educational opportunities; this includes curriculum, pedagogy and recreational opportunities, etc.

After going through literature reviews, it became evident that mainstream teachers' attitude is important, as they implement inclusive pedagogy in actual classroom scenarios. Their perceptions may influence their behaviour towards acceptance of such students (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). Van Reused, Shoho, & Barker, (2000). Attitude of teacher and role of their gender in shaping that attitude had mixed responses. Also, the localised study of research at village level helps us to understand how prevalent is inclusive education at grassroots level.

1.6 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The involvement of school administration, teachers, parents, students and support staff is necessary for successful inclusion. Do teachers get support from them? Do teachers of both female teachers and male teachers equally utilise the school and community support they receive? Are female teachers and male teachers equally acquainted of Teaching methodology, instructional technologies, teaching process, assessment, accommodation in classroom environment, assisting technology and teaching aids available for children with special needs. How does it impact the formation of an attitude towards inclusive education with experiences?

Analysis the Attitude of teachers toward different types of disabilities based on the gender of the teachers. Do male teachers and female teacher attitudes are the same towards the students with different types of disabilities?

1.7 TERMS

(a) Teachers

For the present study, teachers are those who have been appointed by the government of Bihar and perform their jobs as Primary Teacher (PRT), at different government schools run by the ministry of Education, Bihar.

(b) Attitude

“An attitude is an individual’s view point or disposition towards a particular ‘object’, ‘person’, ‘thing’, ‘idea’ etc.” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Attitudes are considered to have three components: cognitive, effective and behavioural (Eagle & Chaiken, 1993). Teachers’ beliefs or knowledge about educating

children with special needs may represent the cognitive component of attitude; teachers' feelings about educating children with special needs in inclusive classrooms reflects an affective component and the teachers' views on how to act with children with special needs refers to the behavioural (conative) component of attitude. Precisely, for the present study, attitude refers to the teachers' viewpoints towards teaching children with special needs in inclusive classrooms which consists three components; feelings, emotions or behaviour towards teaching and learning practices in the realm of education.

1.8 OBJECTIVES

For in-depth study of Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education (Dependent variable) and its relationship with independent variable, gender of the teacher.

The research based on three objectives stated as;

- To study the difference between the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education and the support system from administration and community based on the gender of the teacher.
- To identify views of teachers relative to inclusive education with respect to different types of disability changes with respect to gender of the teacher.
- To study the role of experience and gender of teacher in shaping teacher attitude towards inclusive education.