

A Study of Parent's Attitude on Inclusive Education for Their Children with Mental Retardation

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Introduction - Education socializes a child in the school. A child comes into contact with other children and interacts with their ideas, ideals, cultural values and patterns of behavior and it is the bounden duty of society to organize proper education for its individuals to grow and develop more and more. Education plays a vital role in building of society. Modern society cannot achieve its aim of economic growth and higher cultural standards without making the most of the talent of their citizens. So education must be spread among all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour and individual differences. Almost in every country some children and adults are being excluded from formal education altogether, some of those who go to school do not complete. They are gradually and deliberately pushed out of the school system because schools are not sensitive to their learning styles and backgrounds. There are inter individual differences and intra individual differences. In other words some students are so different from other regarding education and special education is required to meet their educational needs.

To a parent, every child is special in his or her own way. But some children have special needs that challenge parents to find ways to best prepare their children for the future. Every parent wants his or her child to be physically or developmentally perfect. Parenting techniques can affect a child's behaviors.

In the next phase, an attempt was made for their education. But disabled children were considered distinct from their peers. They were considered to be incapable of receiving education in general schools. Thus, for the first time special schools and institutions established in different countries for the education and training of such children. They were educated in special schools. However, in recent years the rationale for having two parallel national systems of education has been questioned and the foundations of special education have begun to crumble.

In the second half of the twentieth century, new thinking and new realization have opened new directions for education of disabled children. It is now realized that a disabled child is not a different kind of person. He is a child with special needs. Like all other members of the society,

the disabled must have the same right to education, work and full participation in the society. It is also recognized that the disabled, particularly those with mild or moderate degree of disability can be educated along with their non-disabled peers in general schools with provision for extra- help.

Need And Significance Of The Study: Education is the primary tool for treating as well as developing the mental retarded children as an independent citizens. Therefore appropriate efforts should also be made for the desired proper education of these children. Children with mental retardation, as far as possible should get their education in the inclusive setup with their non-disabled peers. It provides them enough opportunities to learn desirable communication skills, seek social and emotional integration and adapt to their social and cultural environment.

Parents are the real well-wishers of their children. They can help in so many ways in the welfare, care as well treatment of the mental retardates. Parental role is important in making the inclusion a success. It is essential to know their attitude about inclusive education. The concept of inclusive education is very recent and has not been established properly. Teacher and parents are not aware of the philosophy behind it. Parental role is important in making the inclusion a success. It is quite necessary to study their attitudes about inclusive education.

Statement Of The Problem: "A Study Of Parent's Attitude On Inclusive Education For Their Children With Mental Retardation."

Objectives Of The Study: To study the attitude of parents on inclusive education across different educational level.

1. To study the attitude of mothers on inclusive education with that of the fathers.
2. To study parent's attitude on inclusive education across different age level.
3. To study parent's attitude on inclusive education across different income level.
4. To study parent's attitude on inclusive education across different educational levels.

Hypotheses: In order to realize the objective of the study the following hypotheses are formulated for testing:

1. There is no significant difference between the attitudes

- of mothers on inclusive education with that of the fathers.
2. There is no significant difference between parent's attitude on inclusive education across different age levels.
 3. There is no significant difference between parent's attitude on inclusive education across different income levels.
 4. There is no significant difference between the attitudes of parents on inclusive education across different educational levels.

Design Of The Study: This study was designed to analyze the attitudes of parent's on inclusive education for their children with mental retardation. To fulfill the above purpose and collect the information about parent's attitude on inclusive education a questionnaire as measuring tool was prepared and applied on the sample. ANOVA and t-test were carried out to find out the effect of age, income, educational level and level of retardation of their children on parent's attitude towards inclusive education.

Selection Of Sample : The sample consisted of two hundred parents who have children with mental retardation, attending special school. Basically one hundred parents including fifty mothers and fifty fathers from fifty families were taken whose children are attending special School named Disha School of Special Education School for mentally challenged children. Only those parents were selected who have children with mental retardation.

Tools And Technique Used: To undertake the study, a researcher may use variety of devices, keeping in view the need of the study. Therefore selection of appropriate tools is of vital importance for collection of data. Survey method is used for collection of demographic information and the parent's attitude on inclusive education.

1. A format was prepared to collect demographic data of subjects like educational qualification, age, income, the retardation of the child etc.
2. A questionnaire was developed to collect the parents attitude on inclusive education for their mentally retarded children. The questionnaire consisted of thirty questions.

Construction Of The Criterion Test: Planning of the test: Construction of a good test is time consuming and requires skill and analytical insight. In this research the criterion test covers two choice closed ended questions regarding inclusive education for mentally challenged children. Thorndike and Hegel have demonstrated that multiple type questions are effectively used for measuring information to achieve the objectives of the study. To construct the tool in the form of questionnaire the advice of the parent of mentally challenged children was taken.

Preparation Of The Test Items: The questions were constructed with two choices for each item. The preliminary draft of questionnaire consisted 50 items regarding parental attitude and expectations to inclusive education for their

mentally challenged children. The each item was marked as 1 mark of each question.

Tryout And Scoring The Test: The first draft of criterion test was administered on fifty parents of mild and moderate children "Disha School of Special Education" Special School for Mentally Challenged Children, The photocopies of the first draft of criterion test were administered on the try out sample, before administering the test of fifty parents of mild and moderate mentally challenged children general instruction about taking the test were explained. The researcher expressed a friendly attitude towards the above parents in order to establish a rapport with them. The questionnaire was given to them and they were instructed to complete it within one hour. Parents on criterion test responses were scored with the help of counting their respective questionnaire.

Results Of The Study: The data collected from the one hundred parents (fifty mothers and fifty fathers) was analyzed and tabulated in this chapter. The questionnaire consists of thirty items on inclusive education; the responses of the hundred parents were collected. A score of '1' for each 'yes' response and '0' for each 'no' response was awarded. To see the effect of parental gender, age, income, education of their children, on their attitude towards inclusive education ANOVA and t-test were carried out. Results are presented in tabular form in tables 1 to 7 with the following table title.

1. Demographic information about parents.
2. Scale mean score of parental Attitude on inclusive education.
3. Comparison of scale mean score on inclusive education with reference to gender.
4. Comparison of scale mean score with reference to educational qualification of parents.
5. Scale mean score with reference to age level of parents.
6. ANOVA table, comparison of scale means score with reference to age level of parents.
7. Scale mean score with reference to income of parents.
8. ANOVA table, comparison of scale mean score with reference of income of parents.
9. Item wise percentage of parental responses.

Table No. 1: Demographic information about parents (N=100)

| Variable | Category | 'n' | % |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----|------|
| Parents | Mothers | 50 | 50.0 |
| | Fathers | 50 | 50.0 |
| Age in Year | 20 to 30 years | 12 | 12.0 |
| | 31 to 45 years | 68 | 68.0 |
| | Above 45 years | 20 | 20.0 |
| Income Level | Up to 2000/- P.M. | 44 | 44.0 |
| | 2001 to 5000/-P.M. | 32 | 32.0 |
| | Above 5000/- P.M. | 24 | 24.0 |
| Educational Status | Below Graduate | 76 | 76.0 |
| | Graduate above | 24 | 24.0 |

From the above table we can infer that 12% of the parents belong to the age group of 20 to 30 years, 68% of parents belong to age group of 31 to 45 years and 20% of parents belong to above the age group 45 years. So far as monthly income is concerned 44% of parent belong to the income group of up to 2000/- per month, 32% of parents belong to the income group of 2001/- to 5000/- per month and 24% of parents belong to above 5000/- per month income group. Out of hundred parents 76% of parents have educational qualification of below graduation and 24% of parents have educational qualification of graduation or above.

Table No. 2: Scale mean score of parental Attitude on inclusive education.

| N | Mean | S.D. | Minimum | Maximum |
|-----|-------|------|---------|---------|
| 100 | 26.86 | 3.58 | 14 | 30 |

Table No. 3. : Comparison of scale means score of inclusive education with reference to gender of parents.

| Parents | N | Mean | S.D. | Mean Diff. | df | Sig. | t-Value |
|---------|----|-------|------|------------|----|----------------------|---------|
| Mother | 50 | 27.20 | 2.19 | .68 | 98 | P>0.05, | .94 |
| Father | 50 | 26.52 | 4.17 | | | Not Signifi- cant | |

As seen in the above table, not much difference is found with regarding to the parental Attitude towards inclusive education. So far as gender is concerned, the t-value is 0.94 is not significant at .05 level. This implies that there is no gender affect on the parental attitude about inclusive education.

Table No. 4. : Comparison of scale means score with reference to educational level of parents.

| Education Status | N | Mean | S.D. | Mean Diff. | t-Value |
|------------------|----|-------|------|------------|--|
| Below Graduate | 76 | 26.95 | 3.08 | 0.36 | t=0.33, df=98 (P>0.05, Not Significant) |
| Graduate or | 24 | 26.58 | 4.99 | | |
| Above Graduate | | | | | |

As seen in the above table the attitude on inclusive education of parents having educational qualification below graduate level and graduate or above graduate level are 26.95 & 26.58 respectively t-value was found to be 0.33 which is not significant at 0.05 levels. From this result it is evident that level of education (below graduate and graduate or above graduate) has no impact on parental Attitude towards inclusive education. Most of the parents preferred inclusive education.

Table No. 5. : Scale mean score with reference to age of parents

| Age Range | N | Mean | S.D. |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 20 Years to 30 Years | 12 | 25.00 | 5.29 |
| 31 Years to 45 Years | 68 | 26.65 | 3.51 |
| Above 45 Years | 20 | 28.70 | 1.63 |
| Total | 100 | 26.86 | 3.58 |

Table No. 5(A): Comparison of scale means score with reference to age of parents

| | df | Sum of Squares | Mean Square | F-value | Sig. |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|---------|----------------------|
| Between Group | 2 | 56.15 | 28.07 | 2.30 | P>0.050, |
| Within Group | 97 | 571.86 | 12.16 | – | Not Signi- ficant |
| Total | 99 | 628.020 | | | |

The above table shows the Mean score of parental attitude towards inclusive education. Less than three parental ages group is twenty to thirty years, thirty one to forty five years and above forty-five years. The mea score for the three above age groups are 25.00, 26.65 and 28.70 respectively F-value is found to be 2.30, which is not significant at 0.05 level. From this result, it is evident that age level has no impact on parental attitude towards inclusive education. Most of the parents preferred inclusive education.

Table No. 6. : Scale mean score with the reference of income of parents

| Income Level | N | Mean | SD |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| Up to 2000/- P.M. | 44 | 26.82 | 3.15 |
| 2001 to 5000/-P.M. | 32 | 27.19 | 3.12 |
| Above 5000/- P.M. | 24 | 26.50 | 4.94 |
| Total | 100 | 26.86 | 3.58 |

Table No. 6(A) : Comparison of scale means score with the reference of income of parents

| | df | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F-value | Sig. |
|---------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-------------|---------|----------------------|
| Between Group | 2 | 3.31 | 2 | 1.65 | .12 | P>0.050, |
| Within Group | 97 | 624.70 | 97 | 13.292 | | Not Signi- ficant |
| Total | 99 | 628.02 | 99 | | | |

The above table shows the mean score of parental attitude towards inclusive education. Among three parental income groups, upto Rs.2000/- Rs. 2001/- to Rs. 5000/- and above Rs. 5000/- per month. The mean score for the above three income groups are 26.82, 27.19 & 26.50 respectively F-value is found to be 0.12 which is not significant at 0.05 level. From this result it is evident that income level has no impact on parental attitude towards inclusive education. Most of the parents preferred inclusive education.

Interpretation Of Results: Parental attitude on inclusive education were analyzed in the present study. Survey method is used for this purpose. Demographic information of parents was collected using a format & parental attitude were collected by the use of a questionnaire. The attitude of mothers and fathers towards inclusive education were compared. Parental attitude towards inclusive education were also compared with respect to parental age, educational qualification, income, and mental retardation of their children.

It was observed from the results that both the mothers and the fathers had high ratings for inclusive education. There is hardly any difference between the attitude of mothers and fathers so far as inclusive education is concerned. This result is indicating to the fact that gender has no impact on parental attitude towards inclusive

education. Findings indicated that parents had positive attitude on inclusive education and they would prefer the placement of their children in inclusive educational set up. This finding is in concurrence with the earlier findings Tess Bennett, Hwa Lee and Brenda Luke (1988). These researchers interviewed the fathers and mothers of children with disabilities. One of the findings reveals that parents had broad attitude on inclusion as they considered the children as members of larger society.

Result of the present study reveals that parents preferred inclusion setting for the children with disabilities. Irrespective of parental age qualification income and mental retardation of their children. Most of the parents had broad positive attitude on inclusive education. Though many of the earlier studies were revealed about the impact of age, income, educational qualification on parental attitude on inclusion. The findings of such studies reveal positive opinion of parents towards inclusive education. John E., Christina of V. Kraayenoord and Anne J. (2003) investigated of 354 Australian parents of children with having special needs. They found many of these parents were in favour in inclusion. The finding of this study reflected the increases trend towards inclusion in general education to society.

Item wise the questions were analyzed it was observed that 100% parents preferred inclusive education, as it provide better opportunity for mainstreaming, 94% parents accepted inclusive education as it facilitates all round development and 90% parents maintained it would enhance the self esteem of children. These Findings were supported by findings of Tichenor, Mercedes S., Heins, Bette, Piechura C. and Kathy (2000) the findings of their study on parents' perception of a co-taught inclusive classroom suggested that the parents were in favor of inclusive class setting. According to the parents inclusive Setting increases self esteem, social skills and academic achievement.

It was also observed that 100% of the parents supported the statement that their children would get better opportunity to improve language and communication skills by interacting the non-disabled peers in inclusive set up. Many parents agreed to the fact that inclusive set up would foster acceptance and (94% parents) children with disabilities would demonstrating high level of social interacting (98% parents). This was supported by the findings of Laurel M.G. Uuhanev and Spencer J.S. (2000). In several studies.

These researchers analyzed perception and experience of parents of children with and without disabilities concerning inclusive education. Results of these studies reveal that majority of parents of children with disabilities supported inclusion. They believe that it would promote the acceptance of the children and it would help their children develop socially, emotionally and academically.

After analyzing parental attitude on various aspects on inclusive education, it was found that majority of the parents had positive view towards inclusive education. They prefer

their children to be placed in inclusive education set up. According to the parental attitude inclusive education setting would help in overall development of their children. As revealed from this study parents were quite optimist about inclusion. These types of parental attitude have a strong bearing for future planning of inclusive education in developing country like India.

Implication Of The Study: In the field of education for children with disabilities this study has a specific importance. Every student should be an integral part of the regular classroom in general school. Nobody should be segregated due to his or her disabilities. Inclusive education is the new and recent trend in the education system. For successful educational system the parents' involvement and attitude about any new concept or model is very necessary. Because the parents are the basic and the first teacher of the child and home is the first school. The parental attitude recording in this study will help in the establishment of the inclusive education set up in the society.

Findings And Suggestions: Findings indicate very positive attitude of parents towards inclusive education. Most of the parents having children with mental retardation preferred the placement of their children in inclusive effective set-up with belief that inclusive set up would provide better and effective environment for the overall development of their children. Irrespective of the age, educational qualification and income of the parents, both mothers and fathers had a high rating for inclusive education.

The findings of this study through light on the following facts:

1. Parents have positive attitude towards inclusive education and they consider inclusive education can help in over all development of their children.
2. Most of the parents believe that inclusive education set up can provide better, effective and maximum opportunity for mainstreaming for children.
3. Parents prefer sending their children to inclusive education set up with optimistic attitude.
4. Parents believe that their children can get greater opportunity to improve language and communication skills by interacting with their non-disabled peers in inclusive education.

The findings of the present study show that inclusive education is the future hope of the parents. They are eagerly waiting for the setting up of inclusive education. But the foundation of inclusive education needs to be laid down necessitates ample researches in the area. The findings of this study give an idea about parental perception and attitude on inclusive education. The total integration of the persons with disabilities is possible through the inclusive education.

Suggestions For Further Study: The following are the suggestions for further research, which enable a thorough understanding of the problem and better preparation for establishment o inclusive education in India:-

1. Comparative analysis of parental attitude of children

- with mental retardation with that of parents of non disabled children.
2. Comparative analysis of attitude of regular school teacher with that of attitude of special educator.
 3. The comparative research study should include different category of disabilities like Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Multiple Disabilities, Autism, and Cerebral Palsy etc.
 4. Study on required of infrastructure facilities or inclusive education.

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