

Perception of Students Towards Inclusion of Special Needs Children in Regular Classroom

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Abstract

The current research paper examines perception of students towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom. In the present study, descriptive survey method was used for data collection. A sample of one hundred and thirty nine middle secondary school students was drawn from four middle secondary schools in Thimphu, Bhutan through convenience sampling technique. Student Attitude to Inclusion (SATI) scale adapted from PATI scale by Palmer et.al (2001) was used by the investigator to measure perception of students towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom. The objective and hypothesis of the study have been tested by using frequencies and percentages. Results revealed that majority of students' have favorable perception towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom.

Keywords: *Perception, Inclusion, Inclusive Education, Students, Special Needs Children and Regular Classroom.*

Introduction

Equal accessibility to education is a fundamental right of every individual irrespective of gender, caste, creed, religion, disadvantaged groups, minorities, below poverty line, ethnic groups, those with and without special educational needs, the marginalized or vulnerable to exclusion in the regular school setting.

Inclusive education is the learning environment which upholds not only personal fulfillment but also help develop professional and academic development of each individual despite their differences in culture, religion, sexual preferences, class, creed, caste, languages and learning styles (National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET),1997).

Bhutan was signatory to the Salamanca statement, so the concept of Inclusion as mentioned was welcomed and National Policy on SEN (final draft) was formulated. The policy statements indicate that IE has gained its worth significantly in the system of Bhutanese education since then.

Currently, Bhutan has two separate schools that cater only to children with disabilities. However, there are 14 general mainstream schools that have an immersion of Special Education Needs Programme. The list is expected to rise to 26 schools by the end of the 12th Five –Year –Plan as the Ministry Of Education has plans to have 12 more mainstream schools that implement Special Education Needs programme. The ministry aims to have at least one school in each Dzongkhag that immerses Special Education Need Program. The enrollment would depend upon the types of

disability of the children. A plan to provide basic SEN training to teachers working in those schools is also in place.

Reviews of Related Literature

Vaughn and Klinger (1998) studied perceptions of students' towards inclusion and resource room settings. Results of the studies focused on perceptions of students with learning disabilities towards their educational settings were analyzed. Interviews and surveys of students with learning disabilities were conducted. Findings revealed that (1) specialized instruction outside the general education classroom preferred by majority of students with learning disabilities; (2) students liked the resource room; (3) students feels that the work is easier in resource room, (4) students enjoyed their time in resource room; (5) students get the help for their daily work in resource room; (6) students feels that they get good opportunity for making friends in inclusion classroom; (7) in the general education classroom, majority of students valued the support provided by the special education teacher without getting the information about their teacher i.e. he or she is special education teacher or general teacher; and (8) majority of the students were confused about their placement in special education, person responsible for taking decision for providing required services for special students in the resource room or general education classroom.

McGregor (2003) examined middle schools students' attitude towards their disability peers as a trial in inclusive program which was set up in regional Western Australia. The analyzed data trend under discussion noticed the increased of level of acceptance by the nondisabled peers towards the inclusion in mainstream school.

Vignes et al. (2009) explored on students associating factors and attitude towards disability peers of students in grade seven from twelve Toulouse school areas. The result revealed that most girls possessed positive attitude in relation having a quality of life, more awareness from various media, parents, and, and having maximum acquaintances with a disability peers.

Olaleya et al. (2012) conducted the study on middle secondary school students' attitude towards the disability peers in Peri-urban area in South Eastern Nigeria regarding inclusion. The result proved that students held positive attitudes and it was found to be associated with having disable relatives in a family or either acquaintances with disable friends.

Mantzikos and Kofidou (2017) reviewed the literature related to students' and teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. Investigators concluded that teachers are divided into two groups on the basis of their opinion i.e. one group of teachers have favorable attitude towards the inclusion of disabled people in general classroom, whereas other group of teachers have unfavorable attitude towards the inclusion of disabled people in general classroom. Result of research also indicates that the attitude of children have direct and positive association with the disabilities.

Statement of Problem

Perception of Students towards Inclusion of Special Needs Children in Regular Classroom

Objective

To study perception of students towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom.

Hypothesis

H₀: Students' have favorable perception towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom.

Design of the Study

In the present study, descriptive survey method was used to collect the data. The sample was collected from one hundred and thirty nine middle secondary students which were drawn from four middle secondary schools of Thimphu, Bhutan through convenience sampling technique.

Tool

Student Attitude to Inclusion (SATI) scale adapted from PATI scale by Palmer et.al (2001) was used by the investigator to measure perception of students towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom.

Delimitation

Present study was delimited to four middle secondary schools of Thimphu, Bhutan.

Statistical Technique

The objective and hypothesis of the study have been tested by using frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of data, result and interpretation of findings has been done keeping in view the objectives and hypothesis of the study.

Result Pertaining to Perception of Students towards Inclusion of Special Needs Children in Regular Classroom

The objective was to study perception of students towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom. After administrating the Students Attitude to Inclusion Scale; frequencies and percentages of the students have been presented in table 1.

H₀: Students' have favorable perception towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom.

TABLE 1
Number and Percentages of Students' Perception towards Inclusion of Special Needs Children in Regular Classroom

Sr. No.	Statements	Options	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
1	The more time spend by special need children in a normal classroom improves quality of special need children education.	Disagree	17	12.33
		Agree	122	87.77
2	The more time spend by special need children in a regular classroom increases chances that nondisabled students mistreatment them.	Disagree	56	40.29
		Agree	83	59.71
3	The more time spend by the special need children spend in a regular classroom decreases the feeling lonely among special need students.	Disagree	70	50.36
		Agree	69	49.64
4	The enrollment of students with severe disabilities in the regular education classroom overruled any possible problems due to this practice.	Disagree	46	33.1
		Agree	93	66.9
5	Most of the lessons and materials in a regular	Disagree	37	26.62

	classroom can be easily modified to meet the need of the special children.	Agree	102	73.38
6	There is no extra help to special need children if they spend more time in a normal classroom.	Disagree	51	36.69
		Agree	88	63.31
7	There are more chances of friendship between nondisabled students and special need children, if they were to spend more time in a regular classroom.	Disagree	35	25.18
		Agree	104	74.82
8	Presence of students with severe disabilities in regular class enriched the quality of the regular students' education.	Disagree	37	26.62
		Agree	102	73.38
9	If Special need children were to spend much of the time in a regular classroom then they would not getting all the essential services of special education classroom.	Disagree	39	28.05
		Agree	100	71.95
10	More meaningful opportunities for special need children to learn are there in regular education classroom as compared to special education classroom.	Disagree	35	24.45
		Agree	104	75.55
11	Nondisabled students will give kindly treatment to special need children if they spend more time in a regular classroom.	Disagree	26	18.71
		Agree	113	81.29

Interpretation

Following observations have been made from table 1:

- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 122 (87.77%) nondisabled students are of the view that the more duration the children with disability spend in a normal classroom there is improvement in the quality of education provided by the teacher. It is concluded that the normal students feels that quality of the special need students' education is improved when the special need students spend more time in regular classroom.
- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 83 (50.71%) nondisabled students agree to the statement that more the special need children spend time in the regular classroom there is more chances of mistreatment by nondisabled children, whereas 56 (40.29%) nondisabled students feel that special need children will be treated good if they spend more in the regular classroom with normal children. It is concluded that majority (50.71%) of the normal students are of the opinion that special need children will be treated badly by the nondisabled children in the regular classroom.
- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 70 (50.36%) nondisabled students are of the view that the more time spend by children with special need in the regular classroom results that they would not feel left out or lonely, whereas 69 (49.64%) nondisabled students feel that children with special need will feel alone or isolated if they have to spend more time in the regular classroom. It is concluded that majority (50.36%) of the nondisabled students are of the opinion that special need children do not feel left out or lonely when they spend more time with normal students in the regular classroom.

- 66.9% nondisabled students agrees that when severe disability child is enrolled in the regular classroom, it benefits regular student's education and there are more advantages although few problems do exist. On the other hand, 33.1% nondisabled students still feel that problem outweigh the advantages when the severe disabled child is enrolled in the regular classroom. Majority of the students (66.9%) holds the strong view that there exist significant advantages than problems when children with disabilities are enrolled in the regular classroom.
- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 102 (73.38%) nondisabled students agree that teachers are able to modify the lesson and arrange materials according to the needs and requirement of the special need children in the regular classroom.
- 63.31% nondisabled students are of the view that the special need children do not get extra time when spend more time in the regular classroom and 36.69% nondisabled students feel that special need children get extra time when spend more time in regular classroom. It is concluded that most (63.31%) nondisabled students are of the opinion that special children do not get extra time in the regular classroom.
- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 104 (74.82%) nondisabled students strongly agree that special children make lots of friends with normal students if they spend more time in regular in the regular classroom.
- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 102(73.38%) nondisabled students have the opinion that the quality of education of regular students is being improved after the inclusion of children with severe disabilities in the regular classroom.
- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 100 (75.55%) nondisabled students are of the view that special children do not get required special services if they spend more time in regular education classroom than what is provided in special education classrooms.
- The majority nondisabled students i.e. 104 (75.55%) believe that there is more learning opportunities for them in the regular education class as compare to special education class.
- Out of 139 nondisabled students, 113 (81.29%) nondisabled students hold the strong believe that special children get favorable treatment from the nondisabled students when they spend more time with the normal students in regular class.

At last, it can be concluded that majority of students' have favorable perception towards inclusion of children with special needs in regular classroom.

Hence the hypothesis stated that students' have favorable perception towards inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom, is accepted.

Conclusion

Students are of the view that special need children get quality education; mistreated by nondisabled; may feel isolated and cut off from rest of the students in inclusive classroom; positive benefits may compensate issues and challenges in mainstream classroom; possibility of modifying the materials and lesson to cater the requirement of the special educational need student; may not get desired help they need: able to make more friends with nondisabled peers; education of normal students is enhanced when children having severe disabilities do participate in the regular classroom; special services may be unavailable in mainstream classroom as compared to special education classroom; special need children get momentous platform to learn; and kindly treated by the nondisabled students in inclusive classrooms.

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