

Analysis of D.El.Ed Students Perception towards Concept of Inclusive Education

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Abstract

The concept of inclusive education emphasizes the right of every learner to access quality education in a supportive environment that accommodates individual differences. This study aims to analyse the perception of D.El.Ed (Diploma in Elementary Education) students towards inclusive education and its practical implications in elementary classrooms. A descriptive survey research design was used, and data were collected from 85 D.El.Ed students enrolled in government teacher training institute DIET Pasighat. The results revealed a generally positive perception of inclusive education, although variations were observed in their understanding of implementation strategies, resource adequacy, and preparedness. The study highlights the importance of pre-service teacher education in shaping attitudes towards inclusive practices and recommends strengthening inclusive pedagogy in teacher training programs.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, D.El.Ed Students, Perception, Teacher Education, Inclusive Pedagogy.

Introduction

Inclusive education has emerged as a global educational movement to ensure equitable access to learning for all students, including those with diverse disabilities, backgrounds, and learning needs. The principles of diversity, equity and inclusion if embedded within the school education system lays the foundation for access to schooling for all, a larger population joining the workforce and opportunities for lifelong learning for all the learners.

The United Nations Convention on Rights to Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) emphasize inclusive and equitable quality education as a human right. In India, the Right to Education Act (2009) and the National Education Policy (2020) both advocate for inclusive classrooms to address learner diversity. The National Educational Policy (NEP), 2020 emphasizes that, “Education is the single greatest tool for achieving social justice and quality” which has implications for development of an inclusive community and society at large. Inclusive education broadly encompasses the teaching-learning environment which is welcoming and supports all learners regardless of learning styles, abilities and disabilities.

D.El.Ed students, as future primary school teachers, play a crucial role in implementing inclusive education. Their perceptions, attitudes, and preparedness significantly influence the success of inclusion at the grassroots level. Understanding how these teacher trainees view the concept of inclusive education is essential for developing responsive teacher education curricula and training strategies.

Review of Literature

Numerous studies highlight that teacher attitudes and perceptions are critical determinants of inclusive education practices. Sharma and Desai (2002) found that pre-service teachers with prior exposure to inclusive settings had more positive attitudes toward learners with special needs. Ainscow (2005) emphasized the importance of school culture and teacher preparation in building inclusive environments. Similarly, Subban and Sharma (2006) observed that teacher training programs must equip trainees with adequate pedagogical and attitudinal competencies for inclusion.

In the Indian context, teacher education institutions are increasingly incorporating inclusive education components into their curriculum. However, there remains a gap between theoretical understanding and classroom application (Singal, 2019). Study conducted by K. Sinkkonen & Harju-Autti, (2023) found that on average, the results indicate Finnish schools appear quite inclusive with regards to students' linguistic background i.e. immigrant/language status did not show major negative effects on perceived inclusion.

This study builds upon existing research by focussing on the perception of D.El.Ed students-a group at the frontline of primary education delivery.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess the perception of D.El.Ed students towards the concept of inclusive education.
- To identify areas of strength and gaps in their understanding of inclusive practices.
- To provide suggestions for enhancing inclusive education components in teacher training programs.

Research Questions

- What is the level of awareness among D.El.Ed students regarding inclusive education?
- How do D.El.Ed students perceive the feasibility of implementing inclusive practices in classrooms?

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study to capture perceptions and attitudes of the respondents.

Sample

The study involved 85 D.El.Ed students (second semester & fourth semester trainees) selected randomly from DIET Pasighat government teacher education institute.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire comprising 25 statements on inclusive education (Likert scale: Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) was used. The tool was validated by experts in education and piloted with 50 students.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through face-to face administration of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage were used to analyse the data.

Result and Discussion

Overall Perception

Result indicated that 74% of D.El.Ed students showed a positive perception of inclusive education. Most respondents agreed that inclusive classrooms promote social integration and respect of diversity.

Understanding of Inclusive Practices

84% of students understood inclusion as integrating children with special need into regular classrooms.

70% acknowledged the need for individualized teaching strategies.

Only 52% felt confident about implementing such strategies effectively.

Perceived Challenges

- **Lack of Resources:** 65% of respondents believed that schools lack adequate materials and infrastructure.
- **Teacher Preparedness:** 60% reported that they need more training to handle diverse learners.
- **Class Size and Workload:** 55% identified overcrowded classrooms as a major challenge.

These findings resonate with Sharma et al. (2008), who found that resource availability and teacher confidence strongly influence inclusive education outcomes.

Implementations for Teacher Education

The study underscores the need for strengthening inclusive education modules in D.El.Ed programs. Teacher educators should integrate more practical training, field experiences, and case-based learning to build confidence in inclusive classroom management. Policy maker, stake holders and head of the institute ensure the inclusion concept and work on infrastructure inclusion feasible.

Conclusion

The perception of D.El.Ed students toward inclusive education is generally positive indicating their willingness to embrace inclusive teaching. However, gaps in practical readiness and resource concerns highlight the need for targeted interventions in teacher education. A holistic approach combining positive attitudes, pedagogical competencies and systemic support can foster effective inclusion in elementary schools.

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