

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Introduction

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, once said that "things that are alike should be treated alike, whereas things that are unlike should be treated unlike in proportion to their un-alikeness."

The principle of respect for difference and acceptance of disability as part of human diversity and humanity is important, as disability is a feature of the human condition. Criticizing the segregation policies of the Indian government, Baquer and Sharma (1997) have pointed out that: separate special education systems lead to social segregation and isolation of the disabled, thus creating separate worlds for them in adult life. Inclusive education has the potential to lay the foundation of a more inclusive society where being "different" is accepted, respected and valued. The school is the first opportunity to start this desirable and yet difficult process. It is difficult because it is wrought with fears and apprehensions on the part of parents, teachers, and other children. Segregation or isolation is good neither for learners with disabilities nor for general learners without disabilities. Societal requirement is that learners with special needs should be educated along with other learners in inclusive schools, which are cost effective and have sound pedagogical practices (NCERT, 2000).

A quote from the Salamanca Statement:

We the delegates of the World Conference on Special Needs Education...hereby reaffirm our commitment to Education for All, recognizing the necessity and urgency of providing education to children, youth, and adults with SEN (Special Educational Needs) within the regular education system, and further hereby endorse the Framework for Action on SNE (Special Needs Education) that governments and organizations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations (UNESCO, 1994:8).

Though, in India, there is no formal or official definition of inclusion, it does not only mean the placement of students with SEN in regular classrooms. The Draft Scheme on Inclusive Education prepared by the MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource and Development) (2003) uses the following definition:

Inclusive education means all learners, young people—with or without disabilities being able to learn together in ordinary preschool provisions, schools, and community educational settings with appropriate network of support services (Draft of Inclusive Education Scheme, MHRD, 2003). Inclusion means the process of educating children with SEN alongside their peers in mainstream schools.

1.2 Benefits of Inclusion for Students without Special Needs

The benefits of inclusion for students with SEN are as follows:

- Spending the school day alongside classmates who do not have disabilities provides many opportunities for social interaction that would not be available in segregated settings.
- Children with SEN have appropriate models of behaviour. They can observe and imitate the socially acceptable behaviour of the students without SEN.
- Teachers often develop higher standards of performance for students with SEN.
- Both general and special educators in inclusive settings expect appropriate conduct from all students.
- Students with SEN are taught age-appropriate, functional components of academic content, which may never be part of the curriculum in segregated settings (for example, the sciences, social studies, etc.).
- Attending inclusive schools increases the probability that students with SEN will continue to participate in a variety of integrated settings throughout their lives (Ryndak and Alper, 1996).

1.3 Benefits of Inclusion for Students without SEN

The benefits of inclusion for students without SEN are as follows:

- Students without SEN have a variety of opportunities for interacting with peers of their own age who experience SEN, in inclusive school settings.
- They may serve as peer tutors during instructional activities.
- They may play the role of a special “buddy” for the children with SEN during lunch, in the bus, or on the playground.
- Children without SEN can learn a good deal about tolerance, individual difference, and human exceptionality by interacting with those with SEN.
- Children without SEN can learn that students with SEN have many positive characteristics and abilities.
- Children without SEN have the chance to learn about many of the human service professions, such as, special education, speech therapy, physical therapy, recreational therapy, and vocational rehabilitation. For some, exposure to these areas may lead their making a career in any of these areas later on.
- Inclusion offers the opportunity for students without SEN to learn to communicate, and deal effectively with a wide range of individuals. This also prepares them to fully participate in a pluralistic society when they are adults (Ryndak and Alper, 1996).
- Inclusive education ensures that a school responds to the educational needs of children in the neighborhood. It brings a school closer to the community (Jha, 2002).

Negative attitudes constitute one of the major barriers to the development of the potential of children with special needs students.

While inclusive education has been proposed as a means of promoting integration among children with disabilities and their peers, its implementation is still a matter of debate in many African countries (Garuba,2003; Ajuwon, 2008).

Improved societal attitudes towards people with disability are necessary to create an environment for integration, but studies have shown that negative attitudes towards young people with disabilities are a major barrier to inclusive education (Christensen, 1996; Rousso, 2003). Okunrotifa (1988) reported

Worldwide, an estimated 650 million people live with disability and about a quarter of them are younger than 18 years (World Health Organisation, 2011). Children and adolescents with disabilities face inequalities in healthcare, transport, education, employment and other aspects of human endeavour. About 85% of them live in developing countries where they often suffer neglect, stigma and discrimination (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2005). While inclusive education has been proposed as a means of promoting integration among children with disabilities and their peers, its implementation is still a matter of debate.

1.4 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is when all students, regardless of any challenges they may have, are placed in age-appropriate general education classes that are in their own neighbourhood schools to receive high quality instruction, interventions, and supports that enable them to meet success in the core curriculum (Bui, Quirk, Almazan, & Valenti, 2010; Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

The school and classroom operate on the premise that students with disabilities are as fundamentally competent as students without disabilities. Therefore, all students can be full participants in their classrooms and in the local school community. Much of the movement is related to legislation that students receive their education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means they are with their peers without disabilities to the maximum degree possible, with general education the placement of first choice for all students.

Successful inclusive education happens primarily through accepting, understanding, and attending to student differences and diversity, which can include the physical, cognitive, academic, social, and emotional. This is not to say that students *never* need to spend time out of regular education classes, because sometimes they do for a very particular purpose—for instance, for speech or occupational therapy. But the goal is this should be the exception.

The driving principle is to make all students feel welcomed, appropriately challenged, and supported in their efforts. It's also critically important the adults are supported, too. This includes the regular education teacher and the special education teacher as well as all other staff and faculty who are key stakeholders; and that *also* includes parents.

1.5 Attitude

In psychology, **attitude** is a psychological construct, a mental and emotional entity that inheres in, or characterizes a person. They are complex and an acquired state through experiences. It is an individual's predisposed state of mind regarding a value and it is precipitated through a responsive expression toward a person, place, thing, or event (the attitude object) which in turn influences the individual's thought and action. Prominent psychologist Gordon Allport described this latent psychological construct as "the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology." Attitude can be formed from a person's past and present. Key topics in the study of attitudes include attitude strength, attitude change, consumer behavior, and attitude-behavior relationships.

An attitude is an evaluation of an attitude object, ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive.

Factors of attitude:

Psychological

Family

Society

Economic

Attitude component models

An influential model of attitude is the multi component model, where attitudes are evaluations of an object that have affective, behavioural, and cognitive components (the ABC model):

- **Affective component** The affective component of attitudes refer to your feelings or emotions linked to an attitude object. Affective responses influence attitudes in a number of ways. For example, many people are afraid/scared of spiders. So this negative affective response is likely to cause you to have a negative attitude towards spiders.
- **Behavioural component** The behavioural component of attitudes refer to past behaviours or experiences regarding an attitude object. The idea that people might infer their attitudes from their previous actions.
- **Cognitive component** The cognitive component of attitudes refer to the beliefs, thoughts, and attributes that we would associate with an object. Many times a person's attitude might be based on the negative and positive attributes they associate with an object.

1.6 Need and justification of the study

The objectives of this study were to describe the attitudes of students without disability towards their peers with special needs, and to assess the roles played by gender and interpersonal contact in influencing these attitudes.

The majority of children and young people with disabilities live in developing countries where they face inequalities in education and other opportunities. Negative attitudes constitute one of the major barriers to the development of their potential. This study aimed to describe the attitudes of students without disability towards their peers with special needs, and to assess the role that gender and interpersonal contact play in shaping these attitudes.

The present study is to find out that in an inclusive classroom what are the attitudes of students towards their peers with special needs. How much the students are aware towards disabilities also will be the area of the study. The benefits include meaningful friendships, respect, better appreciation and understanding of individual differences, and being prepared for adult life in a diverse society.

Some benefits are social. Students can create lasting friendships that help them navigate relationships later in their lives. In an inclusive classroom, they get to see how different people interact.

There are academic benefits too. In a well-designed inclusive classroom, students meet higher expectations – both from their peers and their teachers. They may also see positive academic role models in their classmates.

Families may also benefit. This is especially true when the children with special needs student is an only child, whose parents may be unable to fit in to the community, unless the student is in an inclusive school.

The aim of the study is to study the attitudes of students towards peers with special needs. Students with disabilities increased in social participation and access to the general curriculum and an improvement in individualized goals. Students without disabilities increased their social and communication skills when working with students with special needs.

1.7 Operational Definition of the key terms

1.7.1 Inclusive

Not excluding any section of society or any party involved in something. Inclusive Education is defined as a learning environment that promotes the full personal,

academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, colour, gender, disability, sexual preference, learning styles and language.

1.7.2 Disability

A disability is defined as a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual or group. The term is used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment, mental illness, and various types of chronic disease.

Disability is conceptualized as being a multidimensional experience for the person involved. There may be effects on organs or body parts and there may be effects on a person's participation in areas of life. Correspondingly, three dimensions of disability are recognized in ICF: body structure and function (and impairment there of), activity (and activity restrictions) and participation (and participation restrictions). The classification also recognizes the role of physical and social environmental factors in affecting disability outcomes.

- Vision
- Hearing
- Thinking
- Learning
- Movement
- Mental health
- Remembering
- Communicating
- Social relationships

1.7.3 Inclusive classroom

An inclusive classroom is a general education classroom in which students with and without disabilities learn together. It is essentially the opposite of a special education classroom, where students with disabilities learn with only other students with disabilities.

1.7.4 Attitude

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. Four major components of attitude are

- (1) Affective: emotions or feelings.
- (2) Cognitive: belief or opinions held consciously.

(3) Conative: inclination for action.

(4) Evaluative: positive or negative response to stimuli.

1.7.5 Relationship

The way in which two or more people or things are connected or the state of being connected.

1.8 Statement of the problem

A STUDY OF ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS THEIR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS PEERS

1.9 Objective of the study

- To study the attitude of students towards their children with special needs peers.

1.10 Delimitations of the study

- 1) Only class VIII to X students of Government Naveen Higher Secondary School Amrai Bag Sewaniya would be the respondents.
- 2) We have only considered classroom environment. There are various other factors which can influence the relationship among students.
- 3) The sample of the study was confined to Bhopal city only.