



## **Effectiveness of Inclusive School Activities on Academic Performances of Disabled Students**

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### ***Abstract***

*The aim of this paper is to study the effects of an inclusive school activities on the academic performances of students with sensory and mobility disabilities in the primary schools of Amravati District, India. Also, this paper examines the teachers' and parents' perspective regarding the inclusive education of students with sensory and mobility disabilities. The study reveals that the developed inclusive school activities have significant effects on the academic performances on the experimental group in both reading and basic operation of mathematics, compared with those in the control group. The parents have positive perspectives while some headmasters and teachers have negative perspectives towards the inclusive education programme.*

**Key Words:** *Inclusive education*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Education in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another. Our universe is so beautiful with different cultures, but only a few are devoid of enjoying or experiencing such beauty because of their innate inability to see things around them. Education for all is an international commitment to ensure that every child receives basic education of good quality. But education for all has not given sufficient attention to some marginalized groups of children in some of the underdeveloped nations.

### **Inclusive Education:**

Inclusive education is an approach to educating children with disabilities. Inclusion is, “a dynamic approach for responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning” (UNESCO-2005). Shapiro-Barnard (1998) defines inclusion as, “all students being educated where they would be educated if they did not have a disability (i.e., in age-appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood school) with necessary supports provided to students, educators, and families so that all can be successful” (as cited in Dukes and Lamar-Dukes, 2006). In the past, integration (or mainstreaming) was the term used to describe the incorporation of children with special needs into normal education set-ups.

### **Why Inclusive Education?**

The basic premise is that the school should meet the educational needs of all children irrespective of their disabilities or limitations. UNESCO (1994) states that, all children learn together, whatever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of the students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuing quality education to all through appropriate curriculum, necessary arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. Inclusive education promotes child-to-child learning and participation of parents and community in planning and execution of services for children in general and disabled children in particular. Children with disabilities form a significant proportion of the out-of-school population in the region and their right to access equal opportunity of education is too often violated. Hence, students with disabilities especially the sensory (visual and hearing) and mobility disabilities need to enjoy their right to receive education along with their normal counterparts.

**Visual Disabilities:** Visual disabilities encompass disorders in the structure and function of the eye that are manifested by at least one of the following:

- (a) Visual acuity of 20/70 or less (up to 20/200) in the better eye after the best possible correction.
- (b) A peripheral field so constricted that it affects the student's ability to function in an academic setting.
- (c) A progressive loss of vision which may affect the ability to function in an educational setting. Some examples of visual disabilities are cataracts, glaucoma, retinal detachment, retinal pimentos, and strabismus.

**Hearing Disabilities:** Students with hearing disabilities may experience varying degrees of hearing loss. Their hearing disability may be due to conditions such as conductive hearing impairment or deafness, sensory-neural hearing impairment or deafness, high or low tone hearing loss or deafness, or acoustic trauma hearing loss or deafness.

**Mobility Disabilities:** A wide range of conditions may limit mobility. Among the most common permanent disorders are musculoskeletal disabilities, such as partial or total paralysis, amputation, or severe injury; active sickle cell anemia; muscular dystrophy; multiple sclerosis; poliomyelitis, and cerebral palsy. Students with mobility impairments may have a wide variety of characteristics, even with the same disability.

**Research Evidence Relating to Inclusive Education:** A number of research studies are available on different aspects of inclusive education at different levels, some of the relevant search studies conducted by different researchers are: Maheady et al, (1988) argued that the peer tutoring resulted in significant increases in spelling, social studies and other academic areas for students with and without disabilities. Secondly, as York et al, (1992) pointed out, inclusive classrooms does not interfere with the academic performance of students without disabilities with respect to the amount of allocated time and engaged instructional time, the rate of interruption to planned activities and students' achievement on test scores and report card grades. Siba Charan Subudhi (2010) studied 'educational practices for low vision children in Garo hills of Melghat, India.' He found, the low vision children perform well in their studies as well as co-curricular activities. Alquraini, Turki A (2012) undertaken a study on, 'Factors related to teachers' attitudes towards the inclusive education of students with severe intellectual disabilities in Riyadh, Saudi'. He found that teachers have significant factors regarding teachers' perspectives towards the inclusion of this group of students included their current teaching position, previous teaching experience with students who had any kind of disability in inclusive settings and the teacher's gender. Snehal Bansal (2012) critically analyzed that children with learning disabilities are just as smart as and sometimes smarter than their peers, but have difficulty learning in conventional school settings.

**Research questions:** From the above brief reviews of related literatures, following questions are raised for the present empirical study:



- a) In spite of abundant expenditures and various strategies adapted by the Government of India, why the educational achievement of the students with sensory and mobility disabilities not improved?
- b) Is the backwardness and lack of awareness of the family members basically the parents are responsible for education of students with sensory and mobility disabilities?
- c) What is the level of the academic achievements of students with sensory and mobility disabilities?
- d) Do inclusive schools function better or worse than less inclusive ones in terms academic performances of students with sensory and mobility disabilities?

With such interrogations in mind, an investigator undertook an empirical study with the following

**objectives:**

- i) To study the effects of an inclusive school activities on the academic performances of students with sensory and mobility disabilities.
- ii) To know the attitude of their teachers and parents towards the inclusive education programme of students with sensory and mobility disabilities.

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the following **hypothesis** formulated for the present study:

H<sub>0</sub>: It was hypothesized that there is no significant effects of an inclusive school activities on the academic performances of students with sensory and mobility disabilities.

**Methodology:**

Experimental method was adopted. For the present study an equivalent group research design was adopted. Inclusive educational programme for the students with sensory and mobility disabilities was built upon the language and basic mathematics. The experimental group comprised of 50 students with sensory and mobility disabilities from six inclusive classrooms. The control group comprised of 50 students with sensory and mobility

disabilities that were to become part of the inclusive programme. The positive treatment was given to an experimental group only. The data required for the present study was collected by means of an achievement test, interview schedule and attitude scale. The sample for the study is comprised of 100 students with sensory and mobility disabilities, 100 teachers of primary schools and some selected parents of the students.

**Inclusive Education Program:** The needs of children with different disabilities vary considerably in accomplishing the tasks prescribed by the curriculum. Some visually impaired children may need only a reading as medium, whereas others may require a different technique such as lip reading as in the case of the hearing impaired. Still others like slow learners may call for a different presentation. In this study, the investigator developed an inclusive school programme which involves several techniques like peer tutoring, word attach strategies, trace-copy-recall, magic-e, and multi-sensory techniques that include tracing, hearing, writing and seeing are often referred as visual-auditory-kinesthetic-tactile (VAKT). Inferential statistical techniques and Percentage were used to analyze the data.

**Analysis of Data:**

Table-01

Comparison of Academic Achievement between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Sample N	Mean M	Standard Deviation SD	Obtained t-value	Significance
Experimental Group	50	21.70	4.20	7.68	S*
Control Group	50	16.40	2.56		

Ref: The facts and figures in the above table is based on the field data collected; S\* - Significant at 0.01 level.

From the above table, it is observed that obtained t-value (7.68) is more than the table t-value at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, the developed inclusive school activities have significant effects on the academic performances on the experimental group in both reading

and basic operation of mathematics, compared with those in the control group. Hence a hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected. Therefore, the developed inclusive school activities have significant effects on the academic performances on the experimental group in both reading and basic operation of mathematics, compared with those in the control group.

**Findings of the Study:** On the basis of obtained data and interaction with the headmasters of primary schools and parents of the disabled children the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. An inclusive school activities have significant effect on the academic performances of students with sensory and mobility disabilities on the experimental group in both reading and basic operation of mathematics, compared with those in the control group.
2. Irregularities and poor attention of disabled students cause the teachers to have less attention and negative attitude towards the inclusive education of students.
3. It is found that backwardness and lack of awareness of the family members are responsible for education of students with sensory and mobility disability.
4. The parents of disabled children accept that the inclusive education promotes and develops their wards socially, emotionally and academically.
5. Some parents had concerns that their children would not receive sufficient assistance from their teachers and they might emulate inappropriate behaviors of children with disabilities.
6. The parents have positive perspectives while some headmasters and teachers have negative perspectives towards the inclusive education programme.
7. Lack of awareness and financial crunches of parents have added fuel to the fire on inclusive education.

**Conclusion:** Inclusive education is an approach to educating children with disabilities. The role played by parents and teachers have great impact on the future of graceful children with disabilities. Awake and awake the dawn is the model for teachers with less motivation. For the discouraged parents, inspiration and drives of the heart are the brainwaves. Divergent thinking and a set direction of the administration will unfold the dreams of such disabled

children who look forward to their future with aspirations and hope that will be only their scope.

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