

MAINSTREAMING OF CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES: A STUDY OF SCHOOLS OF KOLKATA, INDIA

Arundhati Sarkar¹
Elizabeth Dey²

¹Manochetna Academic and Research Centre, Manovikas Kendra, Kolkata, India (asasauro1@gmail.com)

²Department of Education, Shri Shikshayatan College, Kolkata, India (elizabethdey1969@gmail.com)

Accepted date: 14-09-2018

Published date: 15-12-2018

To cite this document: Sarkar, A., & Dey, Elizabeth. (2018). Mainstreaming of Children with Learning Difficulties: A Study of Schools of Kolkata, India. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 3 (20), 94-109.

Abstract: Any mainstream school's trajectory of 'Inclusive Education' is dependent on the key factors playing out their roles for the actualisation of the proposed concept. The concept of 'Inclusive Education' envisions an environment where key factors: educators, administrators, and educational policies cater to diverse learners in an all-inclusive learning environment. 'Mainstreaming' of Children with Learning Difficulties (LD) in a system of 'Inclusive Education' (IE) enhance the quality of learning of students with Learning Difficulties as well as those without. In this context, the paper examines classroom teachers' attitude regarding 'Inclusive Education' in selected mainstream schools of Kolkata, West Bengal, India. A study was conducted with the help of a questionnaire schedule administered on 100 teachers. Responses to crucial questions were statistically computed by Chi-Square Test, interpreted and analysed. Of the two hypotheses drawn for study, the first states that mainstream school teachers' attitude towards Children with LD will be positive. The second hypothesis states that teachers will show a positive attitude toward providing additional guidance to children with LD in mainstream classrooms. The majority of responses supported the first hypothesis but rejected the second. Interviews of the respondents were recorded for a qualitative analysis, as well. Emerging traits from quantitative and qualitative analyses are discussed in the manuscript. This study may have implications for an expansive and in-depth research into the apprehensions of teachers of Secondary schools and lacunae in the education system to make 'Inclusive Education's success.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Mainstreaming, Divergent Learners, Learning Difficulties

Introduction

'Inclusive Education'(IE)and mainstreaming of children with diversity go hand in hand. When mainstream schools of a country practices inclusive education, implications are there that precedence is given to the need of all children irrespective of their diversity. This is the first step to eliminate all forms of discrimination in the learning environment and in society at large. Proponents of this policy uphold that it is far more effective than exclusion practice. Exclusion practice in education is a contradiction to inclusive practices. Here segregation of vulnerable learners who may have specific needs are sought in specially designed schools or institutions. Whereas, mainstreaming and IE may advocate presence of all kinds of learners with or without challenges who may attend general classes as well as may make of specially designed and equipped resource rooms that may cater to specific individual needs of some learners. Access to a resource room for direct instruction has shown effective increase in students' academic skills and thus increasing the abilities applied by students with Learning Difficulties (LD)in a general education setting.

Here, the study focuses on children with LD who are in general educational set-up and are part of mainstream schools. As these individuals may not have any kind of physical features to help in identification process, they often go unidentified in classrooms of mainstream schools. As identification of these children is often a dilemma especially among teachers with low awareness, they are misunderstood as capable but 'lazy or naughty'. In keeping the perspective of these vulnerable children, experts have chosen to coin the term 'Hidden Disability'. Global statistics show that there may be 10-15% children present in any given classroom who may have a need to learn differently in spite of their average to above average intelligence. These children form a significant part of human resource. When helped to develop their potential to the fullest extent, they can play a major role in building of a nation. These children with LD may however need some special accommodation and classroom teacher's attention in mainstream schools. It has been observed that a mainstream school teacher spends 98.7% of their time in whole- class interaction. Children with LD may spend twice as much time in whole class activities. It is to be noted that 'one to one activities for these children are teacher's responsibility to accomplish whole-class teaching-learning. Individual Educational Programmes of these children should relate to general –education curriculum. In this system three fundamental factors that govern the mechanism of IE are support provided by the policy makers, administrators of the educational institutions and educators of the children in mainstream classroom who manage the stage. Cochran (1998) commented that, it is thus imperative that a positive teacher attitude towards inclusion may be the key to the success of including students with special needs. The attitudes of these teachers may play an important role to the success of an inclusion model and the factors that influence attitudes in a positive manner. According to Kavale (2002) the requisite attitude to include students with special needs in general education setting are not yet in place.

Students with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities (LD) in an inclusive setting out perform the ir peers who receive instruction outside of regular classroom setting. Regular students also benefit from inclusion practices both academically and socially. According to this line of research, inclusion seems to have a positive effect on all students academically and socially. Inclusion in both principle and process requires adaptation and or transforming the education system at large, notably the way in which schools adapt their learning and teaching practices to cater for all learners. This requires attention to a wide range of interventions, among them the curriculum, the nature of teaching and the quality of the learning environment.

Literature Review

In this section, significant acts of global importance are stated. One significant act that was remodelled by India in early 2018 is highlighted as well. Some significant research findings regarding teachers' attitude towards children with LD in IE scenario as stated in various journal articles are discussed.

The World Declaration on Education for All, adopted in Jomtein (1990), set out an overall vision of universalising access to education for all children, youth and adults promoting equality.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) declares that Inclusive Education means: schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include the disabled children as well. It is to be noted Salamanca Conference set a special focus on Special Needs in Education.

The Dakar Framework for Action (2000), place special emphasis on 'Inclusive Education'. It reaffirmed the vision and mission of Salamanca Conference. Dakar thus, emphasised that 'Inclusion' is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, increasing their participation in learning and eliminating exclusion.

A right based approach in education is reflected at present in India as well with 'Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act RTE (2009)'. The RTE Act came into practice in 2010 in many states of India. In West Bengal it was implemented in 2012. The latest in this venture in facilitating educational facilities to the diverse group of learners is the amended 'Persons with Disability Act (2016)'. The gaps and loopholes of RTE is to be filled in by the newly declared Central Government Scheme: Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (2018).

All these policies and practices aim to enable both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment in the learning environment. This entails that teachers not only should be prepared to accommodate diverse learners in their classrooms but also be prepared to provide additional attention and support to this group. Thus, 'Inclusion' as a guiding principle has implications for teachers' practice and attitudes towards learners with challenges. Teachers' positive attitude towards 'Inclusion' depends strongly on their experience with learners perceived as 'challenging'. A successful 'Inclusive Education' creates an optimum learning environment so that all children can learn well and achieve their fullest potential. This involves considering an education system that is learner –centric and adopt support system in education that considers the diverse needs of the learners in classrooms.

Although the concept of IE may reflect the ideals of: 'Education for All', the ground reality in mainstream schools where children with and without LD attend, may be quite contradictory across the globe. Teachers of mainstream classes often report being unsure of how to provide help to those who will learn differently. Teachers report their willingness but inability to help 'those that do not disrupt the classroom routine-which often means providing whole class accommodations. Despite strong support for inclusion most teachers demonstrate mixed responses to the inclusion of children with Learning Difficulties (Woodcock, Stuart, Vialle, Wilma 2016). Bansal (2016 a) conducted a study on the attitudes of teachers in private schools towards IE. This study highlighted the fact that there existed significant amount of differences in attitude. Yet another study in the same year by Bansal (2016b) found out teachers were in

favour of learning theory but were reluctant to practice the teaching methods needed to support diverse learners. Bansal (2018) conducted another study in Chandigarh, India, that showed that primary school teachers' attitude towards inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms was neither positive nor negative. However thematic analysis revealed that they were in favour of segregated institutions for these children. Research further indicated lack of skills to teach these students acted as primary source of impediment for successful implementation of IE.

Exclusion within education system primarily happens from a key player in the scenario: the teachers, as even with best of intentions many still lack the concept of inclusion and the various support system that it entails. Prager (2015), observed in one study in US, that mainstreaming of children with Learning Difficulties may not be desirable as this may amount to neglect and suffering for the rest of the learners in any classroom of a mainstream school. She went on to cite one case where the court in US declared mainstreaming of children with LD may even amount to being unfair to the rest of the class, as it may require all or most of the teacher's attention. Scanlon and Baker (2012) declared historically, regular classroom teachers have feared that they would detract from regular teaching time and they may even lack expertise for specialized instruction.

Definition of Key Terms

Four key terms of the study are elaborated from available materials as per the researchers' perspectives and understanding. They are as following:

Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education (IE) is a system of education where children with special needs find acceptance and opportunity to spend time in general school classrooms with children who may not have special needs. Here learning needs of all children are catered.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming is a practice of placing students with need for special educational services in a general school classroom. This could be for part or full time period of the school day, based on specific needs of the individual students.

Learning Difficulties

A person with Learning Difficulties (LD) refers to an individual having specific problems processing certain information related to Reading, Writing and Numeracy. These individuals with LD do not have impaired general intelligence.

Divergent Learners

Divergent Learners possess average to exceptionally high intelligence, but may not take to general curriculum or traditional teaching methods of teaching in general school classrooms.

Problem Statement

Divergent learners with Learning Difficulties (LD) will be present in mainstream classrooms at any given point in time. Recent policies and Governmental Acts in India make it imperative for teachers to teach these children in a way that they learn. From this perspective the study focuses on ground reality in schools of Kolkata. Hence, 'Problem Statement' of the study is: Mainstreaming of Children with Learning Difficulties: A study of schools of Kolkata, India.

Objective

1. To assess the attitude of mainstream school teachers towards inclusion of children with Learning Difficulties in classrooms
2. To assess the attitude of mainstream school teachers towards providing additional guidance to children with Learning Difficulties in classrooms

Rationale

Based on the objectives, the rationale of the research study was to study the mind set of teachers in the mainstream schools regarding mainstreaming and inclusion of children with Learning Difficulties in general classrooms. The teachers are one of the key factors in making 'Inclusive Education' a true reality, hence a small study in three schools of Kolkata, India was conducted.

Hypotheses

Based on the review, researchers formulated two hypotheses for the study:

H₁: The attitude of mainstream school teachers towards inclusion of children with Learning Difficulties in classrooms will be positive.

H₂: The attitude of mainstream school teachers 'towards providing additional guidance to children with Learning Difficulties in classrooms will be positive.

Method

Participants

Participants were mainstream school teachers (n=100) of Kolkata from three schools. The two girls schools: Girls 'School 'A'(n=39) and Girls' School 'B'(n=36), comprised of 75 participants out of the total respondents. The 3rd school was Co-ed School 'C' (n= 25). Attention was given to have all parameters same, such as all institutions were from English medium schools, all taught at Secondary level, teachers' training and teaching experiences were more or less of similar level, all institutions were mainstream schools, socio-economic back ground of school students and teachers were similar and last of all schools were from inner city of Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

Sampling Procedure

The research study followed a random stratified sampling procedure. The names of mainstream schools of Kolkata were available from a directory of schools. Then the English medium schools were selected and divided into 4 zones of: North, South, East and West. From each zone Co-ed, Girls' and Boys' schools were segregated and randomly selected. Then again by random selection 4 chits were drawn, of which 2 girls' school, 1 boys' school and 1 co-ed school were selected. In these schools, the researchers met up with administrators and from the school's teacher register book selected all secondary school teachers as participants. However, the boy's schools could not participate in the study for some technical reasons.

Research Tool

The research tool used for this study consisted of a 3-point questionnaire schedule. This was constructed by the researchers for the purpose of the research. It consisted of 14 questions in all. The teachers of mainstream schools (respondents) were to put ticks against the questions in appropriate places of: Yes, No and Not Sure. A key was also developed for the questionnaire schedule.

The questionnaire schedule had instructions regarding the procedure to fill in the form. There was also the option to fill in with additional comments if they choose to write in their personal opinion.

The questionnaire schedule was validated by 5 experts from the domain area. Apart from this, for 2 key questions: responses of respondents were recorded following Interview method.

Procedure

Researchers visited the two girls' school's 'A' & 'B' and Co-Ed school 'C' within a span of 10 days to collect data. The questionnaire schedules were filled in by the respondents /school teachers, supervised by researchers in similar conducive environment. Discussions among the respondents were discouraged to maintain objectivity.

Then total data collected from responses of two crucial questions were selected for computation and statistical analysis. The researchers considered these two questions crucial for providing an idea of the teachers' attitude towards 'Inclusive Education'. These two questions were directly derived from the research hypotheses.

Here a Social Survey method was followed by giving out questionnaire schedules to teachers of mainstream schools. A nominal scale was applied when Chi- Square Test was conducted to examine the hypotheses drawn by the researchers.

Two Research Questions from the Questionnaire schedule which tested out the hypotheses were:

Q1. Do you think children with Learning Difficulties should study in mainstream schools? (Linked to hypothesis: H₁)

Q2. Do you think giving special attention to these children in general classrooms is unfair to other children without Learning Difficulties? (Linked to hypothesis : H₂)

Data collected from the interviews of the respondents to the key questions were analysed qualitatively based on thematic analyses of responses.

Findings and Discussion

Data preparation for statistical computations of data available from key questions to test out the hypotheses were conducted.

In order to investigate the first hypotheses (H₁) the total participants or respondent teachers from three schools of Kolkata (n=100) were separated in three groups – Girls' school A (n=39), Girls' school 'B'(n=36) and Co-ed school C(n=25). The total positive responses of the respondents to RQ1 corresponding to H₁ was computed.

FIGURE 1
POSITIVE RESPONSES TO H₁ & RQ1

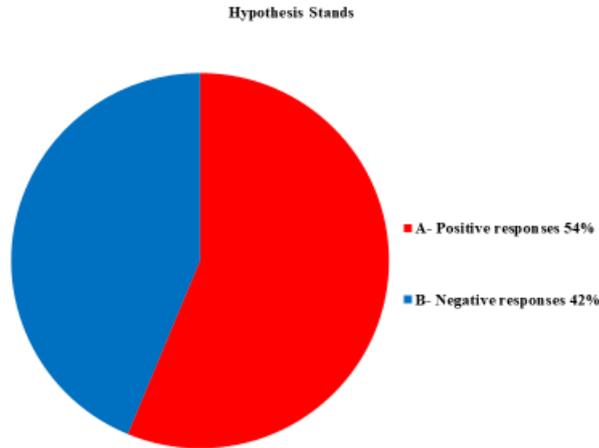


Figure 1: Total Responses of Schools: A, B & C to H₁ & RQ1

The Figure 1, shows 54% of respondents gave a positive response and 46% of respondents gave negative responses to H₁ & RQ1. Thus, as majority of the respondents gave a positive response, H₁ stands.

Then inter group comparisons of positive attitudes of the respondents towards inclusion of children with LD in mainstream classrooms, were conducted. Total 'Yes' response to the particular question were computed. Respondents with positive attitude were 24% from Girls' school 'A'. This amounted to total 61% with positive attitude within the group. In the Girls' school 'B' with positive attitude was 9%, in the total group, which amounted to 25% within the group. Co-ed School C's total positive attitude among the whole respondent population was 21%, this amounted to 84% within the group. Therefore, in schools A and C majority of the respondents showed a positive attitude towards inclusion, thus supporting the hypothesis. However, majority of school B, did not show positive attitude towards inclusion.

In order to find out significant differences in the intergroup comparisons, first Chi-Square test was done between 'A' & 'B'. It was observed that, X^2 for 2df at $\alpha=0.05(5.99)$. So significant difference between school's 'A' and 'B' was noted. Therefore, the respondents with positive attitude in School 'A' compared to School 'B' was statistically found to be significant. Inter group comparison between 'A' and 'C' however revealed X^2 for 1df at $\alpha=0.05(3.84)$. Here it is to be noted that the tabulated value was 3.67 (below 3.84). This led to the conclusion that there was no significant difference between Girls' school 'A' and Co-ed school 'C'. Both schools with respondents with high number of positive attitudes approved to be statistically insignificant. Comparison between Girls' school 'B' and Co-ed school 'C' revealed significant amount of differences between the schools as X^2 for 1df at $\alpha=0.05(3.84)$. This revealed significant differences among the two schools. Respondents with less positive attitude towards inclusion in Girls' School 'B' compared to Co-ed School 'C' statistically proved their

differences to be significant. Last of all positive respondents of two Girls' schools 'A' and 'B' grouped together were compared with that of Co-ed school 'C's' respondents. In this the tabulated value was X^2 for 2df at $\alpha = 0.05$ (5.99), which draws conclusion that significant difference was there between respondents of girls' schools and that of the co-ed school. Thus, respondents with positive attitudes in girls' schools taken together outnumbered the co-ed school respondents and this became statistically significant. Interestingly, although 84% of co-ed school teacher respondents within the group showed a positive attitude towards inclusion, lagged behind the two girls' schools taken together.

The inter-group comparison of schools: A & C, have been highlighted in the figure 2, given below.

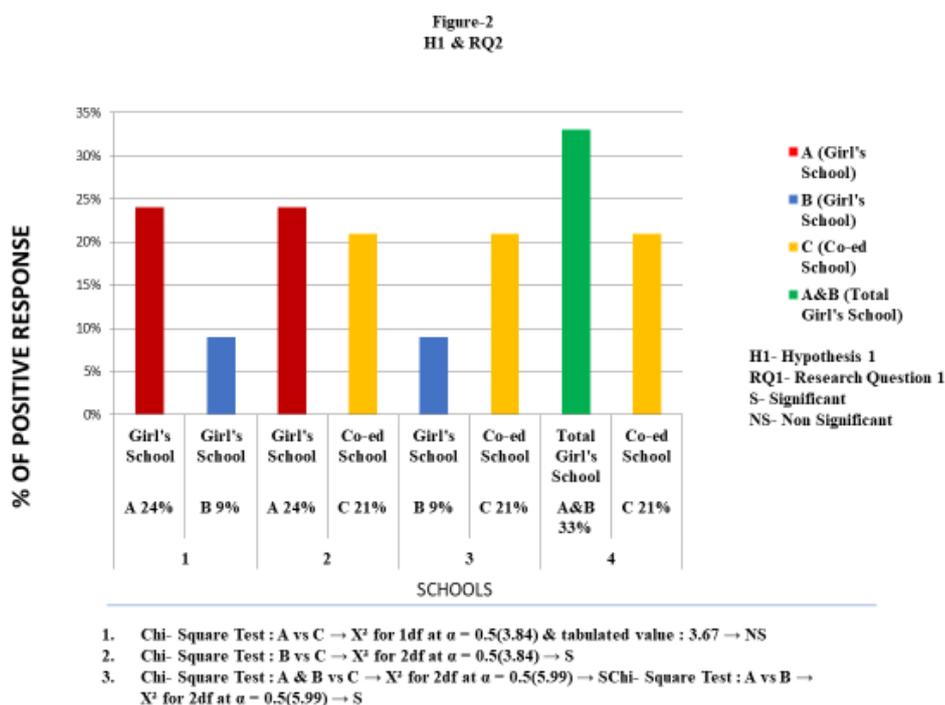


Figure 2: Inter-Group Comparisons of Positive Responses to H₁ & RQ1

Comparative group data in percentile and statistical data of Chi-Square Test are stated above. Positive responses of respondents from the 3 participating schools: 'A', 'B', 'C' was computed to test the second hypothesis H₂, corresponding to Research Question 2 RQ2. It is illustrated in the figure as given below:

FIGURE 3
POSITIVE RESPONSES TO H₂ & RQ2

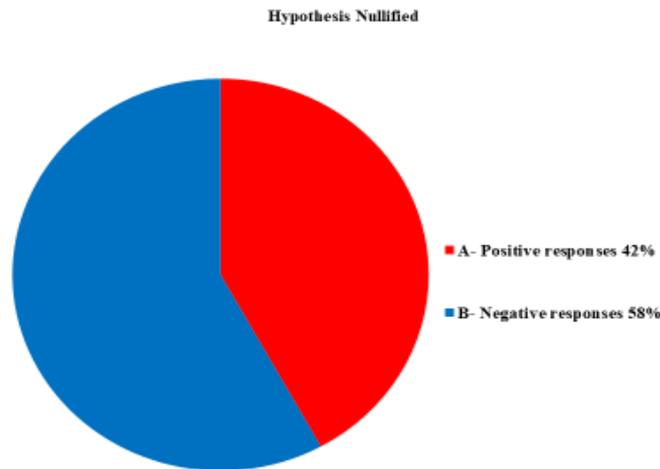


Figure 3: Total Responses of Schools: A, B & C to H₂ & RQ2

Figure 3, highlights that as the total negative responses was more than the positive ones, thus H₂ was nullified

Investigation of responses for positive attitude towards providing additional guidance to children with LD in a mainstream classroom examined the second hypothesis (H₂) drawn by the researchers. The total responses for 'no's of School 'A', 'B' and 'C' were calculated and computation was carried out as this indicated a positive attitude of the respondents. The total positive responses for three schools taken together was 42%. This was far less than expectation. An inter-group comparison was done to find out the comparative positive responses to H₂ corresponding to second Research Question RQ2. Girls' school 'A' amounted to 29% with positive response among the three schools. However, within the group, 'A' showed 74.35% respondents with positive attitude. Girls' school 'B' gave a positive response of only 10% in the total population. Within the group, school 'B' had 27.77% individuals with positive attitude towards providing additional guidance to children. Interestingly in Co-ed school 'C' respondents with positive attitudes among all the participants in 3 groups taken together were only 3%. This amounted to about 12% respondents with positive attitude within the group 'C'. The hypothesis drawn by the researchers that attitudes of teachers of mainstream school will be positive in all schools stood its ground only in Girls' School 'A'. In both Girls' School 'B' and Co-ed School 'C' the hypothesis was nullified.

For further investigation, the researchers carried out an inter group comparison and data was computed by Chi-Square test. Comparison of Girls' School 'A' and Girls' School 'B' revealed that there was a significant difference in positive attitude between the two groups with X² value for 1df at $\alpha=0.05$ (3.84). School 'A' when compared to School 'C' for comparative positive responses, showed the value of X² for 1 df at $\alpha=0.05$ (3.84). Thus, conclusions were drawn that the difference between the two schools were significant. Comparative analysis between school

'B' and school 'C' were found to be significant with X^2 for 1df at $\alpha=0.05(3.84)$. Though both the schools showed less positive attitude towards providing guidance to children with LD in class, a difference in responses was noticed. Total number of positive respondents from Girls' Schools 'A' & 'B' compared to Co-ed school 'C' had X^2 value for 1 df at $\alpha=0.05(3.84)$. Here again, the comparative analysis revealed a significant amount of difference. It can thus be concluded that the significant amount of differences could be due to a greater number of positive responses from respondents of classroom teachers of girls' schools as compared to the co-ed school. This comparative group analysis is depicted in Figure 4 as shown below:

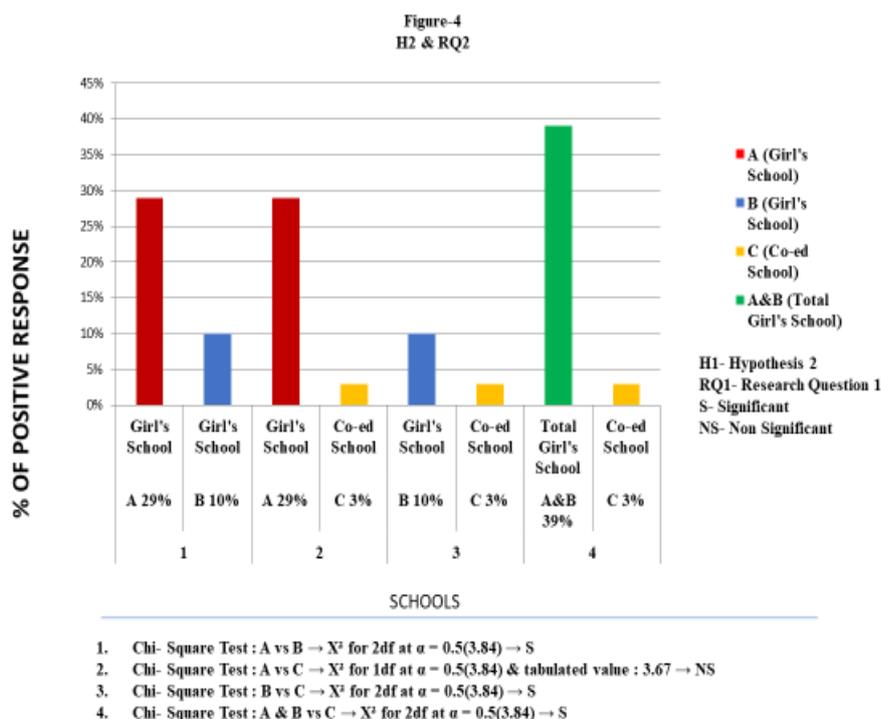


Figure 4: Inter-Group Comparisons of Positive Responses to H₂ & RQ2

Chi-Square results of inter-group comparisons are also given in the above figure.

Qualitative Analysis Method

Procedure

The responses from the three schools: 2 Girls' schools and 1 Co-ed school were further classified into two primary themes based on the Hypotheses H₁ and H₂ and research questions drawn from the two hypotheses. The themes and few significant responses have been given verbatim from the interviews recorded by the researchers. The verbatim of the responses shed further light into the mindset of the responses. For purpose of narrowing down the study 30 responses of respondents were randomly selected : School 'A' (n=10), School 'B' (n=10), School 'C' (n=10). From these responses only significant 3 verbatim of responses from each school have been selected and tabulated. These verbatim of the 3 schools expressed the group sentiments.

Findings of the Qualitative Study

The research study endeavoured to look into the mind set of teachers of the 3 schools: Girls' school 'A' & 'B' & Co-ed school 'C' and their guiding thoughts and apprehensions for Research Questions and Hypotheses of the study. Inner thoughts and apprehensions guide our opinions and eventually influences the outcome of group sentiments on any proposed issues. Here the first Hypothesis: H₁ is linked to Research Question 1 or RQ1. The exact RQ1 is one of the two chosen questions from Research Tool. The Research Tool is the Questionnaire Schedule deemed crucial in unravelling the sentiments towards inclusion of children with LD in mainstream classrooms. The second Hypothesis: H₂ is again linked to Research Question 2 or RQ2. Research Question 2 is the second question selected from the Research Tool deemed suitable for unravelling the mind-set of mainstream school teachers in providing additional guidance to children with LD within the class rooms of mainstream schools.

The table below highlights the selected verbatim of teachers from the three schools considered for the research study.

Table 1: Responses of Respondents as per Themes

	Themes	Responses of Respondents
1 st	Acceptance of children with LD in mainstream classrooms	<p>School A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is our duty to treat all children as one. I totally support that children with LD should study in general classrooms. 2. I think equal opportunities should be given to all children. 3. I support the idea but probably children with LD will be neglected in general classroom as their needs will not be served. <p>School B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not sure about the concept and I am fearful of what it entails. 2. Totally disagree with the concept. These children should attend a separate school. 3. There is a child in my class with whom I am struggling. I want to learn how to guide him. As there is no support...I am apprehensive ! <p>School C</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the idea. 2. I want to support these children but I need more support from school authority. 3. As a teacher It is my duty to teach all children and cater to their needs.
2 nd	Fairness of providing additional guidance to children with LD inclassroom	<p>School A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I think it is fair to provide help to vulnerable 2. Question of fairness does not arise at all ! We as teachers must cater to the needs of all children ...even if they need additional time 3. Yes it is fair but I will need assistance of supporting teachers in the class so that other children are not neglected <p>School B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grossly inappropriate to let these children study with 'normal' children. I did not take training to teach special children ! 2. I find it unnerving. I don't think I will be able to manage . Yes I will neglect a significant number of children in this situation... 3. I think It is unfair to neglect children who are good in studies and spend most of teaching time with the ones who are struggling! <p>School C</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes it is unfair that a teacher should spend additional time with only a few children. 2. I cannot neglect my whole class to concentrate on few. Is it fair ? 3. I will be answerable to my school authority if most of my class perform badly due to additional time given to a handful. If there is a supporting staff ... then I can try to teach them but not at the cost of sacrificing class discipline!

Interpretation of Table 1

Table 1, indicates the sentiments expressed by 3 teachers from each school. They are indicative of the group attitudes expressed and discussed in the quantitative data analysis. Some sentiments and apprehension that may have influenced attitudes of respondents expressed earlier were revealed. Emerging traits of willingness was evident for the first theme for school 'A' and 'C', but school 'B' was opposed to the idea in general. For the second theme School 'A' remained optimistic, 'B' moderately opposed to the idea but surprisingly school 'C' opposed the idea to a large extent.

Taking into perspective the 1st theme of Research Question 1: 'Inclusion of Children with LD in mainstream schools' responses of 3 respondents of each schools reflecting the group sentiments, have been highlighted in the above table. Individual focus on each school at a time and analysing each of the three verbatim per school provides opportunity to evaluate variability factors that may have influenced the respondents. Following discussion will consider each school at a time, consider three respondents from the respective schools and then tally the verbatim presented with the group consensus expressed and discussed earlier in the study.

In Girls' School 'A', the very first respondent or 1A₁: expressed whole hearted support for the idea of 'inclusion 'of children with LD in mainstream classrooms. The respondent went to express sentiment of deep commitment where the person considered teaching 'all' children as one. 1A₁ commitment to treat all at par expresses an inclusive mentality. The second respondent of the group 1A₂: came out as proponent of 'equal opportunity for all '. The third respondent of the group 1A₃, supported but expressed concern that in a general classroom child with LD may get neglected. Considering the responses of the three respondents of the Girls' school: 'A' the opinions expressed by the respondents were tallying with a general positive group attitude towards children with LD in the classrooms of mainstream schools.

In Girls' School 'B', first respondent or 1B₁: expressed a strong negative opinion towards the theme. The respondent's opposition to the idea of inclusion was obvious from words like 'being fearful '. Apprehensions of what the idea may entail was highlighted and at the same time it was obvious the respondent was not aware about the concept of 'Inclusion'. The second respondent from the same school 1B₂: grossly opposed the idea. The respondent used strong words like 'totally disagree'. This respondent even spoke out openly in support of segregation. In the face of strong negative sentiments, the third respondent or 1B₃, expressed mild support laced with apprehension for the concept and ways of coping with diverse learners in mainstream classroom. The general consensus of the group is negative opinion towards 'inclusive education'. Individual verbatim recorded and quoted in the table comes out in support of group consensus. The group in general reflected a lack of awareness for the concept topped with lack of flexibility in their attitude to deal with children with LD in a mainstream classroom.

In the Co-Ed school: 'C', the first respondent 1C₁ quoted in Table 1, went out wholeheartedly for the idea. The second respondent or 1C₂, declared the willingness to have children with LD within the ambit of mainstream schools. However, this respondent raised a crucial aspect of having appropriate support system to facilitate the process. The third respondent or 1C₃ from this school under this theme, expressed opinion of being duty-bound to support this group of children and to cater to their diverse needs. This overall outright support for inclusion was the

consensus of this group and this reflected from the sentiments gathered from the recorded verbatim stated in the table above.

The 2nd theme under consideration in the qualitative study is linked to the second hypothesis H₂& RQ2, that happens to be another crucial area: 'willingness of class-teachers to provide additional guidance to children with LD. Under this category Girls' school: 'A' showed an overall positive attitude. The three respondents verbatim recorded by the researchers reflected the sentiment of the group. Individual verbatim also reflected the underlying sentiments for doing so. First respondent under this category 2A₁, felt strongly that it is only 'fair' to help the vulnerable children who may benefit from the additional guidance in mainstream classes. Second respondent or 2A₂ in fact came out strongly in support of the idea and even stated 'the question of efficacy of the guidance does not arise!' Teachers are duty bound to help children who have possibility but may falter. Strong sentiments in favour of the theme was expressed here. The third respondent or 2A₃, confirmed that the idea was 'fair' however this respondent too highlighted the need for supporting staffs for successful implementation of the idea.

In Girls' school 'B', three respondents again consistently gave negative opinion and thereby opposing the second theme's central idea. This, however tallied with the group sentiments as expressed in the study earlier. First respondent under this category 2B₁ strongly opposed the idea. The respondent said the training taken by this person was inadequate to teach children with LD. 2B₁ exhibited strong opinion in favour of segregation. Children with LD were even referred as not 'normal'. Lack of flexibility and prejudice was exhibited here. Second respondent 2B₂ too opposed the idea completely. The whole idea appeared to be unnerving to 2B₂. The third respondent or 2B₃ too again came out to support the group sentiment and found the proposed concept to be grossly unfair. Catering needs of few and neglecting promising good performers was unacceptable. However, this respondent again raised the issue of necessity of supporting staffs for success of the idea. Emerging concern of this group stemmed from prejudice and lack of awareness to deal with intelligent group of diverse learners.

Co-Ed school: 'C', surprisingly opposed the idea most strongly as a whole! 2C₁, opposed the idea and stated that this whole idea was 'unfair'. The second respondent in this group or 2C₂, too supported the sentiment of the first respondent and strongly opposed the idea on the basis of unfairness. The third respondent or 2C₃ felt helping and giving more time to a group of children will neglect other children in the class. This may result in administrative actions from school authority. However, this last respondent again raised the efficacy and urgent requirement of a support system to implement the whole concept of providing additional guidance to children with LD in a mainstream classroom. Another emerging concern was of 'sacrificing' class discipline where individual needs of diverse learners will be catered in a classroom. Sentiments of all three chosen respondents in this group tallied with the negative group sentiments expressed in the study earlier. Group sentiment of opposing the theme was reflected from recorded interviews of respondents as stated in the table above.

Emergent trait here, indicated insecurity regarding lack of support to guide children with LD in mainstream classes. Teachers in general made mixed responses in spite of general consensus for inclusion. However, most respondents had reservation regarding 'fairness' of the second theme idea. Lack of awareness about children with LD became evident from the recorded verbatim of respondents.

Conclusion

The researchers conclude that in general teachers of girls' school 'A' emerged with a positive attitude towards catering towards divergent learners which is crucial for 'Inclusive Education'(IE). However conclusive opinion could not be drawn regarding attitude of teachers of girls 'schools as School 'B' showed resistance to the requisite mindset to facilitate an 'Inclusive Educational' environment. The teachers of co-ed school in comparison to the girls' school showed resistance to provide additional support to students in need but their opinion firmly supported inclusion of children with LD in general classrooms. Hence response of teachers of co-ed school was mixed. Comparative studies revealed attitude of respondents in 2 girls' schools showed attitudes of contrasting nature. However, when 2 girls' schools were taken together had far more respondents with positive attitude compared to that in the co-ed school. Here, references to LD can be drawn to Bansal (2018) and his study that drew similar conclusion. Bansal (2016a), found mixed responses among school teachers and another study of Bansal (2016b), was in alignment with the findings of this study. Research findings of Woodcock et.al (2016) too supported the overall findings of the study. However, a deep look into mindsets and apprehensions of teachers in the domain only became evident from the qualitative thematic analyses of the recorded verbatim. This is considered to be crucial as this may have influenced their attitudes towards inclusion of children with LD in the three schools. Some were willing to provide the services required for the vulnerable children while others opposed the very idea of inclusion. However most of them mentioned apprehension regarding supporting infra-structure and teaching staffs to carry out the teaching service to children with or without any kind of LD in mainstream classes. Mixed responses among the majority of respondents were noted. This may have implications for further awareness in the domain of IE, which may influence attitudes of mainstream school teachers and availability of robust support services to make IE successful.

Definite conclusions could not be drawn as the limitation of the study was that, small number of schools were involved. Only English medium schools were taken under the purview of the research study and schools of regional language as medium of teaching were left out. Only teachers of girls 'schools and co-ed schools were considered but teachers of boys 'schools could not be taken within the purview of the research due to technical factors and time constraints.

Further in-depth and expansive research in this very crucial domain of 'Inclusive Education' is needed to be carried out with utmost urgency.

References

- Alur,M. (1996).*Convocation Address*. Madras: Spastics Society of India.
- Alur,S.(2005).*Including Disabled People in Development in Inclusive Education*, Alur, M. and Bach,M. Eds.From Rhetoric to Reality: The North South Dialogue II, Viva Publication, New Delhi, India.
- Alur,M. (2010).*Introduction: Beginning the Journey*, Alur,M. and Bach, M.Eds. The Journey for Inclusive Education in the Indian Sub-continent, Routledge, New York, USA.
- Armstrong,F. (2014).*Inclusive Education School Cultures, Teaching and Learning*, Richards,G. and Armstrong, F. Eds. Teaching and Learning in Diverse and Inclusive Classrooms: Key Issues For New Issues, Replika Press Pvt Ltd, India.
- Bansal,S. (2016a).Attitudes of Teachers towards Inclusive Education in Relation to their Professional Commitment. *Indian Journal of Educational Studies*,3(1),96-108.

- Bansal,S. (2016b).Teacher Education Programmes Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Classrooms: A North India context. *Journal of Disability Management and Rehabilitation*,2(2),83-90.
- Bansal,S.(2018).Understanding Teachers' Perspective of Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs(CWSN). *Educational Quest: An International Journal of Education and Applied Social Science*,9(1),115-123.
- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarva_Shiksha_Abhiyan
- Scanlon,D. and Baker, D.(2012). An Accommodation Model for the Secondary Inclusive Classroom. *Learning Disability Quarterly*.35(4) 212-224.doi:10.117/0731948712451261 .<http://ldq.sagepub.com>
- Singh,A.J. and Virk, J.K.(2014). Inclusive Education. Twenty-first Century Publication, Patiala, India.
- Sutton,J. E.(2013).'*Teacher Attitudes of Inclusion and Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities*', Dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi <http://aquilla.usm.edu/dissertation/398>
- UNESCO (1990). *World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs*, Jomtien, Thailand. Available online at http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/jomtien_declaration.shtml
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 61/295.2007.*United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. New York, UN Headquarters. <Http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/en/drip.html>
- Walker,T. J.(2012). '*Attitudes and Inclusion: An Examination of Teacher's Attitudes Towards Including Students with Disabilities*', Doctor of Education, Dissertation, University of Aquilla, Southern California <http://aquilla.usm.edu/dissertation/398>
- Woodcock,S. andVialle, W. (2016). '*An Examination of Pre-service Teachers' Attributions for Students with Specific Learning Difficulties*'. *Learning and Individual Difficulties*, 45,252-259. doi: 10.1016/j.lindif.2015.12.021
- World Education Forum, 2000. *The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All-Meeting our Collective Commitments*. Paris, UNESCO. (ED-2000/WS/27)