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What do teachers feel and think about when teaching in the inclusive classroom?

By

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We accept this Graduate Applied Project as conforming to the required standard.

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this project was to learn about teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education in India. Understanding what conditions and factors contribute to human motivation, wellbeing, and satisfaction is essential to design inclusive classrooms and create approaches that will assist teachers as they work to reach their goal. The purpose of my project was to look at what problem's teacher faced (personally or systemically) in their attempts to allow Indian classrooms to become truly inclusive. The main objective of my study was to find out what teachers felt and thought about when teaching in inclusive classrooms?

Keywords- inclusion, self-esteem, self-concept, institutionalization, discrimination, post-independence

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **My Story**

One evening, when I was playing badminton in the stadium, I saw a lady teaching her daughter how to play badminton. I was curiously looking at them and I realized the lady was having problems teaching her daughter. I went close to them and started having a conversation with the mother.

Because I was in the teaching profession, I started helping teach the child some tricks to hold the racket and play a shot, but I noticed that the child did not pick up the instructions at first. The mother began to describe that her daughter is a special child.

I always enjoy teaching children so, although it was a challenge for me, I tried my best and started teaching that girl how to play badminton. I also felt compassion about the difficulties the mother and child seemed to be facing; I was both sad and curious. I started asking few more questions to the mother, and the mother described the problems her daughter had been facing in her regular life and the classroom.

I found out the girl went to the same school where I was teaching; so, I wanted to know more about the problems they were going through. The mother told me that her daughter was very slow in completing her work, but the teacher was not completely supportive. The mother had to fetch the classwork and homework from the other children of her class because nobody bothered to send completed work home—and it was very difficult for her child to manage the homework. This realization embarrassed me. I believe that, if a child in a classroom, the educator has to make some accommodations to help the child.

As an educator, my most rewarding experience is to see my students excel. As far as my thinking is concerned, a child is like a wax and a good and hardworking teacher can mold

it in a shape. However, if the teacher is not playing an effective role, then what about the child's future? This thought was something that troubled me. I felt these struggling children also have equal rights to get education.

We are living in a world where we talk about inclusion everyday, but how much are we following it? I began to feel that inclusion is just a black and white term for the teachers in India. They might talk about it, but they are not completely into it. This consideration helped me start to think about teachers' perceptions about inclusion in India. I began to wonder what teachers feel, what they think about, and what kind of problems they face while teaching in an inclusive classroom.

### **My Context**

India is a country with abundant human capital. This important human resource should have educated and trained to engage successfully in the nation building activity. But unfortunately, more than half of India's children are out of the school system due to special needs. Furthermore, due to a lack of inclusion, they are not getting proper education and/or facing many problems in getting an education. I believe this is a violation of a human right's issue, which stresses upholding human dignity. The main goal of Right to Education Act and inclusive education is to make education available to each child irrespective to location, class, caste, religion, status and standing, mental and physical limitations, or any other disadvantages the child might be suffering from.

### **Background and Key Concepts**

Mastropieri and Scruggs (2004) described inclusive education to mean that students with disabilities are served primarily in the general education settings, under the responsibilities of [a] regular classroom teacher. When necessary and justifiable, students

with disabilities might also receive some of their instruction in another setting, such as a resource room.

### **Justification**

Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) explained that, despite the policy initiatives outlined in the Right to Education Act, India has made little progress in providing educational access to children with disabilities in regular schools. This lack of progress raises an important question: Why has India not been able to make any significant improvement despite the policies that support inclusion of children with disabilities into regular schools?

Bhatnagar and Das (2014) depicted that inclusion does not occur in vacuum. It requires a number of factors to be in place before a successful outcome is possible. Kavale and Forness (2000) emphasized this notion by stating that inclusion is not something that simply happens, but something that requires careful thought and preparation ... implemented with proper attitudes, accommodations, and adaptations in place. Bhatnagar and Das (2014) showed results that indicated that teachers who held negative attitudes towards inclusion tended to employ less-effective instructional strategies, which resulted in increasingly poor performance of students with disabilities included in regular education classrooms (Nutter, 2011).

A number of researchers asserted that teachers' negative attitudes prevented many students with special needs to not achieve their expected learning objectives (McFarlane & Wolfson, 2013). Even more importantly, negative attitudes of teachers towards students with disabilities adversely affected students' self-esteem and self-concepts. Furthermore, researchers argued that negative attitudes held by teachers might be a significant barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive education (Glazzard, 2011).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Because, I taught in India for a long time, I have a vested interest in improving the educational system and to understand it better. In part, I wanted to know about teachers' perceptions of inclusion in India. I wanted to know about their attitudes and concerns about inclusion in classroom activities. The research tells us that teacher attitudes are essential for inclusion to work. Furthermore, teachers play an extremely vital role in students' lives to make their futures bright.

I believe teachers must believe and treat each child as equal. As well, I believe a good teacher's aim is always that each child should be given equal opportunities to reach his or her fullest potential with as much time is spent in an education setting as possible. So, it is significant to know what teachers think about inclusion.

The goal of my study was to know about teachers' perceptions towards inclusive education in India. Understanding what conditions and factors contribute to human motivation, wellbeing, and satisfaction is essential to design inclusive classrooms and approaches that can assist teachers to reach their goal. The purpose of my study was to look into and understand more fully what problems teacher face (both personally and systemically) that would allow Indian classrooms to become truly inclusive.

### **Research Question(s)**

To accomplish this goal, my main research question asked: "What are teachers' perceptions towards inclusion/ inclusive education in India?"

The following relevant research sub-questions were also asked:

1. What do teachers feel and think about when teaching in the inclusive classroom?

2. What kind of problems do teachers face while teaching in inclusive classroom?
3. What are teachers' attitudes and concerns regarding inclusive classrooms?

### **Brief Overview**

This introductory chapter has described the purpose, justification of why I have chosen to carry out this study and how it can be beneficial for inclusive education, the questions that guided this study and some definitions of the terms used throughout the study. Chapter Two will cover a range of themes: inclusive education and human right, benefits of inclusion, the factors make inclusion successful, challenges to inclusive and variables affecting inclusion. Chapter Three describes the research methodology and the plan I have used to conduct the study.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This research attempted to better understand the issues teachers faced as they taught in inclusive classrooms. As I engaged my review of the literature, I came to the work believing that inclusive education was an effective tool to teach students with disabilities. Thus, this literature review works to detail related research around inclusion and the variables that are a part of teachers' perceptions who teach in inclusive settings. My work is centered upon translating what works in other parts of the world so that teachers in India might be helped to engage inclusive education more successfully.

This research literature I read focused on relating various issues related to teachers' attitudes towards education of children with disabilities. My literature review, which was carried out by studying a variety of different sources like journals, reference manuals, handbooks, text books, e-resources, explored the following areas:

- a) an introduction to inclusive education;
- b) inclusive education in India;
- c) the benefits of inclusive education; and,
- d) the challenges to inclusive education.

### **Inclusive Education and Human Rights**

There have been a variety of global efforts to engage children with disabilities into the core of the education system. Lindsay (2007) reported that inclusive education is the key policy objective for education of children and young people with disabilities. Inclusive education entails "increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools" (Booth & Ainscow, 1998, p.

89). The research suggested and encouraged governments to give priority to making education systems inclusive and to adopt the principle of inclusive education as a matter of law or policy. It emphasized that every child has a basic right to education and every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.

Inclusive education emanated from the human rights perspective which upholds that variations in human characteristics associated with disability, whether in cognitive, sensory, or motor ability, are inherent to the human condition and such conditions do not limit human potential (Rioux & Carbet, 2003). The idea of children having rights independently of the adults around them is a relatively new concept of the past century, and a common theme in early legislation was that children were seen as passive recipients, to be 'seen but not heard' (Munro, 2001). Children having disabilities have universally suffered discrimination, violence and abuse, poverty, exclusion and institutionalization (International Save the Children Alliance, 2001). Jones (2000) criticized the 'country reports' to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, noting that in the majority of the cases children with disabilities were referred under Article 23, only focusing on rehabilitation and special care. Children were rarely mentioned under Article 28 (the right to an education)

### **Indian Context**

The rehabilitation practices of a society can be comprehended by taking a deeper look at the cultural nuances and responses to disability. Historical events, sacred texts, and social institutions all contribute to the social construction of disablement. Ghai and Karna (2001) suggested that, in Indian and other Asian societies, the concept of *karma* governs basic assumptions about disability, where disability is seen as the result of one's deeds in previous births (as cited in Ghosh, 2005).

A World Bank report (2007, pp. 21-29) has explored the cultural modelling of disability that has impacted societal attitudes. The association of bad deeds with sufferings such as disability together with ignorance on issues related to disability resulted in stigma and discrimination of individuals with disabilities. These negative attitudes have perpetuated societal disabling and resulted in marginalization and denial of equal opportunities in social and development spheres.

Therefore, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has great relevance in India because it can be a step in helping to overcome cultural attitudes such as disability being one's fate and invest concerted efforts to provide equal opportunities for education to children with disabilities. To gauge the national response towards inclusive education of children with disabilities, it is vital to know the magnitude of childhood disability. It is difficult to estimate the number of children with disabilities in India.

The 2001 Census of India reported 7.73 million children and young adults in the age group 0-19 years are considered disabled. Singal (2006) cited the office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (2003), which noted that the figures available are highly unreliable and range between 6 million and 30 million children with disabilities in India. Singal further noted that the Rehabilitation Council of India suggested figure of 30 million children with disabilities as the best estimate.

There are also noted discrepancies related to education of children with disabilities. Singh (2003) reported three-to-four percent of children with special needs had access to education with or without support services, and Mukhopadhyay and Mani (2002) deduced that only one percent of children with disabilities in the 5-15 age group had access to education. A recent World Bank Report (2007) highlighted that 38 percent of the children with disabilities in the age group 6-13 years are out of school. Irrespective of the estimate, in

India, the fact remains that a majority of children with disabilities do not have access to education. In the context of the right to education for children with disabilities as laid out in CRC (Canada Research Chairs) and more illustriously in UNCPRD (United Nations Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities).

### **Inclusive Education: In India**

The concept of inclusive education was introduced in India in 1997 when Jangira (1997) referred to the UK Warnock Committee Report. However, Mani (2000) noted that Jangira had pioneered inclusive education in India in the 1980s while referring to the concepts of 'dual teaching model' and the 'multi-skilled teacher plan' (Singal, 2005). In practice, however, inclusive education gained momentum in India during the 1990s in response to international developments which advocated inclusive education (e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; and the UN Standard Minimum Rules, 1993) and was largely influenced by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). This declaration marked the incorporation of inclusive education in the official documents of many signatory countries, including India (Holdsworth, 2002; cited in Singal, 2006).

To build a discourse and help the audience understand the context, it would be interesting to construct a historical trail for inclusive education in India. However, lack of documentation on education of children with disabilities in the nineteenth century in India is a major constraint (Alur, 2002a). The first attempt to integrate was initiated by the Royal Commonwealth Society for the blind and the Christopher Blind Mission. Visually challenged children were integrated in regular classrooms where they were expected to devise self-learning mechanisms during sessions where oral repetition was a dominant pedagogy (Chaddha, 2003).

During the pre-independence period, the provincial governments took sporadic interest in educating children with disabilities by dispensing ad-hoc grants to schools and institutions run by the voluntary sector (Gupta, 1984 cited in Alur, 2002). The Kothari Commission (1966), which highlighted the importance of educating children with disabilities during the post-independence period, expressed that the education of children with disabilities must be a part of the general educational system and suggested that educational facilities must be extended to the blind, deaf, orthopedically challenged and mentally challenged children (Pandey, 2006).

In 1974, the centrally-sponsored scheme for Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) was launched; this program is currently being implemented in over 90,000 schools in India. The program was introduced to provide equal opportunities to children with disabilities in general schools and facilitate their retention. It provides support with expenses related to books, stationery and uniforms, allowance for transport, reader and escort for students with disabilities. It also supports the appointment of special teachers, provision of resource rooms, and removal of architectural barriers (Minister of Human Resource Development (MHRD), 2009).

In pursuit of the goal of providing basic education for all, the National Policy on Education (1986) and its follow-up actions have been major landmarks. The World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in 1990, gave a further boost to the various processes already set in motion in the country. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act (1992) initiated a training programme for the development of professionals to respond to the needs of students with disabilities.

Furthermore, the enactment of the People with Disability Act in 1996 provided legislative support. This act made it mandatory to provide free education to children with

disabilities in an appropriate environment until the age of 18 years (UNICEF, 2003).

Although the legislation made access to regular schools easier, it was still not guaranteed as an equal right for all students. In 1999, the government passed the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act for the economic rehabilitation of people with disabilities. These acts have been instrumental in bringing about a perceptible change/ improvement in the attitude of government, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organization) and people with disabilities.

In the 25 years, two major initiatives have been launched by the government for achieving the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE): The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994 and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2002. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) focused on universalisation of primary education, which included children with disabilities. The main objectives of the programme were to provide access to primary education to all children, to reduce dropouts at the primary level and to increase achievement levels (Department of Education, 1993). However, the success of the programme is under scrutiny. Alur (2002b) contended that the reasons for failure were reported corruption in the form of budgets for non-existent non-formal education centres, tribal dropout, the difficulty of multi-grade teaching in one-teacher schools, low learning achievement, and lack of integration of children with disabilities due to continued reliance on special school systems (Giffard-Lindsay, 2007).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is an effort to universalize elementary education by community ownership of the school system. It is in response to the demand for quality basic education all over the country. The SSA programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children, through provision of community-owned quality education in a Mission mode. The SSA has been launched as the

shared responsibility of the Central and State governments in partnership with the local governments and the community.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan will not disturb existing structures in States and districts, but would only try to bring convergence in all these efforts. Efforts are being made to ensure there is functional decentralization down to the school level in order to improve community participation. There will be a focus on the educational participation of children from SC/ST (schedule caste/ schedule tribes), religious and linguistic minorities disadvantaged groups and the children with disabilities.

Since then, other policies have also advanced issues of inclusion in India. The National Policy for Persons with Disability (2006) attempted to clarify the framework under which the state, civil society and private sector must operate in order to ensure a dignified life for persons with disability and support for their caregivers. It included extending rehabilitation services to rural areas, increasing trained personnel to meet needs, emphasizing education and training, increasing employment opportunities, focusing on gender equality, improving access to public services, encouraging state governments to develop a comprehensive social security policy, ensuring equal opportunities in sports, recreation and cultural activities, increasing the role of civil society organizations as service-providers to persons with disability and their families.

Furthermore, the most recent advancement is the Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education (2009), which guaranteed the right to free and compulsory education to all children between ages six to fourteen. For education for a child with disability, the act has to be read in conjunction with Chapter V of the Persons with Disability Act (1995). Chapter V of the PWD Act ensures that every child with disability is entitled to a free education up to the age of 18 years. The responsibility for integration of students with

disabilities in regular schools, as well as promoting setting up of special schools to make them accessible to children living in any part of the country lies with local authorities.

Alur (2003) observed that in India a dichotomy exists between policy and practice; the government promotes the 'inclusionist' philosophy through its schemes and extends a parallel support to the 'segregationist' policy by promoting the idea of special schools through their assistance to voluntary organisation schemes. In addition to these legislations and policies, the Indian Government provides facilities and concessions for children with disabilities under various programs. For instance, under the IEDC (International Economic Development Council program), the government has made provision for aids, incentives, and specially-trained teachers in state-run schools (for details see Planning Commission, 2002). However, policy commitments of governments in a number of areas remain in large part unfulfilled (World Bank, 2007) and have failed to bring the children with disabilities into mainstream education (Julka, 2005).

Maharashtra (Mumbai being its capital) has 600 special schools, which are exclusively for children with various types of disabilities (UNICEF, 2003). It would be imperative to understand the types of private schools in India and their numbers in Maharashtra. The main types are 'private unaided' schools, which means that the schools are privately owned and funded and rely on user finance to quite an extent, and 'private aided' schools, which means that the schools are largely funded by the government (90- 95%) but their management is private (De et al., 2002).

In Maharashtra, the number of private aided (primary and secondary) schools is about 5218 and the number of private unaided schools is approximately 4220 (MHRD, 2009). The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also have also played an active role in the provision of services for people with disabilities including education for children with disabilities since

the early 1950s, particularly in urban areas. The NGOs are supported by the government through various grants. In the 1970s and 1980s, there was an increase in the number of NGOs in India (UNICEF, 2003). Some of these NGOs are making consistent efforts towards including children with disabilities into regular educational settings. In Mumbai, some NGOs partner with regular schools to enable them to become inclusive'.

In the nut shell, this research in Indian context is still in nascent stage despite some case studies in few states in India. By promoting and implementing inclusive education in Indian education system, the result can be a major milestone to prove its efficacy.

### **Benefits of Inclusion**

This part of my review of the literature will focus on analyzing and studying the advantages and benefits that the outcome of inclusive education. Facilitating learning for all students should always be the primary goal (Boyle et. al., 2011). Every student, whether identified as having a disability or not, requires individualized instruction (Silverman, Hong, & Trepanier-Street, 2010). Teachers of all levels and areas should make certain they are facilitators of learning, not prescribing a *one size fits all* approach.

Benefits of inclusion include all students, not just students with disabilities, because every child has the right to an appropriate education (Taylor, 2011). Boyle et al. (2011) suggested that, for this to happen, the gap and stigma between regular and special education must be redacted and that quality instruction must occur to support development, growth, and academic achievement. Boyle et al.'s work reminds readers that good teaching practices are good practices for students with and without disabilities. Furthermore, the study suggested that the quality of instruction is the most important predictor of learner achievement, rather than placement; therefore, quality and teachers' expectations positively influence the achievement of students with special learning needs. Resources, support, using a

differentiated approach and differentiated teaching, and pedagogic strategies (direct instruction, cognitive strategies, and co-operative learning) all enable teachers to effectively implement inclusive practices in the classroom.

Woodcock, Hemmings, and Kay (2012) found that supporting inclusive practices and ensuring success involves not only the educators who deliver the direct instruction but also requires collaboration with key stakeholders, which includes counselors, support teachers, administration, and parents. Teaching in itself can be a challenge; but, without support, a positive attitude, hands-on training, utilizing best practices, and forestalling barriers that may impede service delivery, educating students becomes burdensome and overwhelming for teachers at all levels of experience. Thus, support is imperative (Polidore, Edmonson, & Slate, 2010).

Finally, Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) noted that successful implementation of inclusion depends on policy that supports inclusive education, adequately trained teachers, and a commitment to the provision of necessary ongoing support. They found that positive perceptions encouraged appropriate policies and integrative practices, where negative attitudes sustain low expectations of students and unacceptable behaviors in students with disabilities.

Boyle et al. (2011) noted that students without identified disabilities also benefitted by connecting with students with disabilities because they have the opportunities to learn special skills that students with special learning needs may bring into the classroom (such as Braille and sign language), additional funding that may be provided, and the fact that inclusive schools value the learning of all students.

**The factors make inclusion successful**

It has also been argued that the most important factor in inclusive education is the teacher, and the success of inclusive education is dependent upon the teacher's positive attitude towards inclusion (Secer, 2010). These attitudes are influenced by personality factors such as experience, seniority, and knowledge (Secer, 2010). Encouragement and outlook is an intrinsic motivator that cannot be expressed upon someone, but often stems from a deeply held belief in God and/or a strong moral obligation to others and has been deeply rooted since childhood (Polidore et al., 2010). Finding the right fit for pairing co-teachers should not be done on convenience, as there are many factors that influence and determine successful inclusive environments thus either encouraging or extinguishing the endless benefits of inclusion (Secer, 2010).

Trainor (2007) expressed the importance of caring relationships through learning how cultural identities shape interactions as well as strategies for establishing caring relationships that do not come at the expense of academic rigor. In establishing relationships that are positive for both student and teacher, a barrier is removed that could limit effective communication and nurturing relationships that will facilitate a positive learning environment to aid in academic achievement. Trainor also suggests that creating a welcoming and effective environment for all students and staff involved in inclusive practices benefits the entire school culture, which transcends teaching boundaries.

Peer support within departments is an important aspect for inclusion, but support at the administrative level is also important (Boyle et al., 2011). Perhaps the support given along with sharing ideas among colleagues aids in the motivation and encouragement of teachers in inclusive settings, which then facilitates endless possibilities of success (Boyle et al., 2011). Orr (2009) highlighted additional supports of inclusion to include a school-wide

inclusion philosophy (shared vision), positive attitudes of general education teachers, and partnerships between general and special educators (including interpersonal dynamics). Access to additional resources and training is also an added benefit. Orr suggested that, as the incidence of inclusive practices increases and the acceptance of individuals with disabilities becomes more positive, the collaboration and commitment among education professionals will be greater enhanced. To ensure positive inclusion, flexibility, planning, knowing the children, modeling a positive tone, and respecting and celebrating each child's uniqueness are essential components (Silverman et al., 2010).

The beneficial part of the research concludes that, due to various government initiatives like SSA, inclusive education can be implemented effectively. At this scenario, there are still many areas uncovered that are major objectives or the research gaps to allow researchers to further explore inclusion as a major area of study.

### **Challenges to Inclusion**

Specially designed instruction must meet the needs of each student individually (Taylor, 2011). With that thought, it is important to note that one method of service delivery is not good for every student, and inclusion is not a good fit for all students with disabilities (Wilson, Ellerbee, & Christian, 2011). Individualizing instruction, ensuring positive classroom interactions, and lacking the necessary skills for adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of students with and without disabilities are a few of the challenges that teachers have expressed regarding inclusion (Silverman et al., 2010).

To find out more about inclusive practices and attitudes and the challenges to inclusion, Sharma et al. (2009) surveyed 478 pre-service teachers to determine what attitudes pre-service teachers held towards inclusive education, how these attitudes related to a number of variables (gender, age, previous contact with a person with a disability, educational level,

knowledge of legislation, and level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities), and the level of concern of pre-service teachers regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classes. The authors used the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) and the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES). Results indicated that participants with postgraduate qualifications were more positive toward implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms as compared to those with an undergraduate or diploma level qualification. Sharma et al. (2009) also found that participants of the study were most concerned with a lack of resources and least concerned with declining academic standards associated with students with disabilities being educated in a regular classroom.

Although meeting the diverse learning needs of all students in the classroom can be challenging, ensuring all students experience growth and success regardless of the barriers is paramount. Three distinct themes that Orr (2009) culled as barriers to inclusion were (a) negative attitudes of general education teachers, (b) lack of knowledge, and (c) lack of administrative support. She also noted that the inadequate resource allocation towards implementation of inclusive practices was a major barrier, a point echoed by Winzer and Mazurek (2011). Winzer and Mazurek's work suggested that education professionals are required to be creative with the resources they have, albeit insufficient, to ensure each student is successful. They also noted – worryingly - that the lack of classroom support for special needs students was one of the top factors contributing to teacher burnout and prompting young teachers to leave the profession.

Wilson et al. (2011) indicated that the extra work required by teachers in inclusive settings becomes a limitation, although 56% of educators surveyed felt inclusion was best for all students involved. Winzer and Mazurek (2011) also noted time constraints and workload issues, and suggested they were aligned with concerns of the negative social and academic

consequences for students without disabilities as well as the detrimental effect of the level of instruction provided for all students.

### **Attitude**

One of the greatest barriers to overcome for individuals with disabilities is attitude (McMaster, 2012). Changing and cultivating the culture of a school and the attitudes and beliefs it holds takes great work. Sustainability is a central success factor in creating inclusive school cultures, and sustaining the change is more effective when teachers are given time to explore ideas and integrate them into their practice (McMaster, 2012). Additional barriers, according to McMaster (2012), included intentional attitudinal (isolation, physical bullying, and emotional bullying) and unintentional attitudinal (lack of knowledge, understanding or willingness on the part of systems or teachers).

Yssel et al. (2007) indicated that parents of students with disabilities who are a part of inclusive practices want teachers who have excitement, sensitivity, and honesty. This finding further supports the importance and role of attitudes in inclusive practices. The advocacy of parents has been a driving force in including students with disabilities. Teachers' attitudes are influenced by personality factors such as experience, seniority, and knowledge (Secer, 2010).

Boyle et al. (2011) indicated that a barrier to successful inclusion is what seems to be a gap between acceptance of inclusion and actually being supportive of its implementation. Being supportive is a positive aspect, but if there is no substance or follow through with the implementation, the concept and potential success is stalled (Boyle et al., 2011). Inclusion also has an effect on students' academic, social, and behavioral developments, which is a concern to many as being physically placed in a classroom setting does not suggest acceptance and being *invisible* to peers can be just as devastating as rejection (Yssel et al., 2007).

To ensure that the emotional well-being of students is being protected, it is crucial that educators collaborate with parents (Damber, 2009). Male (2011) surveyed 48 teachers who were in a master's program in special and inclusive education at the beginning and end of a 10-week module. The ATIES questionnaire was used to aid in answering the research question "Will a program of professional development in the area of special and inclusive education be effective in achieving attitudinal shift in teachers?" The participants expressed more positive attitudes towards inclusion of students with physical/sensory difficulties, social difficulties, and academic difficulties than towards students with behavioral difficulties.

Arampatzi, Mouratidou, Evaggeliou, Koidou, and Barkoukis (2011) claimed that the more a child adopts positive attitudes toward his/her classmates and effectively interacts with them, the more competent they are. They also found that the quality of interactions in a regular classroom setting for students with disabilities is defined by social insecurity and aggressive behavior. Arampatzi et al. (2011) suggested that a social insecure behavior or an aggressive behavior is unfavorably dysfunctional for the process of inclusion.

In a study conducted by Gao and Mager (2011), 168 preservice teachers enrolled in a dual-certification inclusive teacher preparation program at a private university and were given four questionnaires that included demographics, Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), ATIES, and Professional and Personal Beliefs of Diversity scale. Participants were provided the instruments three weeks before the end of the semester.

The purpose of the study was to explore pre-service teachers perceived senses of efficacy and attitudes toward school diversity shift over the course of preparation and ascertain how teachers with different degrees of perceived efficacy view school diversity. The participants responded showing attitudes were most favorable towards inclusion of children with social disabilities and least favorable, although still positive, of the inclusion of

children with behavioral disabilities (Gao & Mager, 2011). The data also reported favorable attitudes towards children with academic disabilities in general classrooms. Although students with behavioral disabilities were viewed less favorably, they still had the right to access their education and to be instructed in their LRE (least restrictive environment), not the LRE of the teacher. Sharma et al. (2009) also reported that teachers would rather have students who required academic and physical accommodations but were less positive about including students who displayed disruptive behaviors.

Based on Horrocks, White, and Roberts (2008), this is a common trend, not just amongst teachers but administrators as well. Horrocks et al. (2008) surveyed 571 principals in Pennsylvania and found that principals were more likely to recommend higher levels of placement for students with stronger academic profiles than for more involved students. The results also indicated that elementary principals were more likely than secondary principals to recommend higher levels of inclusion (Horrocks et al., 2008)

It is important to note that the attitudes and behaviors educational professionals display are being monitored by the students they interact with on a daily basis (Lockwood, 2006; Ouazad & Page, 2012). The impressions and attitudes toward the integration of students with disabilities into regular educational programs directly correlate to student behavior since nondisabled students often model the attitudes and behaviors of adults (Arampatzi et al., 2011; Polidore et al., 2010).

### **Variables affecting Inclusive Education**

There are many variables that affect the inclusive education, these areas include gender, years of teaching experience, experience with inclusion, and a variety of other overall factors.

These are discussed below:

## Gender

A variety of studies suggest that teachers' gender plays a role in their attitudes toward change and inclusion – both specifically and indirectly. Lee et al. (2011) surveyed 1,646 teachers in China as to their perceptions of curriculum reform. A 40-item Like scale questionnaire was used to gather the information. The researchers found that female primary teachers were more receptive to curriculum reform than secondary teachers or male teachers even though they had less authority in decision making and less influence on their colleagues. The study also suggested that female schoolteachers were more obedient than their male counterparts.

De Boer et al. (2011) concurred, and found, in a review of the literature, that females had a more positive attitude than males as related to inclusion. Klassen and Chiu's (2010) study of western Canadian teachers reported that there were other differences with gender. They reported female teachers had greater workload stress, greater classroom stress from student behaviors, and lower classroom management self-efficacy compared to their male counterparts. Krips et al. (2011) surveyed 592 teachers from Estonian schools to study the differences of self-perceptions as well as social competence. Krips et al. reported that, when compared to their male counterparts, female teachers were often friendlier and more caring. Females were also reported to be more assertive, *stronger*, and more objective in their feedback.

Although most studies indicated that gender was a factor, Barnes (2008) indicated results disagreed with the previous studies and showed no significant differences by gender. Attitude toward inclusion scores did not vary significantly between males and females from the study of 93 regular education teachers in Pennsylvania.

Despite the large number of studies from various parameters affecting inclusion, one study that suggested that gender was inconsequential. However, overall, it seems teacher gender played a role in issues related to classroom practices that affect inclusion.

### **Years of Teaching Experience**

Teaching experience is another factor that affects teachers' beliefs about inclusion. De Boer et al. (2011) summarized literature that noted that teachers were undecided or negative about their beliefs of inclusive education. They also reported that teachers with less years of experience (1-5 years) had a more positive attitude than teachers with more experience, closely supporting the results of Barnes (2008) earlier study that indicated that teachers with less than five years of experience had higher mean inclusion scores than teachers with 6-15 years of experience and more than 16 years of experience.

Another study suggested similar results. Yssel et al. (2007) indicated that experienced teachers might be less inclined to adapt their classrooms and practices to meet the needs of students with more severe disabilities. Unal and Unal (2012) also concurred; they surveyed 268 primary school teachers and found that experienced teachers were more likely to prefer to be in control in their classrooms than beginning teachers while interacting with students and making decisions. Furthermore, Hwang and Evans's (2011) Korean study suggested the older the respondents were, the more negative their attitudes and willingness regarding inclusion. It is, however, important to note that years of teaching experience were not indicated, only the age of the respondents. In summation, the more years of teaching experience the respondents had, the less receptive they were towards including students with autism in the regular education classroom.

Combs, Elliott, and Whipple (2010) purposefully sampled four physical education teachers with years of experience ranging from 6-18 years. The participants were chosen with

two each being on extreme ends of the continuum (positive and negative attitudes towards inclusion). The purpose was to collect in-depth descriptive information on issues surrounding inclusion. Each participant completed a questionnaire followed by a 60-90 minutes interview.

After comparing the responses of the two participants with positive attitudes to the two participants with negative attitudes, four assertions were generated. Teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion had multiple focus areas or objectives, Teachers with positive attitudes developed written lesson plans that incorporated many different teaching strategies. Teachers with positive attitudes had completed coursework and training on teaching students with disabilities. All four teachers wanted their children to be successful, although there were notable differences in how success was defined. As a result of the analysis, teachers with the positive attitudes wanted students to be successful for the students' benefit, whereas teachers with negative attitudes wanted students to be successful for their (teachers) own benefit because it made them feel they were effective teachers.

When examined, physical education teachers' self-reported communication of content relevance indicated that they believed these strategies were in practice in part of their instructional repertoire (Webster et al., 2012). Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, and Fisher (2012) also provided information that, for content teachers, it is difficult to carve out long portions of instructional time to engage in extended lessons, but they can facilitate mini-lessons over multiple class sessions. This method aids in providing students who need additional time the opportunity as well as continued practice for other students, all without monopolizing instructional time for struggling students in the inclusion setting.

### **Experience with Inclusion**

Teacher training or previous experience with inclusion is an important factor. Golmic and Hansen (2012) noted in their review of the literature that secondary teachers with

high levels of special education experience and training reported positive attitudes towards inclusion and were more willing to be assigned to inclusive classrooms. These claims were also supported by de Boer et al. (2011), who reported six different studies that suggested teachers with experience teaching students with disabilities, whether it was in an inclusive setting or in general, held significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than teachers with little to no experience.

Sharma et al. (2009) surveyed 480 postgraduate students enrolled in a teacher education program and found that contact with an individual with a disability was also a significant factor in promoting positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

### **Overall Factors**

In a classic study, Tallent (1986) conducted a study of classroom teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming. She surveyed 215 regular education teachers from LEAs in North Carolina ranging in grade levels taught from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Teacher responses were divided into two groups: elementary (118 participants) and secondary (97 participants). The secondary teachers were then divided by content area taught and either grouped as content (58) or noncontent (39) area teachers. All teachers were grouped according to their sex, with 41 being male and 174 being female. The degree teachers had completed was also factored, with 151 having bachelor's degrees only and 64 having advanced degrees (master's or education specialists). Years of teaching experience was grouped from 1-5 years (19 participants), 6-10 years (49 participants), and more than 10 years (147 participants).

Tallent (1986) also gathered information regarding teachers who served mainstreamed students and teachers who did not. Of all the participants, 149 teachers served students in the classroom, and 64 did not serve mainstreamed students in the classroom. The participants were also questioned about the number of semester hours they completed in special

education. Of the 214 participants, 117 did not have any coursework in special education, whereas 97 had coursework in special education.

Tallent (1986) used the Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS), which was developed by Berryman, Neal, Jr., and Berryman at the University of Georgia. The instrument was designed to be brief, easy to administer, and useful with subjects other than special educators. The ATMS was an 18-item Likert-type scale used to measure attitudes toward mainstreaming. The adjusted reliability coefficient for the instrument was 0.92 using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula.

Tallent's (1986) data revealed that no significant difference existed between elementary and secondary teachers' attitudes. There was, however, a significant difference in relation to female and male teachers. Female teachers reported a significantly more positive attitude than males. There was also no significant difference between the education levels of the respondents. However, in regard to teaching experience, teachers with 1-5 years of experience had significantly more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming than teachers with more than 10 years of experience. There was no significant difference between attitudes of teachers with 1-5 years of experience and 6-10 or between 6-10 and more than 10 years of experience. There was also no significant difference between teachers who did and did not serve mainstreamed students in their classroom. Tallent (1986) reported a significant difference between the attitudes of content and non-content teachers. Non-content area teachers were more positive than content area teachers. However, there was no significant difference between teachers who had taken coursework in special education as opposed to those who had not taken any coursework in special education.

Overall, Tallent (1986) concluded that, of the teachers surveyed, the participants had negative attitudes toward mainstreaming. This early research study suggests that attitudes

have probably changed significantly during the last 30 years. More recent research studies have supported educating students within an inclusive education model.

Further research was conducted to replicate Tallent's (1986) study, because obviously this study was conducted many years ago. More recent research has been done regarding teachers' perspectives of inclusion (Barnes, 2008; Combs et al., 2010; Hamaidi et al., 2012; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Orr, 2009). Additional research has updated Tallent's work and provides educators and administrators with much needed information to help model and support classroom teachers to enable them to effectively educate students both with and without disabilities in a regular education classroom (McCray & McHatton, 2011). Information obtained from these studies also helps administrators make co-teaching placements based on variables studied (Leatherman, 2007). Tallent's study was a large and classic study that surveyed regular education teachers. More updated research provides additional information from a statewide survey based on variables that were present in schools.

## **Conclusion**

The study has attempted to discover more about the efficacy and efficiency of inclusive education system pertaining to the factors affecting inclusion. Each factor plays a major and vital role towards how teachers understand and engage in inclusion. The body of researchers as a whole have found more than one reason why inclusive education has not always been successful; however, in most instances, the findings suggest that unclear directions about who was in charge of what have hampered the success of inclusion in schools.

These research findings could have a positive social influence on educators and others involved in educating students with special needs. The findings could help direct educational

leaders toward decisions on the best professional development for teachers of inclusion. My own study has helped me better determine what professional development training could be utilized to facilitate positive teaching situations, team work, and favourable outcomes for the students.

This chapter discussed a qualitative study that examined teachers' perceptions of inclusion in the inclusive classroom. Examination of these perceptions can enable schools and educators to review the data and implement changes in classrooms. Results from the study might have the potential to change educators' perspectives of inclusion in the classroom. A more detailed understanding of teacher perceptions of inclusion is presented in this study.

In this research, I have attempted to unfold any myths about inclusion as an effective tool. The main objective behind my research has been to: (a) support the efficacy of inclusive education; (b) study and analyse the role of each parameter affecting inclusive education; (c) develop a descriptive analysis to find accurate results; and, (d) explore the benefits of inclusive education in India.

### **Chapter 3: Project Proposal and Plan**

#### **Introduction**

Teachers play a crucial and vital role in the academic success of all students. Successful inclusive schools operate with a structure where administrators and teachers have a positive attitude toward inclusion and are supportive and committed to the education of students with disabilities (Praisner, 2003). Inclusive education is a major concern all over the world. Without inclusion, schools will never be able to build academic excellence.

Researchers are trying to uncover the possible elements that are major pitfalls in the successful implementation of inclusive classrooms. In my Chapter Two literature review, I synthesized the work of a number of researchers whose work had created theories and concepts about the parameters affecting inclusive education. These included gender, age, subject taught, and the teaching experience and qualification of teachers around the world.

My literature review suggests that there is both a research gap in inclusive education, and the work that has started is still in its nascent stage. In practice, inclusion have been under implementation in India. Because this is true, the aim of my project was to do a small part to persuade Indian teachers about the importance of inclusive education.

Thus, this project has worked to create a website that will provide knowledge about inclusive education, common types of difficulties students face in the classroom, and some effective strategies for teachers who are trying to help students with special needs. The project's website will be designed for teachers in India so these teachers might gain an awareness about inclusive education and the kinds of effective strategies that might help children with special needs.

#### **Project Description: Purpose, Goals, and Knowledge Transfer**

The final product of this project will be a website. The goal of the project was to investigate the factors influencing teacher's attitudes and beliefs toward inclusive education and how these attitudes impact student education at their regular classroom. The main purpose of my project was to remove myths about inclusion and to systematically analyze the various parameters affecting inclusive education. The project has worked to uncover the myths about inclusive education, to analyze tangible and nontangible results of its implementation, to analyze the major factors affecting inclusion, and to support teacher efficacy as they attempt to implement inclusive education as a standard of their own academic practice.

### **Project Design and Steps to Completion**

With the advancement of technology in 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Internet made access to information and communication easier than it has been in decades. Besides searching the library, anyone can access a vast amount of knowledge-based information using smart devices as they are sitting anywhere in the world. Technology in the education allows to do search whatever we choose, whenever we choose. Technology also enables teachers to prepare and share videos or PowerPoint slides and can reduce time gaps when teaching students.

Inclusion in education refers to a model whereby special need students spend most or all of their time with regular students. Inclusive education is a regular practice in the Western world, but inclusive education in India still requires more research about its practice. It is in an under-developed stage. To help do a small part in moving education practice (inclusion) towards further implementation in India, I have designed a website that might become an efficient and easier source for teachers and researchers. Part of the work of the website will be to enhance and inculcate knowledge about inclusion and to how it might be best

implemented effectively in schools in India. This work is just a beginning. I understand that the website I have created will need constant and periodically renewal and improvement to develop inclusive education with future plans.

### **Research Goals**

The main goals of my project are to uncover the myths about inclusive education, to analyze tangible and nontangible results of its implementations, to analyze the major factors affecting inclusion and to prove the efficacy of inclusive education as a standard to achieve academic excellence.

### **Research questions**

- 1) To compare the inclusive education system with regular education system.
- 2) What problems educators face in inclusive education?
- 3) Whether the parameters really affect inclusion?
- 4) Does teacher education, age and experience are major concern for its fruitful implementation?
- 5) Do school administrators play a real role in its implementation?

### **The Outline of the Website**

The first section of website is the homepage. It will show that the website consists of three parts. In Part One, I offer a brief meaning of inclusive education, videos and our blog, and news.

In Part One, I define the meaning of inclusive education on an international prospective and offer definitions of inclusive education. The highlighted sky blue “Read More” icons will lead readers to a general overview about inclusive education. The videos

give a clear vision about inclusive education in the whole world. One video offers information about the background of the page and provides a good understanding to visitors about the concept. There are also other links to videos provided that present a view of inclusive education in different countries.

Our blog and news provide the latest information about the development of inclusive education in India. All news is highlighted and linked with “Read More” buttons. Visitors can click on these buttons to gain the full information about them.

The second section, Part Two, describes inclusive education in India. It defines inclusive education as a new approach that helps educate children with disabilities and learning difficulties with regular students under in the same classroom. It seeks to address the learning needs of all students with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion.

In India, special education is a separate system of education for disable children outside the mainstream education system. It has been that way since special education evolved back in 1980s. The first school for the deaf was set up in Bombay in 1883, and the first school for the blind at Amritsar in 1887. In 1947, the number of the school of blinds increased to 32. There will be link of “Read More” below the description of each policy. This link provides the knowledge of the whole working process and current status of that policy in India.

The third section, Part Three, depicts teaching strategies. This section was created for teachers. This section describes school teams that spend precious time creating the foundation of inclusive programs for the students with disabilities. It describes the careful thought that goes into scheduling co-taught classes, creating balanced classrooms rosters, training co-teaching partners, developing collaborative relationship, and providing appropriate support

for students with difficulties. It contains descriptions of collaborative teaching, station teaching. In this section, the “Read More” link will connect with those videos and links, which are related to these strategies. Visitors, who I hope would include teachers from India, can follow their own interests of topic and click to get more information about whatever topic they might choose.

The fourth section, Part Four, is about all the non-profit organizations that are working for the proper implementation of inclusive education. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education. The NGOs are working at national level with the help of government. These organizations provide reclamation services to the needy like inclusive education, medical care, elderly guidance, and self-employment. Each topic of this page is linked with sky blue color buttons that provide knowledge of latest news, plans, and ongoing activities that might help students achieve success.

### **Future considerations and scope**

The project was focused on the teachers' attitude towards inclusive education in India. It provides a detailed streamlined overview of the working style of inclusive education in India. The special invention and strategies like pedagogic improvement and adoption of child-centred practices are focused on the children with disabilities in the future.

In the future, I hope to gain more information that will help teachers engage in inclusive education. I hope that I might work with teachers and invite them to be participants so that I might collect more information from them by engaging in interviews to collect their responses. After I analyze their responses, I hope to be able to use what I learn to collaborate with others who also care about inclusive education in India. Together, I hope we will be able to find solutions.

I also to add more to my website. For example, I already have a hope that I might add games and activities that would be helpful for teachers and parents to deal with children having special needs.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusions and Reflection

#### Reflection

More research needs to be completed in many areas in regard to inclusive education. Because my present research was mainly descriptive in nature, the following aspects concerning inclusive education could also be taken up for further studies.

- 1) A comparative study might be undertaken to understand the functioning of inclusive schools in our country of India.
- 2) A study could also be conducted to ascertain the attitude of the parents regarding inclusive education.
- 3) A study might also be conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of inclusive education in schools on the performance of the disabled students academic and social development.
- 4) A study might also be undertaken to ascertain the attitude of the teachers regarding inclusive education.
- 5) A study could also be undertaken to ascertain the level of concern by the teachers about the education of the disabled children in the inclusive schools.

#### Conclusion

The challenges of implementing inclusive education can, I believe, be overcome by raising an awareness of human rights in communities and publicizing positive examples of disabled children and adults succeeding in inclusive education environments, both in school and in life beyond school. I believe teachers in India need to develop a systematic inclusive design of learning to make the education joyful for all children so that the education for them is welcoming, friendly, and will benefit them because they

feel a part of it and not apart from it. Inclusion arose as a good and necessary solution to the question of how to educate children with special needs more effectively. I will make a sincere effort to find out more about the benefits of introducing inclusive education in India. I hope that my website will become helpful for the teachers in India.

Throughout the research process of this work, it was apparent that inclusive education plays a vital and major role for the development of nation. The following conclusions can be made:

- 1) Supply of aids and appliances free of cost must be provided to all the disabled students at the inclusive schools itself.
- 2) Inclusion should be done more in the rural area schools and not just in urban schools.
- 3) A separate budget should be allocated for inclusion by the education department and at the department of higher education, instead of a common one. The state Government should increase the funds of the inclusive schools for its expenses
- 4) Holding seminars and conferences at the state level must be made compulsory wherein main themes about inclusion should be discussed. Teachers from various institutions should be invited for the same. Resource persons from various states as well as abroad should be invited to orient the participants.
- 5) Professional counselors should be appointed in schools to handle the problems of both the regular and the disabled students.
- 6) Appropriate monitoring facilities should be formed to monitor inclusive education.
- 7) Strict action should be taken by all those in charge for the implementation of inclusive education against those schools which do not enroll disabled students at the

various stages of education. The monitoring body should see to it that the educational institutions do not refuse admission of the disabled students

8) The salaries of those teachers teaching the disabled student should be higher than that of others. Presently they are lower, and hence these teachers have lower motivation at the school level.

9) Barrier-free environments should be created at all inclusive education schools. All necessary ramps, railings, tactile tiles, etc. should be constructed in schools and institutions of higher learning, even before students with special needs are given enrollment.

10) More of vocational and skilled-based education should be given at the inclusive schools and stress should not be laid on the academic achievement only.

11) Curriculum should be flexible and vocational in nature for the inclusive schools.

12) The State Government should give awards and incentives to all inclusive schools and colleges who show good progress.

13) Appropriate sensitization, orientation, and awareness should be done of all the teachers, parents, students, headmasters, principals, educational officers and the public at large so that inclusion is made clear to all.

With the passage of The Persons with Disabilities Act in 1996, India has joined the few countries that have legislation to promote inclusive education. This is a landmark step because India has now overcome a major legislative hurdle. A number of unique challenges still must be overcome to implement the key objectives. These programs require financial and

collaborative commitment from key national and state education stakeholders, and partnership with schools to support research-based initiatives.

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