



AWARENESS OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the objectives like the Awareness of Prospective Teachers toward Inclusive Education, the difference between male and female Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education, the difference between Arts and Science stream Prospective Teachers Awareness towards Inclusive Education, and hypotheses like there is no significant difference between male and female Prospective teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education, there is no significant difference between Arts and Science stream Prospective teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education. The study revealed that most of Prospective teachers are well versed about different aspects of inclusive education. It shows that very less number of Prospective Teachers are averagely aware concerning to various aspects of inclusive education The awareness of male and female Prospective Teachers towards inclusive education is not differing significantly. The awareness of arts and science stream Prospective teachers towards inclusive education is not differing significantly.

Key Words: Awareness, Prospective Teachers, Inclusive Education

Introduction:

Inclusive education stands as a pedagogical approach designed to facilitate the learning of every student, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, within a unified classroom setting. Its core principle revolves around providing equitable access to high-quality education for all. Embracing inclusive education embodies the belief in affording every child an equal opportunity to attend school, acquire knowledge, and cultivate essential skills for their holistic development. Central to this concept is the integration of all students, regardless of their differences, into the same classrooms and educational institutions.

The Government of India has enacted the legislation Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act-95) to promote the integration of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools.

UNICEF's (2000) Report on the Status of Disability in India states that there are around 30 million children in India suffering from some form of disability. The Sixth All-India Educational Survey (NCERT, 2000) reports that of India's 200 million school-aged children (6-14 years), 20 million require special needs education. While the national average for gross school enrolment is over 90 percent, less than five percent of children with disabilities are in school.

The RPWD Act, 2016 provides that “the appropriate Government shall ensure that the PWD enjoy the right to equality, life with dignity, and respect for his or her integrity equally with others.” The Government is to take steps to utilize the capacity of the PWD by providing appropriate environment.

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2000) has recommended inclusive schools for learners with special educational needs by making appropriate modifications in the content, presentation and transaction strategies, preparing teachers and developing learning friendly evaluation procedures.

Various studies like Pasha, S , Yousaf, F, Ijaz M (2021) conducted a study on “Preparedness of Prospective Teachers for Inclusive Education: Pre-Service Teachers’ Knowledge and Skills”, Gulay, A and Altun, T (2023) conducted a study on “Investigation of Teacher Candidates' Awareness towards Inclusive Education”, Joseph, J.A , Ganesan, P. (2021) conducted a study on “Awareness Of Inclusive Education Among Teachers In Relation To Morale” have been studied by the researchers for getting ideas on methods, selecting tools etc.

Rationale of the Study:

As the student of Integrated B. Ed-M.Ed. during our internship the researchers come in contact with CWSN students, backdrops, low achievers. Given the personal interest of the researcher in the field of inclusive education and the evident lack of awareness among prospective teachers, a crucial need arises to develop an inclusive education program tailored for implementation at the B.Ed. level. This program aims to equip prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge and understanding of inclusive practices, fostering a positive attitude towards inclusion.

Recognizing the elective nature of the current curriculum's inclusion paper, which leads to limited uptake, there is a clear gap in teacher training regarding inclusive education. By integrating an inclusive education program into the core curriculum, prospective teachers would be exposed to essential concepts and practices from the outset of their training.

The researcher's initiative stems from both the urgency to address this gap and the belief in the transformative potential of inclusive education. Implementing such a program not only serves to raise awareness among prospective teachers but also lays a foundation for future confidence in implementing inclusive practices in diverse educational settings.

The effectiveness of this program in enhancing awareness and fostering positive attitudes towards inclusive education is crucial. By conducting a thorough evaluation, the researcher aims to provide evidence of the program's impact, thereby advocating for its integration into teacher training curricula on a broader scale. This proactive approach aligns with the overarching goal of creating inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and supported.

Under the above circumstances the researchers have decided to conduct the study entitled as “**A Study of Awareness of Prospective Teachers in Inclusive Education.**”

Operational Definitions of Key Terms:

Inclusive Education: It means providing equal educational opportunities to all the children whether they are disabled or not in a same classroom in the same school.

Awareness: It means the state of being well informed or having knowledge about something.

Prospective Teacher: The aspiring teacher candidates who were enrolled themselves under any teacher education program.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the Awareness of Prospective Teachers toward Inclusive Education.
2. To find out the difference between male and female Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education.
3. To find out the difference between Arts and Science stream Prospective Teachers Awareness towards Inclusive Education.

Hypothesis of the Study:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female Prospective teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education.
2. There is no significant difference between Arts and Science stream Prospective teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education.

Delimitations of the Study:

The tool constructed by the researcher includes use of multiple options. This may sometime result in curtailing the freedom of the Prospective teachers in expressing themselves. The Prospective Teachers did not get scope for personal comment. As it is a close end questionnaire, factors like motivation, fatigue and interest would also affect the responses of the Prospective teachers.

Method and Procedure:

The present study incorporates the survey method to conduct the study.

Population of the Study:

All the Prospective teachers of Angul district are the population of the present study.

Sample of the Study:

Stratified random sampling technique was used for the study with the sample of 40 Prospective Teachers, out of which 20 are boys and 20 are girls and 20 are from Arts and 20 are from Science stream.

Tool Used for the Study:

In the present study a self-developed awareness questionnaire developed by investigator to check the awareness of Prospective Teachers towards inclusive education.

Procedure of Data Collection:

One of the teacher education institute of Angul district named as Nabakrushna Choudhury College of Teacher's Education, Angul was selected randomly and 40 Prospective Teachers of B.Ed were selected from both Arts and Science stream. The data was collected using google form. The tool was scored properly and data was analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Result:

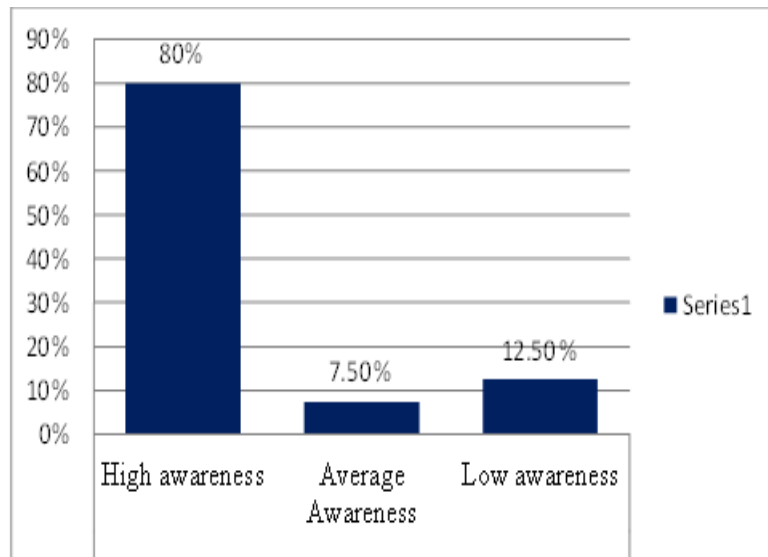
In the present study the researchers used statistics like Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test for analyzing the result.

Objective 1: To study the awareness of Prospective Teachers towards inclusive education

Table:1**Awareness level**

Awareness level of Prospective Teachers		
High awareness	Average Awareness	Low awareness
32 (80%)	3 (7.5%)	5 (12.5%)

From the above table 1, it is revealed that most of the Prospective Teachers (80%) are highly aware about inclusive education, 12.5% low aware Prospective Teachers and 7.5% Prospective Teachers are average aware about inclusive education. It can be pointed from the above table that most of Prospective teachers are well versed about different aspects of inclusive education.



Objective 2: To find the Significance difference between male and female Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards inclusive education.

Table:2

Difference on the basis of gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	p-value	Level of Significance
Male	20	13.35	2.98	0.69	Not Significant
Female	20	13.8	4.4		

Table 2 revealed that the p-value (0.69) is greater than 0.05 and hence, not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis “There is no significance difference between male and female Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education.” is retained. Result leads to infer that the awareness of male and female Prospective Teachers towards inclusive education is not differing significantly.

Objective 3- To find out the Significance difference between Arts and Science stream Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards inclusive education.

Table:3**Difference on the basis of stream**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	p-value	Level of Significance
Arts	20	14.55	2.5	0.08	Not Significant
Science	20	12.6	4.18		

Table 3 revealed that the p-value (0.08) is greater than 0.05 and hence, not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis “There is no significance difference between Arts and Science stream Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards Inclusive Education.” is retained. Result leads to infer that the awareness of arts and science stream Prospective teachers towards inclusive education is not differing significantly.

Major Findings:

- From the study it is found that majority of Prospective Teachers that is 80% have high awareness towards inclusive education. It can be infer from the study that most of Prospective Teachers are well versed with various aspects of inclusive education.
- It is revealed that 7.5% of Prospective Teachers have average awareness towards inclusive education. It shows that very less number of Prospective Teachers are averagely aware concerning to various aspects of inclusive education.
- It is also found that 12.5% Prospective Teachers have low awareness towards inclusive education. It indicates the need of awareness for the Prospective Teachers about various aspects of inclusive education.
- There is no significance difference between male and female Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards inclusive education.
- There is no significance difference between Arts and Science stream Prospective Teachers regarding their awareness towards inclusive education. But arts students have little better awareness (14.55) in comparison to their counter parts.

Educational Implications:

Education is the core of equality and empowerment. Although the right to education and equal educational opportunities are guaranteed by the Indian Constitution, it is disturbing to find that more than half of the population

of children and young people with disabilities are denied these rights and do not receive an adequate education in an appropriate place, ambient. Therefore, inclusion is an educational approach and a philosophy that offers community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social outcomes for all students. Inclusion in education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging to other students, teachers and support staff. One of the main objectives of inclusion is to prepare students to participate as full and contributing members to society. Looking at it from a different Prospective Teachers, inclusion does not mean "dumping". Rather, it gives a message: "Everyone belongs to school and everyone is welcome to the school." In addition to guaranteeing equity and equality in schools, inclusive education is also a step towards guaranteeing the right to education.

Inclusive education is the need of the hour keeping in view the population explosion and availability of limited resources to meet out educational and other demands of all members of the population. But, the success of this concept entirely depends on teachers, their commitment and awareness towards students with hearing impairment who are to be imparted education in inclusive settings. Further, inclusive education has become a part of the present educational policies worldwide. However, the success of inclusive education largely depends on its stakeholders, such as teachers, peers, regular schools, parents, communities, policy makers, etc.

Thus, the positive awareness show the greatest impact on the inclusive education of students. This research was just an attempt to find out the awareness towards inclusive education of Prospective Teachers. The following are some of the suggested implications of the present study on the basis of the major findings.

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