



# Awareness towards Inclusive Education and Challenges Faced By Teachers in Teaching Children with Special Needs

Shabir Ahmad Para  
M A (GDS) Student,  
IGNOU

**Abstract:** *In the present study, investigator has attempted to found the awareness towards inclusive education among primary school teachers and challenges faced by teachers in teaching children with special needs. Total 400 primary school teachers were selected from different administrative blocks by using random sampling technique. For collecting data, a self constructed tool which contains total 37 items was developed by the investigator. Besides, structured interview schedule was designed for the data collection in accordance with the different objectives of the study. Mean, Standard deviation and t- test had been used for analysis of data. Main findings of this study reveal that the majority of primary school teachers have moderate awareness towards inclusive education. Female primary school teachers have more inclusive education awareness (20.81) than male primary school teachers (Mean = 17.74). Rural primary school teachers have more inclusive education awareness (23.13) than Urban primary school teachers (Mean = 16.34). Majority of primary school teachers (78%) agree of experiencing challenges in teaching children with special needs.*

**Keywords:** *Awareness, Inclusive education and Children with Special Needs.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education means full inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. It involves regular schools and classrooms genuinely adopting and changing to meet the needs of all children as well as celebrating and valuing differences (Loreman and Deppeler, 2005). Article 45 (Directive Principle) and 21A (86th amendment) of the Indian constitution has made inclusive education as a fundamental right for all citizens and this right of children with special educational needs (SEN) to education was also mentioned by Kothari Commission (1964-66) and NPE-1986.

The Education Commission, 1964-66; popularly known as the Kothari Commission, viewed the need for education of the handicapped children not merely on humanitarian grounds but also on the grounds of utility. The Education Commission in its report states that the education of handicapped children has to be organized and proper education generally enables a handicapped child to overcome largely his or her handicap and make him a useful citizen. For ensuring the equal educational opportunities for the handicapped, the NPE-1986 states that the objective should be 'to integrate the mentally and physically handicapped with the general community as equal partners, to prepare them for the normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. It has envisaged the following measures in its Article (4.9) — (a) wherever it is feasible, the education of children with motor handicaps and other mild handicaps will be common to that of others. The revised programme of Action-1992, stressed up on the inclusion of the educational needs of students with disabilities in planning for UEE.

National curriculum Framework, 2005 has emphasized that a policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout our education system and recommended for neighbourhood school policy, building the capacity of teachers to function in an inclusive setting, making the curriculum flexible and make all curriculum related policies inclusive by nature to effectively address issues related to the education of children with SEN (NCF, 2005). Although, the National Curriculum Framework 2005 articulates a new vision of the school curriculum as an inclusive space that extends beyond the conventional textbooks into the realm of teaching – learning processes, but it fails to engage enough the most critical link – the agency of the teacher. (Batra P, 2005).

A number of research studies have suggested that the degree of success of inclusive education can be related to the number of factors (like quality of teacher training, provision of curriculum to children with diverse abilities, adequate resources and the way the schools and classrooms are organized) and the most important being teachers' preparation, attitude and training (Hobbs et al, 1998; Forlin et al, 1996; UNESCO, 1994). But, according to Loreman and Deppeler (2001), Educators are misinformed and confused about inclusion and teachers do not feel fully prepared to cope with the challenges of students with SEN. Findings of the study carried by Mukhopadhyay et al (2009) explored as how teachers are prepared for inclusive education in Botswana and revealed that teachers were not prepared to meet the learning needs of diverse categories of learners with disabilities in inclusive settings.

Similarly a study undertaken by Khan (2011) in Bangladesh found that the secondary school teachers had predominantly positive attitudes towards inclusive education for children with special needs, except for children who had physical disabilities such as visual or hearing impairments. The findings of the study also suggested that the barriers to the success of inclusive



education include insufficient knowledge, lack of training, and lack of teaching materials and secondary school teachers have diverse conceptualizations of inclusive education. Reddy (2006) in its project highlights that the teachers working in regular schools possessed only low level of awareness, attitude and competencies with respect to the concept of different categories of disabilities in children, causes and characteristics of children with disabilities, identification and assessment of children with disabilities, teaching and training methods for children with disabilities and, guidance and counselling for children with disabilities. In both the studies carried out by Sharma et al (2009) in Maharashtra and Gafoor et al (2009) in Kerala explored the attitudes and concerns of pre-service teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. Findings of the studies revealed that although the pre-service teachers held positive attitudes about inclusive education, but were concerned about the lack of resources in their classrooms and also lacked essential knowledge about inclusive education. These research findings highlighted the concern for inclusive education and therefore call for a reform in the teacher preparation programs for pre-service and in-service teachers.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the awareness of primary school teachers towards inclusive education
- To study, if there is any significant difference between mean scores of awareness of primary school teachers towards inclusive education with reference to Gender (Male and Female) and Locality (Urban and Rural).
- To study the challenges experienced by primary school teachers in teaching Children with Special Needs (CWSN) with special reference to Evaluation, Teaching Methods and Teacher Training

## III. METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out by employing the descriptive survey method of research. Generally, in a descriptive research the researcher is concerned with why observed distribution exists but more particularly with what the distribution is. The descriptive survey used a number of data collection methods to compensate for inadequacies of each individual method. It was selected because it was intended to gather information from section respondents and to gather data at a particular point in time, and use it to describe the nature of existing conditions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

### Sample

The sample of the study consists of 400 primary school teachers from different administrative blocks of district Ganderbal of Jammu and Kashmir State. Besides, 50 primary school teachers were selected from these 400 teachers for interviews (structured) which focuses on different challenges faced by primary school teachers in teaching children with special needs with reference to the dimensions like evaluation, teaching methods and teacher training programmes.

### Tools and techniques

The following tools and techniques were used the present study

- A self constructed research tool which contains total 37 items was developed by the investigator himself. The validity and reliability of the tool were 0.68 and 0.73 (Cronbach alpha) respectively.
- Besides, the structured interview schedule was designed for the data collection in accordance with the different objectives of the study.

## IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.1  
Mean and Standard Deviation

Number	Mean	SD
400	19.73	3.86

The table 1.1 highlights that the Mean and the standard deviation for the sample of 400 primary school teachers on 37 test items was found as 19.73 and 3.86 respectively. These figures (M=19.73 & SD=3.86) indicate that primary school teachers have moderate awareness towards inclusive education.

Table 1.2  
Statistics reflecting Teachers awareness towards inclusive education by Gender

Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	Remarks
Male	183	17.74	4.43	7.67	Significant
Female	217	20.81	3.21		

From the above table 1.2, it is clear that the means of male and female primary school teachers are 17.74 and 20.81 and standard deviation are 4.43 and 3.21 respectively. The obtained t-value is 7.67, which is greater than the calculated critical table value at both .05 and .01 levels of significance and therefore, the results are statistically significant. Hence, it can be concluded

from the above calculated statistics that the female primary school teachers have greater awareness towards inclusive education than male primary school teachers.

Table 1.3  
Statistics reflecting Teachers awareness towards inclusive education by Locality

Locality	N	M	SD	t-value	Remarks
Urban	150	16.34	4.73	15.43	Significant
Rural	250	23.13	3.01		

From the above table 1.2, it is clear that the mean scores of urban and rural primary school teachers are 16.34 and 23.13 and standard deviations are 4.73 and 3.01 respectively. The obtained t-value is 15.43, which is greater than the calculated critical table value at both .05 and .01 levels of significance and therefore, the results are statistically significant. Hence, it can be concluded from the above calculated statistics that the rural primary school teachers have greater awareness towards inclusive education than urban primary school teachers.

Table 1.4  
Challenges faced by Teachers in Teaching CWSN

Responses	N	Percentage
Yes	39	78
No	09	18
Unresponsive	02	04
Total	50	100

It is evident from the table above that the 78 percent (39 out of 50) primary school teachers acclaimed of facing challenges while teaching children with special needs (CWSN), 18 percent (09 out of 50) do not agree of facing any challenge in teaching children with special needs and 04 percent (02 out of 50) were remain unresponsive. This shows that the majority of the teachers experiencing (78%) challenges in dealing with children having special needs (CWSN).

Table 1.5  
Challenges faced by Teachers in Teaching CWSN with reference to different Dimensions

Dimensions Responses	Evaluation		Teaching Methods		Teacher Training	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	36	72	41	82	47	94
No	13	26	07	14	03	06
Unresponsive	01	02	02	04	00	00
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100

It is clear from the table 1.5 above that 72 percent teachers face challenges in evaluating learning achievements of children with special needs, 82 percent of primary school teachers face difficulties in using appropriate teaching methods in teaching children with special needs and 94 percent teachers claimed that the existing teacher training programmes do not prepare teachers in order to deal effectively with children having special needs. It is evident that majority of teachers experience difficulties and small portion of teachers do not accept the experience of facing challenges in evaluation, teaching methods and teacher training programmes of children with special needs.

## V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Majority of Primary school teachers have moderate awareness towards inclusive education (Mean = 19.73).
- There exists significant difference between male and female primary school teachers in their inclusive education awareness ( $t = 7.67$ ). The female primary school teachers have more inclusive education awareness (20.81) than male primary school teachers (Mean = 17.74)
- There exists significant difference between Rural and Urban primary school teachers in their inclusive education awareness ( $t = 15.43$ ). The Rural primary school teachers have more inclusive education awareness (23.13) than Urban primary school teachers (Mean = 16.34).
- Majority of primary school teachers (78%) do agree of experiencing challenges in teaching children with special needs and experience difficulties in Evaluation (72%), Teaching Methods (82%) and Training Methods (94%).

## VI. CONCLUSION

In the present study an attempt was taken to identify the level of awareness towards the inclusive education and challenges experienced by primary school teachers in teaching children with special needs and this study reveals that primary school teachers have moderate levels of awareness towards inclusive education and also varies according to gender and locality. This study also reveals that primary school teachers experience challenges in teaching children with special needs. It can be inferred from this study that in order to meet the diverse learning needs of the students, teachers should teach knowledge, skills, understanding in a



way that suit their pupil's need. Maximizing of learning for all children by taking into account the diverse needs should be the mission of every school and teachers should be equipped to help the learners to provide opportunity to learn effectively by building the capacity of teachers to function in an inclusive setting, gear all teacher education programmes (both pre-service and in-service) to developing the pedagogical skills required in inclusive classrooms.

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