

Acknowledgement and Contribution towards Inclusive Education among School Teachers and Authorities

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Abstract

This research explores the acknowledgment and contributions of school teachers and authorities towards the promotion of inclusive education. Inclusive education, which involves accommodating students of diverse abilities, backgrounds, and needs within general education settings, is gaining recognition as a fundamental component of educational equity. The aim of this research is to explore the acknowledgment and contributions of school teachers and authorities including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators towards inclusive education. There were four objectives of the research namely; 1] to study Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. 2] to study the strategies teachers, use to support inclusive education. 3] to study the role of school authorities in promoting inclusive policies and practices. 4] to study Barriers and challenges faced by both teachers and authorities. The current study incorporated a descriptive survey research design, by employing a researcher-developed tool i.e. questionnaire as the data collection tool. A random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 30 participants (school teachers and authorities). Data was analyzed using percentage scores to interpret the findings and provide understanding of the effectiveness of inclusive practice. The research concludes with recommendations for improving inclusive education practices and policies to ensure an equitable educational experience for all students.

Key Words- *Inclusive Education, School Authorities, School Teachers, Teacher attitude toward Inclusive Education*

Introduction

An educational approach that involves all students (Differently abled and typical), regardless of their diverse needs, backgrounds, and abilities, in general and mainstream education classrooms. Promotes equal opportunities, fully participation, and over all development for students with disabilities and special educational needs (SEN). Inclusive education refers to the practice of educating children with diverse needs, disabilities, abilities, and backgrounds in general education settings. This approach emphasizes equal access to learning opportunities, promoting a sense of belonging for all students with divers' needs. The contributions of teachers and school authorities in fostering inclusive education are pivotal, as they can create an environment where all students, regardless of their learning differences, are given the tools, resources, and equal opportunities to thrive.

Here's an overview of the key ways school teachers and authorities can acknowledge and contribute to inclusive education: Teachers and school authorities need to first recognize the importance of inclusive education and be aware of the diverse needs of students. This involves understanding various disabilities (physical, cognitive, sensory, and emotional) as well as cultural, age, cast, linguistic, and socio-economic differences that may affect students' learning experiences. Regular workshops, seminars, CRE and training sessions for educators can help them gain awareness and skills in handling inclusive classrooms effectively. School authorities can support teachers by providing access to current research and evidence-based strategies that promote inclusive teaching and learning practices.

Adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners is a core contribution of special educators. A flexible curriculum allows students with different learning styles and abilities to access content, demonstrate learning, opportunities and participate meaningfully in the classroom. Teachers can employ various teaching strategies such as visual aids, hands-on learning, and group activities to cater to different learning styles. Teachers may collaborate with parents' special educators, speech therapists, and other specialists to design and deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of all students.

Inclusive education can only be effective if learning environments are physically, psychologically, and socially accessible to all students. School authorities must ensure that buildings are accessible to students with disabilities by providing ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms. Providing access to assistive tools and technology (e.g., Aids and appliance, hearing aids, screen readers, adaptive keyboards, audio devices, audio-visual aids) can support students with specific learning needs, helping them to engage with the learning. Teachers and school authorities play a significant role in creating a school environment and culture that values diversity and inclusion. This means actively promoting respect, appreciate, acceptance, empathy, and collaboration among students, staff, and the broader school community. Developing and implementing anti-bullying policies and legislation, promoting respect for differences, and creating a welcoming environment can encourage students to feel comfortable and supported in expressing themselves. Encouraging peer mentoring or buddy systems can help students with special needs integrate more seamlessly into the classroom and school environment. This also fosters a sense of community among students with diverse learner.

Successful inclusive education requires collaboration between various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, teachers, community members and special educators, counselors, and external experts, audiologist, speech therapist, social worker. Effective communication is vital in ensuring that the unique needs of each student are addressed appropriately. Teachers and school authorities should work closely with parents and special educators to develop and implement Individualized Educational Program (IEPs) tailored to the needs of students with disabilities and divers learner. Teachers should actively involve parents in the educational and learning process, seeking their input and feedback on their child's progress and well-being. Comprehensive and Continuous assessment of the effectiveness of inclusive practices is crucial. Teachers and school authorities

should regularly monitor students' educational progress and make necessary adjustments to teaching method and teaching strategies and teaching learning materials. Teachers can use regular formative assessments to gauge the progress of students with disabilities and diverse learning needs and make adjustments as needed. Teachers, Professional & Special Educator should encourage open dialogue with students and parents, collecting feedback on what resources strategies and practices are working well and what improvements can be made.

School authorities, including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators, are responsible for providing the leadership and institutional support necessary for the successful implementation of inclusive education students with diverse needs. School authorities should create clear objective of policies and Legislation that promote inclusive education and ensure that the necessary resources and funding are available to support these initiatives. Adequate funding for specialized human resources, teaching resources, professional development programs, and assistive technologies (Hearing device, screen readers talkback, speech to text and text to speech device) is essential for building inclusive school environments.

Need for Study

Acknowledgement and Contribution towards Inclusive Education among School Teachers and Authorities" is critical in understanding the current state of inclusive education in schools, identifying barriers, and providing actionable solutions to improve the quality of education for all students, especially those with diverse learning needs. Success of inclusive education depends on teachers' and school authorities' including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators' roles in its acknowledgment and implementation. The research investigates how teachers and authorities perceive and contribute to fostering practicing inclusive education.

Inclusive education is increasingly recognized as a fundamental right for all children. Global frameworks such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 4 call for the provision of education that is accessible to every child, irrespective of their physical, mental cognitive, or social challenges. The need for understanding how school teachers and authorities (principle, coordinator, special educator, teacher) acknowledge and contribute to inclusive education practices is critical in meeting these international goals. Modern classrooms are diverse, encompassing students with varying abilities, learning needs, learning style, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. A study on the role of teachers and school authorities in acknowledging and contributing to inclusive education can provide insights into how educational setup are adapting to such diversity and ensuring that all students receive equitable and quality of education.

Many teachers, especially in general education system, may not have received sufficient training on how to accommodate students with special educational needs. A study could assess whether teachers feel equipped to implement inclusive practices and identify diverse learner and gaps in their professional development. Teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education significantly

influence their inclusive practices. Understanding how teachers perceive inclusion—whether as a challenge, a burden, or a necessary aspect of teaching and learning—can help identify the factors that motivate or hinder the adoption of inclusive practices in the classroom environment. School authorities, such as principals, vice-principals, coordinator, special educator and administrators, play a crucial role in implementing inclusive school cultures and policies. This study can shed light on how school leaders acknowledge inclusive education, support teachers, and ensure that necessary resources and support are provided to facilitate inclusivity in classrooms.

Inclusive education often requires additional resources—such as specialized trained staff, adapted teaching materials, differentiated instruction and assistive technologies. Identifying how school authorities acknowledge the need for such resources and the challenges in allocating them is important for understanding why inclusive education may not be fully implemented in certain settings. Societal attitudes towards disability and divers learner can influence the degree to which inclusive education is accepted and practiced. Understanding the role of school authorities in addressing these attitudes, and the barriers they may face in changing entrenched views, is key for fostering an inclusive environment.

Explanation of Key Terms:

Inclusive Education- An educational approach that involves all students (Differently abled and typical), regardless of their diverse needs, backgrounds, and abilities, in general and mainstream education classrooms. Promotes equal opportunities, fully participation, and over all development for students with disabilities and special educational needs

School Authorities- School authorities refer to the individuals or groups who hold positions of leadership, management, and decision-making within a school or educational institution. (e.g. Principals, Head of Department Coordinators, and Educational Administrators)

School Teachers- School teachers are educators who adapt their teaching methods and classroom environment to ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities or needs, can participate in and benefit from the learning process.

Teacher attitude toward Inclusive Education- Teacher attitudes toward inclusive education are a crucial factor in the successful implementation of inclusive practices within schools. Teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors influence how effectively they engage with and support students with diverse learning needs.

Aim of Study

The aim of this research is to explore the **acknowledgment** and **contributions** of school teachers and authorities including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators towards inclusive education.

Objectives:

1. To examine Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education.
2. To examine the strategies teachers, use to support inclusive education.
3. To examine the role of school authorities in promoting inclusive policies and practices.
4. To examine Barriers and challenges faced by both teachers and authorities.

Research Question

1. What are the attitudes of teachers and school authorities including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators towards inclusive education?
2. What role do school authorities including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators play in supporting inclusive education policies?
3. What strategies and method can improve the contributions of teachers and authorities toward inclusive education?

Review of Literature

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education play a vital role in the successful implementation of inclusive practices. According to Loreman et al. (2005), teachers who demonstrate positive attitudes toward inclusive education are more likely to engage in practices that meet the diverse needs of their students. Teachers who understand and embrace the importance of inclusivity are more likely to create supportive classroom environments that promote equality and fully participation for all students with diverse needs. Studies conducted by Avramidis and Norwich (2002) show that teachers' belief of the value of inclusiveness often vary depending on personal beliefs, experience, and exposure to diversity in the classroom. Some teachers may point of view inclusive education as beneficial, while others maybe more skeptical due to concerns over their ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities or lack of appropriate support.

Training is another significant contributor to the acknowledgment and contribution towards inclusive education. A study conducted by Maktav and Tuncer (2019) emphasizes that professional development programs focused on inclusive education are essential for enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills. Teachers who undergo specialized training in inclusive practices are better equipped to implement inclusive strategies effectively and adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of diverse learners. However, the availability and quality of such training programs vary across regions, and not all teachers have access to adequate professional development. According to a report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009), there is a global need to invest more in teacher training programs that focus on inclusive pedagogy.

School authorities also play an important role in promoting inclusive education. Their contributions include creating inclusive policies, differentiated instruction allocating resources, and supporting teachers in implementing inclusive practices. Study conduct by Forlin (2001) suggests that school leaders who recognize the importance of inclusiveness and actively engage in policy-making contribute to fostering an inclusive school atmosphere. In this context, school

authorities should ensure that there is adequate support for teachers, both in terms of resources (e.g., teaching aids, aids and appliance special education personnel) and time to plan and collaborate. The development of school-wide act and policies that prioritize inclusion is critical for providing a clear framework that guides teachers' practices and sets direction for the school community. Policies must address not only the educational needs of students but also their social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

Despite the positive recognition of inclusive education, there are still many barriers its successful implementation. Study conducted by Haug (2017) and Elkins et al. (2003) identifies common challenges faced by teachers and school authorities, including limited resources, inappropriate support systems, large class sizes, and lack of collaboration among teachers. Teachers often express frustration at their inability to provide individualized attention to all students with divers need due to these barriers. Additionally, there may be resistance to inclusive education, especially in contexts where traditional practices are deeply ingrained. Some teachers and school leaders may feel unprepared to address the complex needs of students with disabilities and divers needs and may hold negative attitudes and perception about the feasibility of inclusion (Bennett, 2009).

An important contribution to inclusive education is the ability of teachers and school authorities to work collaboratively. Collaboration between general educators, special educators, counselors, and other specialists increases the likelihood of success in inclusive classrooms. A study conducted by Friend and Cook (2007) found that collaborative teaching models, such as co-teaching, where general and special educators share responsibility for instruction, improve the educational experiences of students with disabilities, and divers learners. In addition, the involvement of parents and community members is critical to creating a supportive environment for inclusive education (Ainscow, 2005). School authorities can play an essential role in facilitating these partnerships and ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in promoting inclusivity.

The acknowledgment of inclusive education by both teachers and authorities directly impacts student outcomes. Research highlight that students benefit educationally, socially, and emotionally in inclusive settings when teachers and school authorities actively acknowledge and contribute to inclusive education practice. A research conduct by McLeskey et al. (2012) show that inclusive education promotes positive self-esteem, peer relationships, and academic success among students with disabilities, and diverse learners while also fostering empathy and understanding among their non-disabled peers.

Methodology

The main aim to explore the **acknowledgment** and **contributions** of school teachers and authorities including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators towards inclusive education. To obtain a thorough grasp of the teachers' viewpoints, the study used a descriptive survey methodology with an instrument created by the researcher that comprised both multiple-choice questions and qualitative prompts. 30 Inclusive Education teachers and authorities from the state of Rajasthan were chosen at random to serve as the study's sample. To ensure that the

tool (questionnaire) properly gathered pertinent data in the areas of school teachers and authorities including principals, Coordinators, and educational administrators towards inclusive education, the researcher carefully built it. Participants gave their informed consent before Google Forms was used to collect data.

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed on the gathered data through Google Forms. While qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to offer deeper insights into the teachers' understanding of the attitudes towards inclusive education and its role of school authorities in promoting inclusive policies and practices, quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as percentages and frequencies. The researchers were able to represent a more complete Acknowledgement and Contribution towards Inclusive Education among School Teachers and Authorities because of the use of a mixed-method approach.

Result And Discussion

Research findings from a survey of 30 teachers working with inclusive education shed light on the current state of teachers' awareness about and contribution to inclusive education. Research analysis revealed that while most teachers were familiar with the concept of inclusive practice, no specific resources are provided in the school for students with disabilities or learning difficulties, indicating a significant unmet need for students with disabilities in the practice of inclusiveness. Many participants reported that the effectiveness of inclusive education is regularly monitored and evaluated in schools, but there are many schools where there are various concerns that hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education, including lack of resources, trained teachers and barriers to inclusive environment.

The results section presents the findings obtained from the questionnaire conducted on teachers and authorities regarding their acknowledgement and contribution toward inclusive education. Data from the responses are summarized in key themes:

Awareness of Inclusive Education

- School authorities: A significant majority 83.3% of school authorities have very good awareness and understanding of inclusive education. However, 16.7% of school authorities are somewhat familiar.

Training and Professional Development

- Teachers: 8.3% of teachers have received training on inclusive education, though many stated the training was not comprehensive. The remaining 35% indicated they had not participated in any formal training.
- School Authorities: 91.7% of school authorities confirmed providing professional development sessions focused on inclusive teaching methods for teachers.

Classroom Practices and Strategies

- School Authorities: 91.7% of teachers reported adopting inclusive practices in the classroom, such as differentiated instruction, group work, and the use of assistive technologies, school authorities mentioned having policies supporting the integration of students with disabilities but acknowledged the need for more resources to ensure practical implementation. However, 8.3% indicated challenges in fully implementing these strategies due to time constraints and limited resources.

Support Systems and Resources

- Teachers: A significant number (8.3%) of teachers mentioned the lack of adequate resources and teaching assistants as a barrier to effective inclusive education.
- School Authorities: 91.7% of authorities confirmed that they provided additional resources for inclusive education like differentiated instruction, groupwork and peer support, use of assistive technologies, IEPs but most acknowledged that these resources were insufficient to meet all the needs of students with diverse learning needs.

Perception of Challenges and Barriers

- Teachers: Common barriers mentioned by teachers included 25% lack of resources, 8.3% Lack of training or professional development, 25% High number of students in class, 33.3% Lack of support from parents or guardians, 8.3% lack of time large class sizes, lack of specialized training, and insufficient support staff. School authorities cited financial constraints, insufficient teacher training, and a lack of awareness from parents and the community as challenges.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made:

1. Increased and continuous teacher training on inclusive education methodologies and inclusive practice.
2. Provision of more resources and specialized support educator to assist in the classroom.
3. Government and policy reforms to provide better financial support and educational for inclusive education.
4. Enhanced collaboration between teachers, school authorities, and parents and community to create a more inclusive school environment.

Overall, the findings from the questionnaire suggest that while there is strong acknowledgment of the importance of inclusive education, its implementation faces several barriers that need to be addressed for true inclusivity to be achieved in schools.

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