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Teachers' Awareness and attitude towards inclusive education

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Abstract

Teachers play a central role in implementing inclusive education practises. Awareness helps teachers recognise and appreciate the diverse abilities, backgrounds, learning styles, and needs of their students. It enables them to acknowledge and respect individual differences, fostering an inclusive and accepting classroom environment. Positive attitudes towards inclusive education are associated with improved academic performance, increased social interactions, enhanced self-esteem, and better overall well-being for all students, including those with disabilities or special educational needs. Conversely, negative attitudes or a lack of awareness may lead to exclusion, marginalisation, and limited opportunities for certain students.

Methodology: The area selected for the study was Ernakulam and Neyyattinkara educational districts. The technique utilized for sampling was stratified random sampling. 180 sample were collected from teachers of 24 schools. The study employed the survey method, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary tool. The study was conducted in two phases. The investigator prepared a questionnaire and used two standardised questionnaires and the survey was conducted. The questionnaire was, one self-prepared questionnaire to collect socio-demographic details and 2 standardized questionnaires, "Awareness of Inclusive Education Questionnaire" by Dr. Indu Garg and Smt. Sudha. Samir Pingle, Department of Education University of Mumbai and "Attitude towards Inclusive Education Rating Scale" by Dr. Indu Garg and Smt. Sudha. Samir Pingle, Department of Education University of Mumbai. The investigator conducted an awareness programme through Google meet with the help of an expert, Ms Rose Mary, a Special educator. The investigator developed a video to reach more beneficiaries for successful inclusive education, which was evaluated by experts. Correlation, t-test and ANOVA were used for analysis of data. Data analysis was done using IBM SPSS statistics version 23.

Results: The age group 46-55 shows high awareness and 56-65 and 26-35 age group shows less awareness and is statistically significant. Awareness and attitude didn't vary based on educational district and there is no difference in awareness and attitude towards inclusive education between capital city and cosmopolitan city. The mean score of awareness in urban area (35.99) is greater than the mean score of awareness in rural area (30.16). Teachers in urban area have more awareness towards inclusive education than teachers in rural area. The correlation between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, it can be statistically concluded that there is a significant relationship between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education

Conclusion: The scores obtained from the "Awareness of inclusive education questionnaire and attitude towards inclusive education rating scale" reveals that most of the teachers need an opportunity to learn the concept, legal aspects, basic information, skills and competencies on inclusive education. This shows that there is a need to educate teachers to develop awareness on inclusive education. Microsoft PowerPoint presentation and a video were developed for creating awareness and attitude among teachers on inclusive education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, awareness, attitude, children with special needs

1. Introduction

A child's holistic development which includes advancement in the social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical, and economic aspects of life is encouraged through education. The right to an education is one that every student has by virtue of equality of opportunity. Special needs children have the right to a regular education. Upholding children's rights is the aim of inclusive education. They were given adequate possibilities through inclusive education to excel in both academics and skill development.

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Schools make sure that all students, regardless of their special needs, have access to education through inclusive education. Equality and non-discrimination are defined in Section 3 of the Persons with Disabilities Act. The government is required to ensure that the rights of people with special needs are effectively upheld. The government must provide a suitable atmosphere and combat discrimination. Because of special needs, no one has the authority to restrict freedom. The government must take this into account and offer suitable facilities for their general development.

Children with special needs must participate in all aspects of school life, and educational institutions must have a supportive environment for them. In order to ensure that all students are included in normal schools, the schools should offer transportation services. To support children's intellectual and social growth, the entire school community should prepare effective lesson plans. The entire school environment must alter in order for inclusive education to be successful. To remove obstacles to learning, both the students and the teachers require support and education. Negative attitudes must be combated with appropriate measures. Teachers must continue to hold kids in high regard and provide them with the resources they need to learn. They should feel comfortable in the classrooms. Children won't be able to study more effectively in a threatening or unfavourable setting. Children who receive an inclusive education have a fair chance to advance and are better prepared to adjust to their environment. The best way to achieve equality, inclusion, and economic mobility, according to this argument, is through education, which it believes is a great leveller.

The right to education is a crucial element in ensuring the equality of rights for children with special needs and their social inclusion. NEP 2020 emphasises instilling an inclusive educational structure and an inclusive educational culture in our school education system through infrastructure support and corresponding curriculum changes. It calls on all parties to eliminate stereotypes and prejudices through a plan of sensitization in order to remove barriers. In order to promote inclusion, bring out equity, and build respect for diversity, the policy aims to increase awareness of various cultures, beliefs, languages, gender identities, etc. among students, teachers, and other school officials. The implementation of the policy will result in the empowerment of stakeholders through efficient resource management, improved governance and monitoring systems, collaboration and support from schools for the education of children with disabilities and socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

For the country's quick development and prosperity, a credible, rational, dependable, accountable, and dynamic education system is essential. We will not be able to compete with the rest of the world unless we have a good education system. This planned educational system should be available to all students. Our children are the future citizens. We have established a democratic government. Only good and informed citizens can assure democracy's success. As a result, education is critical for the development and advancement of our democracy, as well as for individuals.

2. Methodology

The area selected for the study was Ernakulam and Neyyattinkara educational districts. The technique utilized for sampling was stratified random sampling. 180 sample were collected from teachers of 24 schools. The study employed the survey method, utilizing a questionnaire as the primary tool. The study was conducted in two phases. The investigator

prepared a questionnaire and used two standardised questionnaires and the survey was conducted. The questionnaire was, one self-prepared questionnaire to collect socio-demographic details and 2 standardized questionnaires, "Awareness of Inclusive Education Questionnaire" by Dr. Indu Garg and Smt. Sudha. Samir Pingle, Department of Education University of Mumbai and "Attitude towards Inclusive Education Rating Scale" by Dr. Indu Garg and Smt. Sudha. Samir Pingle, Department of Education University of Mumbai. The investigator conducted an awareness programme through Google meet with the help of an expert, Ms Rose Mary, a Special educator. The investigator developed a video to reach more beneficiaries for successful inclusive education, which was evaluated by experts. Correlation, t-test and ANOVA were used for analysis of data. Data analysis was done using IBM SPSS statistics version 23.

3. Results

3.1. Comparison of teacher's awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on Age

3.1.1 One-way ANOVA for awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on age

The relationship between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on age is represented in the Table 1.

Table 1: One-Way ANOVA for awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on age

	Age	N	Mean	S.D	F	P value
Awareness	26-35	52	29.87	12.316	3.555	0.016
	36-45	67	33.70	8.430		
	46-55	57	35.51	6.746		
	56-65	4	29.50	15.416		
Attitude	26-35	52	120.87	18.427	.106	0.956
	36-45	67	119.57	16.696		
	46-55	57	120.32	12.358		
	56-65	4	123.00	14.855		

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on age. The P value for awareness is less than the level of significance (0.05). There is a significant difference in the score for awareness based on age group 26-35 (M=29.87, S.D=12.316), 36-45 (M=33.70, S.D =8.430), 46-55(M=35.51, S.D =6.746) and 56-65(M=29.50, S.D =15.416) and obtained f value is (F=3.555) and p value is (P=0.016). The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the results suggest that there is a significant relationship in awareness towards inclusive education based on age. The P value for attitude is greater than the level of significance (0.05). There is no significant difference in the score for attitude based on age group 26-35 (M=120.87, S.D=18.427), 36-45 (M=119.57, S.D=16.696), 46-55 (M=120.32, S.D=12.358) and 56-65(M=123.00, S.D=14.855) and obtained f value is (F=0.106) and p value is (P=0.956). The null hypothesis is accepted. The result shows that there is no relationship in attitude towards inclusive education based on age.

From the Table 1, the age group 46-55 shows high awareness and 56-65 and 26-35 age group shows less awareness and is statistically significant. The age group 56-65 shows high attitude, but it is not statistically significant. From this result, it can be statistically concluded that awareness varies with age but attitude didn't vary with age.

Mishra (2018) ^[5], in an article titled "Awareness of Elementary School Teachers About Inclusive Education," sought to investigate the level of awareness of elementary

school teachers about inclusive education and whether there is a difference in awareness of elementary school teachers about inclusive education based on gender, locality, teaching experience, educational qualification, and age. The study shows no substantial variation in the level of awareness of inclusive education among elementary school teachers based on gender, location, educational qualifications or age. Mouchritsa *et al.*, (2022)^[6] presented a paper titled "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education in Greek Secondary Schools." The findings showed that attitudes towards inclusive education were influenced by the type of special education acquired, along with age and regular education teaching experience. Through these research findings, it is evident that a significant difference in the awareness about

inclusive education based on age developed and all teachers developed a positive attitude towards inclusive education without a specific age group.

3.2. Comparison of Awareness and attitude of teachers towards inclusive education from educational districts in both capital city and cosmopolitan city

3.2.1. Independent sample t-test for awareness and attitude towards Inclusive Education based on educational district

Awareness and attitude of two educational districts towards inclusive education from both capital city and cosmopolitan city were represented in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent sample t-test for awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on Educational District

	Educational district	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig. (2-Tailed)
Awareness	Ernakulam	90	32.94	9.810		.859
	Neyyattinkara	90	33.20	9.523	-.177	
Attitude	Ernakulam	90	119.96	15.926	-.253	.800
	Neyyattinkara	90	120.56	15.872		

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on educational district. The P value for awareness is greater than the level of significance (0.05). There is no significant difference in the scores for awareness and attitude based on Ernakulam educational district (M= 32.94, 119.96, S.D = 9.810, 15.926) and Neyyattinkara educational district (M=33.20, 120.56, S.D = 9.523, 15.872) and obtained f value is (F=-1.77, -0.253) and p value is (P=0.856, 0.800) respectively. The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the results suggest that awareness and attitude didn't vary based on educational district and there is no difference in awareness and attitude towards inclusive education between capital city and cosmopolitan city.

In a study titled "Attitude towards inclusive education: district-wise comparison in Punjab," Singh and Bhullar (2022)^[7] discovered that there was no significant difference between districts in the dimensions, the process of learning and teaching, psychological component, social component and an evaluation of teachers regarding equitable education.

Overall, it was determined that there was no substantial variation in teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education based on district. Chary *et al.*, (2022)^[1] report in their article "Awareness on Inclusive Education among B.Ed. Student Teachers" that there is no significant variation in the mean awareness towards inclusive education based on demographic variables such as year of the investigation, the gender, location, level of education, kind of administration, and educational streams. Through these research findings it is evident that there is no significant difference occurred in awareness and attitude based on educational districts.

3.3. Comparison awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on area

3.3.1. Independent sample t-test for awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on area

Awareness and attitude of teachers towards inclusive education based on area evaluated using independent sample t-test and represented in the Table 3.

Table 3: Independent sample t-test for awareness and attitude towards inclusive based on area

	Area	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Awareness	Urban	90	35.99	7.484	4.248	
	Rural	90	30.16	10.664		.000
Attitude	Urban	90	120.08	13.898	-.150	.881
	Rural	90	120.43	17.679		

An independent t-test was conducted to compare the awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on area. The P value for awareness is less than the level of significance (0.05). There is a significant difference in the scores for awareness based on urban area (M=35.99, S.D= 7.484) and rural area (M=30.16, S.D = 10.664) areas and obtained t value is (t=4.248) and p value is (p=0.000). The null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the results suggest that there is a significant difference in the awareness towards inclusive education based on area. There is no significant difference in the scores of attitudes based on urban area (M= 120.08, S.D = 13.898) and rural area (M=120.43, S.D = 17.679) and obtained t value is (t=-0.150) and p value is (P=0.881). The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the results suggest that there is no significant relationship in the

attitude towards inclusive education based on area.

From the Table 3, it is evident that mean score of awareness in urban area (35.99) is greater than the mean score of awareness in rural area (30.16). From this, it can be concluded that teachers in urban area have more awareness towards inclusive education than teachers in rural area. The mean score of attitudes has no much difference and concluded that attitude of teachers towards inclusive education has no difference based on area of school. In a study titled "A study of secondary-school teachers' awareness towards inclusive education," Gurjar (2017)^[3] discovered that teachers in rural areas are more aware of inclusive education than instructors in metropolitan areas. Gupta and Tandon (2018)^[2] report in their study titled "Attitude of Teacher Trainees Towards Inclusive Education" that there is a substantial variation in

perceptions of inclusion among urban and rural teacher trainees, with rural teacher trainees having more positive than urban teacher trainees. According to the research findings, teachers in rural areas continue to be more aware than teachers in urban areas and teachers in both rural and urban areas have formed a good attitude about inclusive education.

Table 4: Correlation between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education

		Awareness	Attitude Score
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	180	180
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.497**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	180	180

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A study was conducted to identify the correlation between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education. The study was found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. Attitude and awareness have a correlation value of 0.497. From the Table 4, it can be statistically concluded that there is a significant relationship between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education and the null hypothesis is rejected.

KG & Mathew, (2018) [4] in an article titled “Awareness and Attitude of school teachers on curriculum modification for students with intellectual disability in inclusive setup”, the study shows a positive relationship between awareness and attitude on curriculum modification.

3.5. Awareness programme for teachers on the topic “Thrive Together-Let’s create an inclusive world” using a PowerPoint presentation.

The researcher organised an awareness class on "Thrive Together: Let’s Create an Inclusive World" by Ms. Rosemary Joy, a special educator. The class was conducted for the teachers from both Ernakulam and Neyyattinkara educational districts. The aim of the researcher is to provide an overview and evaluation of the awareness of inclusion. The class was designed to increase the teachers understanding of inclusive education and equip them with strategies to create inclusive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of all students. The class was conducted online, utilising various instructional methods to engage participants and facilitate their learning. The resource person checks the awareness of teachers by asking some questions related to inclusiveness and then moves on to a detailed session about inclusive education.

3.6. Video on “Super Teacher” to create a positive attitude in teachers towards inclusive education

A video is developed to create a positive attitude among teachers namely “Super Teacher”. The story is about a child with cerebral palsy who succeeds in school solely due to good direction of his teacher. The video describes the individualized tactics employed by the teacher for the child, as well as the numerous ways that can assist teachers in acting as super teachers for other children. The developed video was uploaded on YouTube channel vide <https://youtu.be/KzBYjO8IXhw>

3.6.1 Evaluation Checklist of Video

A checklist for the evaluation of video with 9 items were developed by the researcher and distributed for 15 experts.

3.4. Comparing the relationship between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education

3.4.1. Correlation between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education

The evaluation checklist of video is given in the Figure 1.

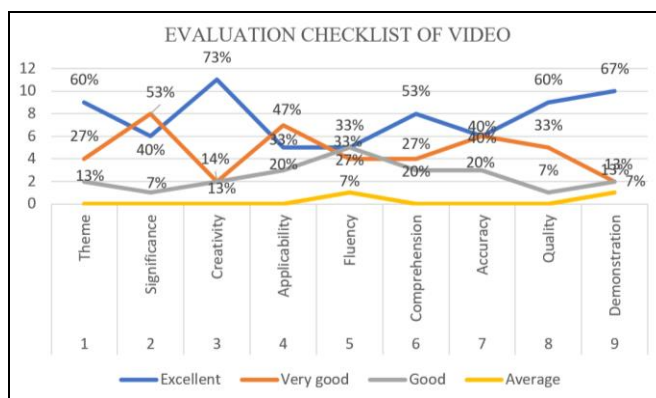


Fig 1: Evaluation checklist of video

Evaluation Checklist of Video

From the figure 1, it is evident that, out of 15 respondents, 11 respondents reported that the video has excellent creativity and only 4 respondents reported that the video has excellent fluency. Figure 1 represents the percentage distribution of evaluation checklist of video. The line chart shows that 73% of respondents reported that the video has excellent creativity and 27% respondents reported that the video has excellent fluency.

4. Discussion

The study was conducted among 180 teachers of 24 schools in Ernakulam and Neyyattinkara educational districts respectively. Our primary objective was to evaluate the level of awareness and attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on age. The study found that teachers in the age group 46-55 shows high awareness and 56-65 and 26-35 age group shows less awareness and is statistically significant. Mouchritsa *et al.*, (2022) [6] presented a paper titled "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusive Education in Greek Secondary Schools." The findings showed that attitudes towards inclusive education were influenced by the type of special education acquired, along with age and regular education teaching experience. An independent t-test was conducted to compare the awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on educational district. The results showed that awareness and attitude didn't vary based on educational district and there is no difference in awareness and attitude towards inclusive education between capital city and cosmopolitan city. Chary

et al., (2022)^[1] report in their article "Awareness on Inclusive Education among B.Ed. Student Teachers" that there is no significant variation in the mean awareness towards inclusive education based on demographic variables such as year of the investigation, the gender, location, level of education, kind of administration, and educational streams. Through these research findings it is evident that there is no significant difference occurred in awareness and attitude based on educational districts. An independent t-test was conducted to compare the awareness and attitude towards inclusive education based on area. The mean score of awareness in urban area (35.99) is greater than the mean score of awareness in rural area (30.16). Teachers in urban area have more awareness towards inclusive education than teachers in rural area. Gupta and Tandon (2018)^[2] report in their study titled "Attitude of Teacher Trainees Towards Inclusive Education" that there is a substantial variation in perceptions of inclusion among urban and rural teacher trainees, with rural teacher trainees having more positive than urban teacher trainees. Correlation between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education were done for Comparing the relationship between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education. Correlation is highly significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Therefore, it can be statistically concluded that there is a significant relationship between awareness and attitude towards inclusive education. K. G. & Mathew, (2018)^[4] in an article titled "Awareness and Attitude of school teachers on curriculum modification for students with intellectual disability in inclusive setup", the study shows a positive relationship between awareness and attitude on curriculum modification. Thus, the study shows that increase in awareness helps teachers to develop positive attitude.

5. Conclusion

The lack of awareness and negative attitudes of teachers can have significant consequences for children with special needs. Some potential outcomes include, limited educational opportunities, social isolation, low self-esteem, reduced academic achievement, behavioral issues, parental frustration, missed opportunities for early intervention and legal and ethical implications. The success of every child in society and their survival depends on their education. Positive attitude and proper awareness of inclusive education among teachers are essential for creating an environment that supports the diverse needs of all students. Awareness programs and video explanation play a crucial role in helping teachers to understand the diverse needs of students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. Story videos have the power to evoke emotions and create a connection with the audience. Personal stories and narratives can make the concept of inclusive education relatable and memorable. The researcher developed a story video and it could help teachers to create awareness and to develop positive attitude among teachers towards inclusive education.

6. Recommendations

- There is a need to spread awareness about inclusive education among teachers.
- Study can be expanded to a larger area with a larger sample size to produce more accurate and bigger database.
- The effectiveness of the video can be evaluated through pre- and post-tests of the video.
- The parents of children with and without special needs can be educated for successful inclusion.

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