Attitude of Teachers towards Inclusive Education In Relation To Their Perceived Self-Efficacy to Teach In Inclusive Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The term inclusion in education invites all children irrespective of their differential needs together and promotes to accomplish their educational needs in same teaching-learning environment by the same teachers, which requires to reform and restructures the general schools policies in the way so that school with diversities would become most powerful learning environment for the children in various ways. However, inclusive environment is a new challenging work environment for the general school teachers; which is not an easy task to be achieved especially in developing countries where the numbers of children are still struggling for the needs of hardship. Moreover, general school teachers required to be equipped with new innovative skills and to be more competent with inclusive strategies then only they will be able to take initiative or put their efforts to implement it in an effective way. Primarily, success of inclusive environment depends on the positive attitudinal response of the school teachers. However, study reveals that still teachers at grass root level are not positive and facing difficulties in implementing inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Attitude, Self-Efficacy, Primary School Teachers.

INTRODUCTION:

The Inclusive education is that all the students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in regular classrooms and age-appropriate and also supported to learn the activities with other students. Likewise, to contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. Inclusive education is concerning to develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate collectively. We all know that our neighbourhood schools are the heart of our communities. India is having the second largest education system in the world, with 200 million children of age group between 6 and 14, around 25 million of whom are out of school (World Bank, 2004). However, comportment in mind that actually 35% of children are registered at birth (UNICEF, 2004), others estimate around 35-80 million children are out-of-school. So, here, role of the teacher is very important in such inclusive settings. Teacher should be capable enough to maintain the quality teaching learning processes in the inclusive classroom. Forlin (2001), claims that, serving children with learning disabilities in a regular classroom requires a major shift in roles and responsibilities of educators, involvement and also special support services. Teachers with a high wisdom of inclusive teaching efficacy tend to create healthy classroom environment and focus on diverse educational needs of the students. According to Weisel & Dror (2006), self-efficacy was the only most critical factor which effected attitudes in Israeli teachers. One of the prominent features of inclusive setting is the attitude of the teacher towards the students in inclusive setting classrooms. Avramidis and Norwich (2002), show that teacher's attitudes towards inclusive settings are very important variables in the execution of successful inclusive education practices. A number of studies suggest a positive association between teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy for inclusive practices (Malinen,Väisänen, & Savolainen, 2012; Meijer & Foster, 1988; Savolainen et al., 2012; Weisel & Dror, 2006). A recent review of 26 studies has been showed that the majority of teachers hold neutral or negative attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with disabilities in regular primary education (Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011)

Recently the global trend of educational inclusion and the provision of education for all has seen children from different social backgrounds being increasingly integrated into general education systems worldwide (UNESCO, 2009). Inclusive education is considered as somewhat of a reform act that aims to eliminate all barriers to the integration of every child into the general education system, regardless of their differences and social backgrounds. The inclusion concept reflects an understanding that accepts, values, and respects variety and differentiation among all people and aims to improve school systems for every individual

(Ainscow, 2005). Despite the long history of inclusive education practices in developed countries, only in the last 25 years have integration practices caught the attention of researchers and parents in Turkey. The regulations and implementations regarding inclusive education in Turkey were first practiced in 1983, though many practicable difficulties were encountered (Sucuoglu, 2004). Since Special Education Regulation 573 came into effect in Turkey and several other countries, inclusive education practices have gained momentum (Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE), 1997). Even though there has been a shift from the use of the term ―integration‖ to use of the term ―inclusion‖ globally, in Turkey, the term ―mainstreaming education‖ has been used in its place. Turkey is a large country with a population of 80 million people; individuals under the age of 18 constitute 40% of the total population. According to data from 2017, the number of school-age individuals in Turkey is nearly 18 million (MoNE, 2017). According to the MoNE's 2017 data, only 25% of school-age disabled students pursue their education. The number of inclusive students attending primary and secondary school is about 300,000 (MoNE, 2017). Despite all the legal regulations, it is obvious that, based on observations made by researchers in research studies, it is obvious that inclusion has not been widely accepted in Turkey, and that it has not provided the anticipated benefits. The reason behind this may be attributed to the fact that the success of inclusive education is based on many different factors. It may be claimed that, of these, the most important is that of teachers. Since it has been realized that the most basic factor that affects success regarding the inclusion of students with special needs is a positive attitude from teachers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Parasuram, 2006). Existing research has revealed that the attitudes and expectations of teachers have a direct effect on students' learning and development (McLeskey & Waldron, 2006; Forlin, Cedillo, & Romero-Contreras, 2010). Additionally, researchers have reported that the disabled teachers' positive attitudes and beliefs towards students in the inclusion environments is related to considerably improved inclusion practices and better student output (Berry, 2010, Blecker & Boakes, 2010, Darling-Hammond, 2006; Rakap, & Kaczmarek, 2010; Rakap, Parlak-Rakap, & Aydin, 2016). It is believed that the teachers who have a positive attitude towards inclusion are able to use educational strategies in general education classes more effectively and they feel sufficiently competent in terms of meeting the requirements of students with special needs and adapting the curriculum and materials accordingly (Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003). On the contrary, it has been observed that the teachers who have a negative attitude towards inclusion have lower expectations and decrease the learning opportunities for children (Idol, 2006; Shade & Stewart, 2001). Many studies have been conducted to investigate the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion. Some of these studies revealed that certain teachers had a positive attitude towards the inclusion of children with special needs (Avramidis, Byliss, & Burden, 2000; Avramidis & Norwich; 2002; Kargin, 2004; Park & Chitiyo, 2011; Sari, 2007; Sucuoglu, 2004; Secer, 2010). Conversely, other researchers have revealed that form teachers have a negative attitude towards inclusion (Avramidis & Kaylva, 2007; Diken & Sucuoglu, 1999; Gozun & Yikmis, 2004; Rakap & Kaczmarek, 2010; Sahbaz & Kalay, 2010). A few studies have concluded that teachers have neither a negative nor a positive attitude towards inclusive education (Engstrand & Roll-Pettersson, 2012; Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001 Ross-Hill, 2009; ; Sari, Celikoz, & Secer, 2009; Sucuoglu, Bakkaloglu, Iscan, Demir, & Akalin, 2013). In their review of the literature, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) mentioned that teacher attitudes towards integration/inclusion were affected by various factors. These factors included: (a) teacher-related factors, such as age, gender, teaching experience, the level of learning regarding receiving special education training; (b) student-related factors, such as the child's inability type and nature; and (c) environmental factors, such as the availability of support staff and educational materials. One of the factors that affect the success of teachers in the inclusion practices is the teachers' self-efficacy perceptions (Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012). According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy belief can be defined as an individuals' judgment regarding their success in using certain abilities. The concept has an important place in social learning theory; it describes an individual's belief regarding their organization and performance of particular of activities and

actions, and their success therein (Bandura, 1984). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs have an important influence on their principled practice regarding successful inclusive practices (Paneque & Barbetta, 2006; Sharma, et al., 2012). In inclusionary classes, successful education depends on teachers' beliefs towards the responsibilities and disabilities of children with special needs (Jordan, Schwartz, & McGhie-Richmond, 2009). Additionally, it is stated that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy use more effective teaching strategies and are more insistent regarding those students who show less interest in academic activities (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). On the contrary, teachers with lower self-efficacy levels spend more time on non-academic tasks and inhibit the students' learning by using ineffective teaching strategies (Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel, & Malinen, 2012; Sharma, et al., 2012). Previous research in the field has revealed that a positive relationship exists between self-efficacy and attitude towards inclusion applications. Wiesel and Dror (2006) stated that Israeli primary school teachers with higher self-efficacy levels had a more positive attitude towards inclusion applications. Soodak, Podel, and Lehman (1998) found a significant relationship between the American general-education teachers' self-efficacy and their attitude towards inclusion. In addition to these studies, Savolainen et al. (2012) reported a significant positive relationship between Finnish and South African teachers' self-efficacy regarding cooperation, and their attitude towards the inclusion of the disabled children. Similarly, Malinen, Savolainen, and Xu (2012) found a positive correlation between the Chinese teachers' attitude towards inclusion and their self-efficacy. Similarly, Sokal and Sharma (2014) revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between Canadian teachers' attitudes and their self-efficacy. In summary, it can be observed that teachers' self-efficacy regarding inclusion is the strongest factor when trying to determine their attitudes towards inclusionary education. Hence, revealing the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes towards inclusion will help researchers and teachers alike to make inferences regarding future studies that may help to develop positive attitudes towards inclusion.

Teachers Attitudes and Self-Efficacy towards inclusive Education

Inclusion is not only a process to placed kids with disabilities physically in the classrooms; it requires creating a flexible learning environment so that individual needs of all children could be met and which could be possible only with the positive attitudes of service providers towards it. Ample of study are there which indicates that teachers are not in favor of inclusion of children with disabilities specially for children with behavioral disorder, and profound intellectual disabilities and showed negative to moderate attitudes towards inclusion (Sharma & Desai, 2007; Chhabra, Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2010; Das &Kattumuri, (n.d.); Das & Desai, 2013; Das & Bhatnagar, 2013; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014). Koster, Pijl, Nakken& Van Houten 2010 acknowledged that if the teachers perceive inclusive education negatively, it will create a gap between teachers and students especially those with disabilities (Hofman & Kilimo, 2014). Classroom environment has an effective role in the positive academic and social achievement of all children especially for children with challenging learning needs. Creating such teaching learning environment depends heavily on the positive attitude of teachers towards inclusive teaching practices. Das and Kattumuri (n.d.) reported that regular teachers are anxious and have a high level of concern to include children with behavioral and severe disabilities in their class and also reported that non-disabled children do not cooperate and make a laugh on children with disabilities too. Children with disabilities also worried and felt uncomfortable in general classroom environment. Whereas Hunt and Goetz 1997 indicated in their study that student with severe disabilities also includable in ordinary school and that they may achieve positive academic and learning outcomes contrary to the unfolded fears and concern held by many stakeholders (Rajani, 2012). Negative attitudes of teachers towards teaching challenging students in their class may affect their sense of self-esteem and self-concept and could be a significant bant barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive practices (Bhatnagar & Das, 2013). Hence, it is important to analyze the attitudes of teachers towards working in an inclusive classroom environment. An attitude is a multidimensional construct, it explores about how a person perceives, believe, and think towards a particular

situation, event or an object. It is a potential factor which drives a person how to react in a certain situation. Allport in 1935, exhibited that an attitude is a neural and mental state of readiness, organized through experiences and exerting a directive or dynamic influence on individual response towards an object or situation to which it is related (Jain, 2014). Another factor which is equally important to implement inclusive education is self-efficacy, which could be understand as the ability of a person to persist with a task and affects every area of human endeavor. Few studies considered it as a strong predictor to teacher's attitudes towards inclusion (Hofman & Kilimo, 2014).

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