



A STUDY OF ATTITUDE OF SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN PUNE

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Abstract

We keep speaking of ingraining in our future generation the 21st Century skills and making them dynamic leaders of tomorrow but there are some qualities which stand of greater importance. These are building in them compassion for one another, helpfulness, humility and empathy which make them better social beings. The researcher through the current study focuses on how these traits become characteristics of normal students when placed in inclusion with students with special needs. A survey is conducted among 30 Seventh Grade students of a well known international school where students are already briefed by their teachers about needs of special children and importance of having them in their class. The students in the survey come from families with good financial background and parents of these children are concerned about a good overall upbringing of their children who spend maximum time in the school. Teachers and educators of the school play a key role in influencing the attitude of the students as the way they would respond to the acceptability to special children in their class so would the other students. The findings of the study show that qualities of compassion, helpfulness, responsibility empathy and social acceptance of special children are a byproduct when placed in inclusion in a positive classroom environment.



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History and Background:

When compulsory public education began near the turn of the century, no public school programs existed for students with disabilities. Schools were expected to be well-organized assembly lines, with each grade of students moving from class to class and, eventually, graduating from high school as dynamic citizens prepared to enter the professional phase. Special classes, at first, did not exist. Later, they were developed as a place for students who could not meet the principles and keep swiftness with fellow classmates.

In India, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) joined hands with UNICEF and launched Project Integrated Education for Disabled Children (PIED) in the year

1987, to strengthen the integration of learners with disabilities into regular schools. National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has laid down a clear context of inclusive education. In 2005, the Ministry of Human Resource Development implemented a National Action Plan for the inclusion in education of children and youth with disabilities. Furthermore, IEDC was revised and named „Inclusive Education of the Disabled at the Secondary Stage“ (IEDSS) in 2009-10 to provide assistance for the inclusive education of the disabled children in 9th and 10th grades. This scheme now subsumed under RashtriyaMadhyamikShikshaAbhiyan(RMSA) from 2013. It is important to integrate these children into regular schools to help them socialise and build their confidence.

Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that provides all students with community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. Inclusion is about making sure that each and every student feels welcome and that their distinctive needs and learning styles are attended to and valued.

Fully inclusive schools, which are rare, no longer distinguish between "general education" and "special education" programs; instead, the school is restructured so that all students learn together.

"... Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions." (Article 3, Salamanca Framework for Action).

"Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system." (Article 2, Salamanca Statement).

Introduction

Inclusion and the Other Kids

Inclusion is receiving much attention, both in school districts across the country and in the media. Most of the attention is focused on how inclusion affects the students with special needs. But what about the students who don't have any such special needs?

Will the learning of students without special needs suffer because of inclusion? Some studies have shown to slowdown the learning of children without special needs in inclusive classrooms. And, surveys conducted with normal students involved in inclusive settings show that they see no harm to studying with students with special needs and that they have positive opinions about inclusion.

Friendships

The most important function of friendships is to make people feel cared for, loved, and safe. Researchers have spoken about cases of lasting friendships that have emerged between students who have special needs and normal students, in which both students benefit. Recent research has helped to identify three specific areas of mutual benefit for children with and without special needs who are friends with each other: (1) warm and caring companionship; (2) growth in social cognition and self-concept; and (3) the development of personal principles. Inclusive settings do not mean that all typical children become close friends with children who have special needs. However, even when relationships remain at the level of 'classmate' or 'familiar acquaintance', versions of these same benefits have been reported in surveys of teachers and other research.

Social Skills

Children without special needs often can become more aware of the needs of others in inclusive classrooms. As they become skilled at understanding and reacting to the behaviors of their friends with special needs, they gain an enhanced acceptance and appreciation of each child's unique gifts. Personal Principles Students without special needs grow in their commitment to their own moral and ethical principles and become advocates for their friends who have special needs. The development of strong personal principles will benefit students throughout their lives.

Comfort Level With People Who Have Special Needs

On surveys and in interviews, middle school students without special needs say they are less fearful of people who look different or behave differently because they've interacted with individuals with special needs.

Caring Classroom Environments

Schools and classrooms can be structured to facilitate kindness, consideration, empathy, and compassion for others. Within a caring classroom environment, students have opportunities to learn about their classmates in ways that honor the full range of experiences that each child brings to the classroom.

Review of Related Literature:

The following few research studies reveal the importance of present research:

Pardini, P. (2002). The history of special education is given by researcher. This paper discusses the history of special education during the twentieth century. It also discusses the laws associated with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

National Council on Disabilities. (2000). Which talks about cultural Diversity. Findings and recommendations contained in the publications in this section come from analyses of data on barriers to and promising practices for the inclusion of people with disabilities from underserved or underserved people with respect to race, ethnicity, linguistic tradition, and economic status. Publications examine attitudes, awareness, and access to federally funded programs and services. Some of the information was provided directly by people with disabilities from diverse cultures.

FernandesAmeliya (2010) intended to study the various aspects concerning Inclusive education in Goa and find solutions to the problems arising in Inclusive Education and make improvement.

Lani Florian (2008) examined the relationship between special and Inclusive Education. She explored the implications and use of the concept of special needs in relation to implement inclusion in practice.

Intention of this study:

Children who learn together, learn to live together.

The research investigator intended to study the attitude of Inclusive Education among school students in an international school. Inclusive Education could be successful only when the teachers create awareness among students to show empathy for children with special needs in an inclusive classroom. As general education classrooms include more and more diverse students, teachers realize the value of accepting each student as unique. Special educators understand that effective general education practices really are appropriate for students with special needs, and general educators often turn to special educators for additional ways to teach their increasingly diverse groups of students.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the awareness of Inclusive Education in School students of Grade 7 in an International School inPune.
2. To study the attitude of students towards specially abled students in an inclusive classroom in Euro International School, Pune.

Hypothesis of the study:

1. There is awareness about Inclusive Education among school students of Euro International School.
2. There is an awareness of Inclusive Education among school teachers of Euro International School, Pune.

Limitations of the study:

1. The present study is limited to only Pune city.
2. This study is confined only to school students of Euro International School.
3. This study is confined only to school students of Grade 7.

Methodology of the study:

This study employed a survey research method. The sample formed was of 30 school students of Euro International School. For sample selection Random sampling technique was used.

Data collection:

The questionnaire was prepared by group discussion from education experts .The data collected was from Euro school students of Grade 7.To ensure quick and complete return of questionnaire the investigator personally visited collected the data by asking questions to students.

Statistical techniques used:

In order to analyze the data the statistical techniques employed were average and percentage.

Result and Discussion:

The following table shows the item, number of responses and percentage of school students towards awareness and attitude of Inclusive Education.

Sr.no	Item	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Special Children are		
	a) Children with disability	9	30%
	b) Children who need additional help	21	70%
2	Inclusive Education		
	a) gives quality education to all peers	22	73%
	b) is time wasting	8	27%
3	Who needs inclusive education		
	a) Special children	11	37%
	b) All	19	63%
4	Does your school practice Inclusive Education?		
	a)Yes	22	73%
	b)No	8	27%
5	Has your teacher briefed you about the needs of special children?		
	a)No	4	13%
	b)Yes	26	87%
6	Do you feel comfortable with special children in your class?		
	a)Yes	25	83%

	b)No	5	17%
7	Do you want these students to be sent to another class separate in your own school?		
	a)Yes	0	0%
	b)No	30	100%
8	Did you ever try to help the special children in your class?		
	a) Yes	20	67%
	b) No	10	33%
9	Do you talk or interact with special children in your class at least once every day without missing a single day in between.		
	a)Yes	22	73%
	b)No	8	27%
10	What kind of help have you extended to the special children in your class till date?		
	a) Taking care of their belongings	17	57%
	b)Completion of class assignments	13	43%
11	Do you benefit academically when teachers re teach concepts for understanding of these children in your class.		
	a)Definitely	24	80%
	b)Not really	6	20%
12	Does your school provide any special teacher for Inclusive education classes?		
	a)Yes	22	73%
	b)No	8	27%
13	Do your special friends participate in extracurricular activities		
	a)Yes	30	100%
	b)No	0	0%
14	Do you feel your special friends perform better than you in any of the activities in class		
	a)Yes	10	33%
	b)No	20	67%
15	Which extracurricular activity do they perform better than you		
	a)Music	11	37%
	b)Art	19	63%

Findings of the study:

1. The school teachers are aware of Inclusive education and its being practiced in schools. The students as well are briefed by teachers about needs of special students in their class.

2. Maximum students are comfortable with special children in their class and NO student wishes to have these children separated from their class.
3. Students of the class have helped these children with special needs whenever they have received a chance and interaction is good between them.
4. Students accept the fact that special children can perform better than them in some or the other way and participate in extracurricular activities on equal grounds.

Educational Implications of the study:

Inclusive students with disabilities in regular classrooms is valuable for everyone concerned. The students with disabilities themselves tend to experience a richer educational environment, both socially and academically. Classmates of students with disabilities also experience a richer educational environment; they meet a wider range of classmates.

Teachers also experience benefits from inclusive students with disabilities in regular classrooms. The most outstanding overall benefit is an increased focus on diversity among students. The presence of students with disabilities reminds everyone, students as well as teachers, that everyone is truly unique, whether or not they are officially nominated as having a disability.

Conclusion:

The research conducted so far shows that being in an inclusive classroom doesn't hurt the students without special needs. Infact it helps them. Growing research suggests that students without special needs can gain a number of vital benefits from relationships with their classmates who have special needs. Some of the benefits include: friendships, social skills, comfort level with people who have special needs, and compassionate classroom environments.