



Perception of Normal Students Towards Differently-abled Peers in the Classroom

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Introduction

The majority of children and young people with disabilities live in developing countries where they face inequalities in education and other opportunities. Negative attitudes constitute one of the major barriers to the development of their potential. This study aimed to describe the attitudes of students without disabilities towards persons with disabilities and to assess the role that gender and interpersonal contact play in shaping these attitudes.

The review revealed that scant research has been conducted into the relationship between students' attitudes and the social participation of persons with disabilities. Some studies were found supporting this relationship with empirical data. Based on those outcomes it can be carefully concluded that positive attitudes of peers are important for successful social outcomes of inclusive education. However, it seems a challenging route to foster more positive attitudes among peers as their attitudes are influenced by different variables. Based on the outcomes of this current study we want to recommend focusing in future studies on interventions to improve the attitudes of students. Such intervention should incorporate different perspectives, such as parental involvement, knowledge about and experience with peers with disabilities. Ultimately, this may lead to effective interventions whereby students with disabilities can better participate socially in regular education.

Hence there are various studies related to the attitude of students towards persons with disabilities. Most of the studies were conducted in Abroad as well as in India. Very few studies are conducted in Odisha related to the attitude of students towards peers with disabilities. Therefore the investigator is interested to undertake a study about students' attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

Review of related literature

Das (2010) recommended inclusive education due to its benefit for children with special needs. Bunch (2010) indicated that the development of friendships and lower degrees of abusive behavior in inclusive schools. Though students in both systems advocated for peers with disabilities, advocacy was more routine in inclusive settings. Most believed the approach taken by their schools to be appropriate for the education of peers with disabilities. Boer (2012) revealed that attitudes of peers relate to the social participation of students with disabilities. Implications of the findings are discussed in terms of promoting positive attitudes of peers. Blackman (2016) suggested that teachers must create more opportunities for meaningful direct contact between peers with and without disabilities that will lead to even better attitudes and pro-social behaviors in inclusive settings. Movkebayeva (2017) indicated varying degrees of tolerance of students depending on whether they have experience of joint training to people with disabilities. It was found out that for students who have experience of joint training with the disabled, social barriers and support segregation towards students with disabilities is typical to a lesser extent as well as compassion and desire to help and to much more extent-equitable and tolerant attitude, pursuit for cooperation and partnership. Baruah revealed that students held a more positive attitude towards their peers with disabilities than a negative attitude. This was true irrespective of gender and the type of school that the participants belonged to.

Objective of The Study

- To study the attitude of students towards persons with disabilities.
- To study the attitude of boy and girl students towards persons with disabilities.
- To study the attitude of rural and urban students towards persons with disabilities.
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Methodology

the present study, the major objective was to study the attitudes of students towards persons with disabilities in an inclusive setting. The sample for this study constitutes Secondary Schools Students of Mayurbhanj district. The investigator has selected 30 samples randomly from Secondary Schools of

the Mayurbhanj district. For the present study, the investigator has adopted questionnaires as tools for data collection, questionnaire of students consists of 30 items. The reliability coefficient of the tool was .65 and it is validated.

Analysis and interpretation

Table-2
Table-2 Mean significance difference between boys and girls students on their attitude towards differently-abled peers

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Level sig.
Boys	65	68.64	5.24	2.76	.01
Girls	85	65.21	6.11		

It is revealed from the Table-1, that the mean of attitude scores of boy and girl students towards persons with disabilities is 68.64 and 65.21 with SD 5.11 and 5.24 respectively. The "t-ratio" between the two groups was found to be 2.76 and not significant at any level of significance. This means that there is significant difference between boy and girl secondary students' attitudes towards differently-abled peers. .

Table-2
Table-2 Mean significance difference between urban and rural students on their attitude towards differently-abled

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Level sig.
Urban	75	68.64	5.36	2.01	.01
Rural	75	65.32	6.10		

It is revealed from the Table-2 that the mean of attitude scores for the resident of rural and urban secondary school students towards E-learning is 68.64 and 66.32 with SD 5.36 and 6.10 respectively. The t-ratio was found to be 2.01 and significant at .05 level of significance. This means that there is significant difference between rural and urban secondary school students' attitude towards differently-abled peers.

Discussion and Conclusion

The major findings have significant implications for teachers, headmasters, parents, community members, and administrators. In this section implications of the findings along with suggestions of the researchers have been presented. Positive attitudes towards students with disabilities is a necessary antecedent to the realization of social and educational inclusion. For positive interactions to happen among students with and without disabilities, a positive attitude towards students with disabilities is of utmost necessity. Attitudes can influence beliefs about and behavior towards people with disabilities and as such, positive attitudes of students towards peers with disabilities can largely determine the successful implementation and effectiveness of inclusive education (Roberts & Smith, 1999). On the other hand, a negative attitude can act as a barrier to inclusion (McDougall et al., 2004). It can lead the students with disabilities to feel lonely and isolate and experience bullying and teasing in schools.

The present study looks into the kind of attitude that children have towards their peers with disabilities. In an inclusive educational system, attitudinal beliefs which are not favorable towards the peers with disabilities may lead to segregation. Other adverse effects of such attitudes may include a decline in the self-esteem of children with disabilities. Hence, through this study, we tried to analyze the attitudes held by children towards their peers with disabilities in terms of positive and negative attributes. It is very important to identify how children would rate these children with disabilities with regard to a few positive and negative attributes. Positive attributes viz. happy, clean, beautiful, fresh, strong, heavy, delicate, fast, active, and negative attributes viz. sad, dirty, ugly, stale, weak, light, rugged, slow, passive, tense will be considered in the present study to rate children with disabilities. Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1971) conducted a series of studies to see the association related to positives and negatives in various concepts. The scale from those studies will be used to check and differentiate between positive and negative attributes of attitude held by male and female students from English and Vernacular medium schools towards other students with disabilities.

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