

Attitude of Secondary School Headmasters and Teachers of Mizoram towards Favourable Psychological aspect of Inclusive Education.

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Abstract: Inclusive Education (IE) refers to the various method of addressing the learning needs of students with disabilities. During the last five decades, the Government of India had made multiple efforts towards the provision of a comprehensive educational services that would cater to the needs of students with disabilities. This study investigated attitude of secondary school headmaster and teachers of Mizoram towards favourable psychological aspect of Inclusive Education. The study consists of 1686 Headmasters and Teachers of Secondary Schools of Mizoram. Out of these 1,015 were male and 671 were female teachers, working in urban and rural areas of Mizoram. Teachers Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE-SA) developed and standardized by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Mrs. Arti Anand was used to collect data from the subjects. Teachers' gender, age, teaching experiences, location, professional level, management and marital status served as independent variables.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, attitudes of Headmaster, teachers, Mizoram.*

Introduction:

In recent decades, Inclusive Education reevaluated the education of persons with disabilities. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) seek to achieve the motto of 'education for all', which can only be achieved through the inclusion of all students in mainstream educational setting. Conforming to this Statement, the mainstream school with inclusive orientation reduced discrimination and normalize inclusive society. The differences between each student are recognized as normal, putting emphasis on their capabilities and strengths rather than their deficits.

In Mizoram, inclusive education has been implemented and enforced but with questionable success. With the implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001, whose principle is the Universalization of Elementary Education, Mizoram have seen steady progress in the area of Inclusive Education, strenuous efforts were given towards the identification and education of disabled children by introducing zero rejection policy on school admission, appointing coordinators for Inclusive Education, training of Resource teachers and Cluster Volunteers. In 2018, Samagra Shiksha, a new scheme by the Government of India was launched which subsumes SSA, Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE) which was also executed in Mizoram. The institutional reforms are a prerequisite to aptly cater to the needs of students with disabilities. However, the success of Inclusive Education appears to depend largely on the competency and active involvement of teachers. The teacher's mindset, behaviour, gender and their specific teaching practices constitutes a pivotal factor which can enhance or undermine the integration process.

Rationale:

The adoption of positive attitudes greatly affects the psychological aspects of an individual. There are several studies which indicate the hesitancy of teachers towards the teaching of students with special needs in general school settings. Lack of practical teaching experience, insufficient infrastructure and teaching equipments often constitutes as the main reason to their hesitancy. Equally, there are also numerous research studies that present a positive teachers' attitude and their active participation towards teaching students with special needs.

Additionally, numerous studies indicate that teacher's agreement with the principle of integration process and their willingness to teach these students might varies from the implementation of Inclusive Education into practice, especially when the role of the state is dominant. The meager government grant, negative principal or headmaster attitudes towards Inclusive Education can cause a deficiency in personnel and equipment, which as a whole cause uncertainty among teachers. Thus, it is in this light that the present study is undertaken.

Review of related Literature:

Studies conducted abroad:

Hoover (1984) conducted a study and found that, inexperienced teachers tended to have a negative attitude when teaching children of behavioural and emotional disorder in the mainstream level while experienced teachers are more positive in their teaching.

Diebold and Trentham (1987) carried out a study on teachers attitudes toward inclusion in Alabama. They found that regular educators were confident in their skills and were positive towards the mainstreaming programme of teaching students with disabilities.

Mba (1991) investigated teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of hard-of-hearing students in mainstream classroom and found that teachers were hesitant to accept the hard-of-hearing students unless the communication barrier is solved.

Avramidis et., (2000) carried out a study and they found that majority of the teachers felt incompetent to teach disabled students, in addition some of the teachers even regarded them a burden in their general mainstream classroom.

Subban and Sharma (2005) studied teacher attitude toward the implementation of inclusive education in Victoria, Australia. They found that majority of the teachers were positively inclined towards the philosophy of inclusive education. However, they remain wary about the acceptance of disabled students in their educational settings.

Stubbs (2011) investigated teacher approach toward inclusive education and stated that: “Insufficient and irrelevant practical experience were the major reasons as to why teachers were hesitant towards the educating of disabled students in inclusive settings.”

MacFarlane and Woolfson (2013) found in their studies that School Principals play an integral part in setting a conducive inclusive environment within their schools. This further indicated the critical role of Principal to integrate and communicate their goals regarding inclusive practices to their teaching staff.

Tina and Vanja (2017) conducted a study among Slovenian preschool and primary school teachers and found that in-service training preschool teacher had the most favourable attitude towards children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) ($M=3.73$, $SD=0.24$). While preschool teacher who do not participate in in-service training with zero experienced in teaching children with SEN ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.10$) had the least favourable attitudes towards inclusion. Furthermore, among primary school teachers, it was found that those with zero experience and no in-service training for SEN ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.21$) had the most positive attitude towards inclusion while primary school teachers having experienced but were not involved in in-service training for SEN ($M=2.87$, $SD=0.12$) had the lowest result in the study conducted.

Jury et al., (2021) carried out a study on 311 France teachers on their attitudes towards inclusive education and found that majority of them have least positive attitude towards the teaching of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) students as compared to cognitive disorder (CD) and motor impairment (MI) students. Additionally, special education teachers. In comparison to general teachers were less likely to express their distinctive attitude towards the education of students with special educational needs (SEN).

Studies conducted in India:

Parasuram (2006) concluded that among teachers in Mumbai city, their age affects their attitude towards inclusion (p.238), while a one-way ANOVA test yields that gender does not have a significant role towards their motive (p.235).

Sharma et al., (2009) conducted a study on 480 pre-service teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education programme. They found that students attitudes towards inclusion tended to be negative; which emerge from the attitudes and beliefs of their teacher educators within the programme.

Nisha and Ajay (2013) carried out a study on 470 secondary school teachers from New Delhi on their attitudes towards inclusive education. They found that teachers especially male, younger teachers (less than 40years) were relatively positive towards the inclusive of students with special needs. In addition, teachers who had their per-service teacher education programme and who had close contact with disabled person were also having positive towards inclusive education.

Subhajit and Tarini (2019) concluded that majority of the teachers i.e., 70% in quantity had unfavourable attitude towards inclusion. In addition, significant difference was found on the basis of their teaching experience at 0.05 level of significance. Teachers with <10 years of teaching experiences were having favourable attitude as compared to those teachers having ≥ 10 years of teaching experiences. However, gender does not have a significant influence towards their attitudes.

Objectives:

1. To find out the Attitudes of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Gender and Location.
2. To explore the Attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Teaching Experience.
3. To compare the attitude between Young, Middle and Old Age group Headmasters and Teachers attitudes towards Favourable Psychological aspect of Inclusive Education.
4. To find out the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to their Educational and Professional level.
5. To explore the Attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to their type of Management and Marital Status.

Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant difference between the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Gender and Location.
2. There is no significant difference between the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Teaching Experience.
3. There is no significant difference between the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to their age level.
4. There is no significant difference between the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to their Educational and Professional level.
5. There is no significant difference between the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to their type of Management and marital status.

Research Design:

The present study falls within the category of descriptive research, and since it is scaled down into smaller sample with a specific population, it can also be termed as descriptive sample survey research.

Population of the Study:

Overall population of Headmasters & Teachers of Secondary School in Mizoram.

Sample of the Study:

The sample of the present study consists of 1686 Headmasters and Teachers of Secondary Schools of Mizoram. Out of these 1,015 were male and 671 were female.

Tools used:

In the present study, Teachers Attitude Scale towards Inclusive Education (TASTIE-SA) developed and standardized by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Mrs. Arti Anand was used to collect data from the subjects.

Procedure of the Data Collection:

The investigator took permission from the Director of School Education to collect data from all the Secondary Schools of Mizoram. Data were collected under conducive environment.

Data Analysis:

To compare the different variables, the investigator used SPSS 16.00 version to calculate the 't'-value.

GENDER & LOCATION-WISE ANALYSIS:

Table 1. Attitudes of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Gender and Location

Categories & Number		Comparison	N	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Sig. level
Gender	Male	Male vs Female	1015	11.64	3.03	0.95	0.14	3.40	0.01
	Female		671	12.15	2.93	0.11			
Location	Rural	Rural vs Urban	803	11.51	3.11	0.11	0.14	4.41	0.01
	Urban		883	12.15	2.86	0.09			

A cursory glance at the data vide Table 1, indicates that there are 1015 Male and 671 Female Headmasters and Teachers and 803 Rural and 883 Urban Headmasters and Teachers among the selected Secondary Schools in Mizoram. The 't' value for comparison of Male vs Female Headmasters and Teachers attitude towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural related aspect of Inclusive Education is found to be 3.40 which is significant and that of Rural and Urban Headmasters and Teachers is also found to be significant at 0.01 level. Also, Female and Urban Headmasters and Teachers have higher Favourable scores than their respective counterparts, the Male and Rural Headmasters and Teachers. This implies that Gender Location have influence on the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards the aforementioned aspect of Inclusive Education.

Hence, the relevant null hypothesis is rejected in both the case of comparison between rural vs Urban Headmasters and Teachers and Male vs Female Headmasters and Teachers.

2 TEACHING EXPERIENCE-WISE ANALYSIS:

.2 Attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Teaching Experience

Categories & Numbers	Teaching Experience	Comparison	N	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Sig. level
Junior 812	1-10 years	Junior vs Intermediate	812	12.03	2.94	0.10	0.19	0.95	NS
			335	11.85	2.89	0.15			
Intermediate 335	11-15 years	Junior vs Senior	812	12.03	2.94	0.10	0.16	2.72	0.01
			539	11.57	3.15	0.13			
Senior 539	16 years above	Intermediate vs Senior	335	11.85	2.89	0.15	0.21	1.30	NS
			539	11.57	3.15	0.13			

Analysis of the data vide Table.2, shows that there are 812 Junior Headmasters and Teachers of teaching experience between 1-10 years, 335 Intermediate Headmasters and Teachers whose teaching experience are between 11-15 years and also, 539 Senior Headmasters and Teachers of more than 16 years teaching experience. The table also shows that Junior Headmasters and Teachers possess more Favourable attitudes than Intermediate and Senior Headmasters and Teachers. The 't' values for comparison between the mean scores of Intermediate vs Senior and Junior vs Intermediate Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural related aspect of Inclusive Education are found statistically insignificant except Junior vs Senior, significant at 0.01 level. This means that teaching experience in relation to Intermediate vs Senior and junior vs Intermediate Headmasters and Teachers have no influence, while junior vs Senior has Favourable influence on their attitude towards the aforesaid aspect of Inclusive Education.

Hence, the relevant null hypothesis is accepted in relation to the comparison between junior vs Intermediate and Intermediate vs senior but rejected in relation to the comparison between junior vs Senior Headmasters and Teachers.

3. COMPARISON BETWEEN YOUNG, MIDDLE AND OLD AGE GROUPS:

Table3 Age wise analysis of Headmasters and Teachers attitudes towards Favourable Psychological aspect of Inclusive Education

Categories & Numbers	Age	Comparison	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Sig. level
Young 876	21-40 years	Young vs Old	11.93	3.02	0.10	0.21	1.10	NS
			11.47	2.98	0.19			
Middle 554	41-50 years	Young vs Middle	11.93	3.02	0.10	0.16	0.20	NS
			11.89	2.97	0.12			
Old 256	51 years above	Middle vs Old	11.89	2.97	0.12	0.22	1.86	NS
			11.47	2.98	0.19			

Examination of the data vide Table 3, reveals that there are 876 Young Headmasters and Teachers between the age group of 21-40 years, 554 Middle Headmasters and Teachers in the age group of 41-50 years of age and 256 Old (above 51 years) Headmasters and Teachers among the selected Secondary Schools in Mizoram. The 't' values for comparison between Young vs Old, Young vs Middle and Middle vs Old are found out to be 1.10, 0.20 and 1.86 respectively. The existence of insignificant difference between Young vs Old, Young vs Middle and Middle vs Old leads the investigator to conclude that these three groups have no influence on the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education.

Hence, the relevant null hypothesis is accepted in relation to the comparison between Young vs Old, Young vs Middle and Middle vs Old.

4. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND PROFESSIONAL STATUS -WISE ANALYSIS:

Table.4 Attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Educational Level and Professional Status

Qualification	Categories & Numbers	Comparison	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Sig. level
Academic	Graduate : 992	Graduate Vs Post Graduate	11.78	2.91	0.92	0.14	0.92	NS
	Post Graduate : 694		11.92	3.13	0.11			
Professional	Trained : 1036	Trained Vs Untrained	11.74	3.14	0.09	0.15	1.80	NS
	Untrained : 650		12.01	2.75	0.10			

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the Table can be that are

992 Graduate and 694 Post Graduate Headmasters and Teachers whereas there are also 1036 Trained and 650 Untrained Headmasters and Teachers among the selected Secondary Schools in Mizoram. The 't' values for comparison of Graduate vs Post

Graduate and Trained vs Untrained Headmasters and Teachers are both found to be statistically not significant. The existence of insignificant difference hints the investigator to conclude that Educational Level and Professional Qualification have no influence on the attitude of both Academic and Professional Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural related aspect of Inclusive Education.

Hence, the relevant null hypothesis is accepted in relation to the comparison between Graduate vs Post graduate and trained vs Untrained Headmasters and Teachers.

5 MANAGEMENT AND MARITAL STATUS -WISE ANALYSIS:

Table.5 Attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural aspect of Inclusive Education in relation to Management and Marital Status

Categories		N	Comparision	Mean	SD	SEM	SED	t-value	Sig. level
Management	Govt.	1143	Government	11.64	3.13	0.09	0.15	4.08	0.01
	Private	543	Vs Private	12.28	2.66	0.11			
Marital Status	Married	1153	Married Vs	11.83	3.02	0.08	0.15	0.36	NS
	Unmarried	533	Unmarried	11.88	2.96	0.12			

A brief glimpse of the statistics vide.5, shows that there are 1143 Government and 543 Private, 1153 Married and 533 Unmarried Headmaster and Teachers among the selected Secondary Schools in Mizoram. The 't' values for the comparison of the significant difference between Government vs Private and Married vs Unmarried Headmasters and Teachers attitude towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural related aspect of Inclusive Education are found to be 4.08 and 0.35, in which the former is significant at 0.05 and the latter is insignificant. The existence of significant difference between Government vs Private Headmaster and Teachers indicates that Management and has positive influence on their attitude towards the said aspect of Inclusive Education. Also, the Private Headmasters and Teachers have higher score in Favourable than the Government.

Hence, the relevant null hypothesis is rejected in relation to the comparison between Headmasters and Teachers based on their Institutional Management but rejected in the case based on Marital Status.

Discussion:

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the attitude of secondary school headmaster and teachers towards favourable aspects of inclusive education. Additionally, the gender, age, locality, teaching experience, professional level, marital status and management process were examined as predictors of their expressing attitudes. According to the statistical analysis, teachers participating in the study expressed marginally positive opinion towards favourable psychological aspects of inclusive education where there is no significant relationship between the various independent variables.

However, the comparison of Male vs Female Headmasters and Teachers attitude towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural related aspect of Inclusive Education is found to be 3.40 which is significant and that of Rural and Urban Headmasters and Teachers is also found to be significant at 0.01 level. Also, Female and Urban Headmasters and Teachers have higher Favourable scores then their respective counterparts, the Male and Rural Headmasters and Teachers. This implies that Gender and Location have influence on the attitude of Headmasters and Teachers towards the aforementioned aspect of Inclusive Education. Additionally, teaching experience in relation to junior vs Senior has Favourable influence on their attitude towards the aforesaid aspect of Inclusive Education. Likewise, for the comparison of the significant difference between Government vs Private and Married vs Unmarried Headmasters and Teachers attitude towards Favourable Psychological / Behavioural related aspect of Inclusive Education are found to be 4.08 and 0.35, in which the former is significant at 0.05 and the latter is insignificant. The existence of significant difference between Government vs Private Headmaster and Teachers indicates that Management and has positive influence on their attitude towards the said aspect of Inclusive Education. Also, the Private Headmasters and Teachers have higher score in Favourable than the Government.

Conclusion:

From the present study, we can conclude that attitudes of secondary school headmaster and teachers toward favourable psychological aspects of Inclusive Education differs in accordance to the various selected independent variables. Firstly, gender and location have a significant influence on the attitudes of secondary school headmaster and teachers. Secondly, teaching experience plays a major role towards the aforementioned aspects of Inclusive Education. 812 Junior Teachers having 1-10 years of teaching experience are having significant difference with 539 Senior Teachers having 16 and more years of teaching experience. This indicates that, teaching experience plays a major role towards the implementation of favourable aspects of Inclusive education. Thirdly, in terms of management, private and government school have a significant difference towards the aforementioned aspects of Inclusive Education. The reason as to these differences may indicate a meager grants, insufficient personnel and teaching equipments.

In conclusion, the finding of even ‘marginally positive’ attitudes of secondary school headmaster and teachers towards favourable psychological aspects of Inclusive Education is an important starting point, which gives hope and optimism for Inclusive Education despite all the adversity and incompetency’s of the education system in recent years. Further research could focus on ways to improve the differences faced by the aforementioned variables to ensure successful implementation of Inclusive Education.

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