

Impact of Inclusive Teaching Strategies on Students' Learning at Primary Level

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ABSTRACT--*This research paper was focused at analyzing the impact of inclusive teaching strategies on the learning of students of class II with and without special needs. The study was experimental in nature in which traditional method of imparting instruction was compared with inclusive instructional strategies. Sample was taken from the school named F.G. Junior Model School, G-7/3-1, Islamabad. Sample size consists of 56 students, twenty-eight students were placed in experimental group and same number of students was in the control group. Both the groups were representative of inclusion, in which there were students from religious/linguistic minorities, slow learners, having low vision or articulation, hyper-actives, etc. Pre-test was used before the treatment started to equate the groups. Treatment of planned inclusive instructional techniques was given to experimental group while control group was taught by ordinary traditional method. The duration of it was two forty days. When the treatment period over, an instructor made post-test was conducted to measure the achievement of the students in the subject of English. First four lessons were taken from the text book for class II. To determine the impact of inclusive instructional strategies on students' learning in inclusive setting and traditional teaching in inclusive setting, the significance of difference between the scores of experimental and control groups at 0.05 level was tested by applying t-test and analysis was made. It was shown by analysis of data that both the groups (experimental and control) in the beginning of the experiment were approximately equal. The results of post-test have shown that inclusive instructional strategies are more effective than that of traditional method of teaching students at primary level as experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group. The result of the study reflects that inclusive instructional strategies were more effective than traditional method of teaching.*

Keywords-- *Inclusion, inclusive teaching strategies, diversity, students with special needs, teaching, learning, traditional*

I. INTRODUCTION

Education denotes to a decent development of personality through the preparation of soul, mind and rationale, procedure of thinking, sentiments and substantial faculties of people. Education is the full right of everyone and it is the duty of the government to offer rather to provide educational facilities to each and every child in the society. To provide educational facilities to all children of appropriate age is the worldwide agenda.

The most important part of the Millennium Development Goals of United Nations is the Education for All (EFA) because education is crucial part of human development, UNESCO, (2005). "The first few years of one's life are very important for an individual because they put lifelong effects on his/her personality. There is evidence that experience-based brain development in the early years sets neurological and biological pathways that affect health, learning and behaviour throughout life." (Kaul, 2008).

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There are many countries of the world in which there are varied education system that work better for some children but not for others who are considered difficult to teach, they are at risk of exclusion especially when marketplace educational competition is there (McLaughlin & Rouse, 2000, Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). The process of inclusion allows all the children of the society to participate in regular classroom activities regardless of any disability, race, or other characteristics and it means to bring all the excluded children to their nearby school or educational institution and encourage them to participate in the curricular and co-curricular activities in the regular schools with other pupils who are without special needs.

Inclusion is defined by Ainscow in these words:

“Inclusion is about welcoming diversity of characteristics of different types, benefiting all the students not only targeting the out of school excluded children but also those who are although in the school even then may feel excluded”. (Ainscow et al, 2006)

Government of Pakistan with the collaboration of IDP Norway has started a number of projects to introduce inclusive education in the regular schools of Pakistan. In initial stage they introduced IE in regular schools of Balochistan Province then at other places and they have also been developing resource centers. In the capital of the country, Islamabad 16 regular schools have been introduced with IE. Many students with special needs have been admitted in regular schools under these projects for IE. The researcher led an exploratory investigation (an experimental study). which was. focused to find the impact of inclusion on the learning of the understudies with and without special needs and requirements. This test pondered and planned to discover the effect (impact) of inclusion on the learning of pupils at primary level (Class II).

Objectives of the Study

The principle objectives of the research study were:

- 1) To find the impact of inclusion on the learning of pupils with special needs.
- 2) To find the impact of inclusion on the learning of students without special needs.
- 3) To give commendations for the launching of inclusive classes in educational institutes.

Significance Of The Study

This experimental study is extremely important and significant in various ways; on one hand it would offer attention and awareness to the general population about inclusive education as even many of the educators and instructors do not know about inclusion. On the other hand, it would again it would empower the network individuals to embrace the uplifting demeanor towards those kids who are experiencing a few issue or inabilities or disorder, unique in relation to different pupils. This research study would give direction and guidance to the instructors, guardians and parents for assisting students with and without special need and in this way, it would be helpful for the children. It would likewise encourage the teachers and overseers to look and examine their instructing style and roll out essential improvements in their instructive techniques. In the National Report on the Development of Education, 2008 the accentuation was given on inclusive education with the aim to help Education For All (EFA), with special emphasis on eliminating the hindrances in the way of all excluded: girls and ladies, the children with special needs, ethnic/linguistic minorities, wanderers, and many others to participate and learn in

regular schools so this study would enhance the efforts of government in making the inspirational disposition among the teachers in particular and public in general.

Hypotheses of The Study

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

H₀1: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of experimental group on pre-test and post-test.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of control group on pre-test and post-test.

H₀3: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of control group and experimental group on post-test.

Delimitations of The Study

The present research consider was delimited to F.G. Junior Model School, G-7/3-1, Islamabad. In the study students belonged to religious minorities/linguistic minorities, having learning disabilities, having low vision, suffering from Thalassemia and students with Hyperactivity disorder were included.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITRATURE

The idea of inclusive education is not same as idea of ‘integration’ and, ‘mainstreaming’ which concerned with the students/children having any disability and ‘special educational needs’ and to change the students or make them ready for placing them in the mainstreaming. On contrary inclusion is about the right of every child to take part in all the activities of regular school and it’s the responsibility of the educational institute to facilitate the children without any discrimination and welcome them.

“For meeting diverse learning needs, there is a need of restructuring, rethinking and re-planning the policies, curricula, cultures and practices in schools and learning environments regardless of the origin and nature of these needs”. (Ainscow and Booth,2003)

The term inclusion in education is derived from the historical backdrop of U.S.A.’s education when some of the students were separated or excluded and left out from regular classrooms due to different reasons. The discrimination based on race was not lawful, as the Supreme Court of the USA declared that this was unconstitutional and unlawful for the community schools (Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 1954). “According to the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, the right of equal opportunities in the education for children with disabilities was enacted in 1990 with IDEA (Individuals Disabilities Education Act) with numbers of changes and amendments. IDEA passed the law for all children even with severe disabilities have the right to receive a free and appropriate public education with equal opportunities environment. IDEA, and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, has created awareness among legislators and educators that separating the children from the regular classroom is taking away the right of equal education from children with disabilities”. (Osgood, 2000)

“Inclusion involves keeping special education students in regular education classrooms and bringing the support services to the child, rather than bringing the child to the support services”. (Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1994)

Chris Darlington, the president of National Association for Special Education Needs (NASEN), a national organization for professionals, working on inclusion (USA), indicated that inclusion is “a process, not a state, inclusion is not a simple concept restricted to issues of placement. Key principles are valuing diversity, entitlement, dignity, individual needs, planning, collective responsibility, professional development, and equal opportunities.” (Darlington, 2003)

According to educationist like Wang, Reynolds, and Walberg "special and regular education" programmes required to be reformed as special education is creating more troubles for the students as well as for the system than it solves, especially for the children having mild disabilities. These educationists pointed out that above 80% of schoolchildren of special education have learning disabilities of one type or the other. It is proposed by them that the teachers of general regular education should be given training to prepare them to teach children having disabilities also with other students who are without special needs. In this way many of the problems, and expense would be reduced. On contrary Liberman and Miller (1990), the opponent of the view above mentioned, inferred that one should think many times even a hundred times before integration of a child with severe learning disabilities. (Wang, Reynolds, and Walberg, 1986; Liberman & Miller, 1990)

The large number of students with special needs in a class was considered as the greatest issue. In 1989, in USA, there were 45% students in special education that had learning disabilities which was increased to 48.5% in 1991-92, and then it became 50.1%. In USA (some districts schools) the percentage is even higher as it increased to 65% as reported by Lewis and Miller. (Lewis, 1991)

Slavin said that special education is a considerable burden because researches have shown that the children with mild disabilities in special education institutions and those in regular education classrooms are found almost equal. (Slavin, 1995).

In 1992, Cannon and his colleagues found after conducting a research that teachers of special education and general regular education used 82% similar techniques and practices for effective and useful teaching for children with learning disabilities. He said if both type of teachers do the same then it is unreasonable to maintain separate education programme for the students with learning disabilities particularly if there are no considerable distinctions in accomplishment. (Cannon, 1992)

Three studies were conducted to analyze inclusion and to see the performance of students with special needs educated in regular schools. They observed that these students did to some extent better academically and socially in regular school setting when the comparison was made with the students of segregated settings. (Baker, Wang, and Walberg, 1995)

Several researches were done in the sphere of inclusion which have also shown the usefulness of inclusion but also pointed out some of the troubles for example:

1. Change instigates fear among some less experienced teachers.
2. A behavior issue produces challenges.
3. In inclusive setting of school students' learning is enhanced.

4. Included students had positive impact on their cohorts.
5. The curriculum of the mainstream schools required to be modified.
6. Collaboration and support are essential part of inclusion.
7. Social interactions are diverse among schoolchildren; these may be positive or negative. (Stainback and Stainback, 1991)

Cole, Mills, Dale, and Jenkins examine the impact of integration and separation in a special education for children of preschool. The duration of the study was 4 years. Total 124 students were included in the study; each year number of student was different. Their ages were between 3 to 6 years, among them 100 were with special needs. Children were randomly taken from integrated and segregated classrooms. The result was that the low achievers made greater gains in segregated classrooms; high achievers made greater gains in integrated classroom setting. (Cole, Mills, Dale & Jenkins, 1991)

III. METHOD

This research study was experimental in nature. The methodology of the study was that two groups of students had been taken and tested before and after conducting the experiment. Pre-test, post-test equivalent design was used in this research study. In this design, pre-test was administered before the application of the experimental and control treatments and post-test was administered at the end of the treatment period.

Population

Students studying in three sections of class II constitute the population of the study. They are 83 students of 7 to 9 years of age, who are studying in three different sections of the same grade.

Sample

Random sampling technique was used to take the sample. The sample of the study consisted of two classes (groups) of the same grade of the school. These classes were the representative of inclusion, in which there was inclusion of students with and without special needs. These two classes were randomly selected among the three sections of class II. Participants of the study were 56 students of F. G. Junior Model School, G-7/3-1, Islamabad. There was inclusion of students belonging to religious minorities/linguistic minorities, having learning disabilities, having low vision, suffering from Thalassemia and Hyperactivity disorder. The scores of pre-test were used to equate the groups i.e. each student of experimental group was equated with corresponding student in the control group. Students were allotted randomly to control and experimental groups. Twenty-eight students were placed in experimental group and twenty-eight students were in the control group.

Data Collection

Two groups of students were taken in which there was inclusion of students with special needs one was taught by traditional method and other was taught by using inclusive teaching strategies. To collect data the teacher made test was used.

IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to test the hypotheses collected data was tabulated and analyzed; scores of pre-test and post-test were compared. Researcher used t-test.

Table I: Significance of difference between the mean scores on pre-test and post-test of control group

Contr ol Group	n	M	S D	t-value	T a b l e v a l u e
		1			
		3	3		
		.	.		
		3	7		
Pre- test	2 8	2	7 2	7	2
				.	.
Post- test	2 8	1 5	4 4	0 7	0 5
		.	.	8	1
		5	4		8
		2	4		

Table 2: Significance of difference between the mean scores on pre-test and post- test of experimental group.

Experimental Group	n	M	SD	t-value	
				Calculat	Table value
Pre-test	28	41	2.39	9.9	2.0
Post-test	28	81	2.67	6.6	1.8

V. FINDINGS

The following findings emerged because of the analysis of data.

1. It is found that the calculated value of t (7.078) was greater than table value (2.0518). The difference between the two means was statistically significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the mean of control group was not found to be almost equal on pre-test and post-test. H_a was accepted and H_{o1} was rejected. (Table 1).

2. It is found that the calculated value of t (9.56) was greater than table value (2.0518) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, H_{o2} was rejected and H_a was accepted. It means that there was significant difference between mean scores on pre-test and post-test of experimental group after being treated by inclusive teaching strategies. (Table 2).

3. It is found that the calculated that the mean score of experimental group was 14.107 and that of the control group was 13.321 on pre-test. Since the value of t did not fall in critical region, therefore, null hypothesis was not rejected. The difference between the two means was not statistically significant at 0.05 levels. Hence, both the groups were found to be almost equal on pre-test. (Table 2).

4. It is found that the calculated mean and t value there was significant difference between mean scores on post-test of experimental group and control groups. Mean score for experimental group was more than that of control group after being treated by inclusive teaching strategies.

VI. DISCUSSION ON RESULTS OF THE STUDY

In 1945, the League of Nations declared that it is the right of every child to be provided an appropriate type of education irrespective of the difference of gender, race, color, religion or region, for the first time, in its Article 26 and in a way laid the basis of inclusive education. In education the term inclusion is derived from the history of U.S.A.'s education where few students were excluded from regular class on the basis of different reasons. In 1990 IDEA (Individuals Disabilities Education Act) passed the law for all children even with swear disabilities have the right to receive a free and appropriate public education with equal opportunities. Osgood (2000) was also agreed with this Act and said that this Act has created awareness even among the educators that separating the children from regular classroom is taking away the right of equal education from children.

The results of the study indicate that the students of experimental group and control group were almost equal as their mean scores of pre-test have shown before conducting the experiment. The result of post-test shows that the students of experimental group who were taught in inclusive teaching setting show comparatively better results than the students placed in control group who were taught in a traditional way. So, achievement level of students of experimental group was better than that of the students of control group which proved that inclusion in teaching was more effective than the traditional teaching setting.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Based on statistical analysis and the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The inclusive instructional strategies in teaching of English at junior level were found to be more effective as they increased the interest and enhanced the motivation level of the students with and without special needs.
2. Inclusive instructional strategies were found to be equally effective for both, the students with and without special needs.

3. When small children are taught with love and affection and by using instructional aids, the achievement level of low achievers was found to be much higher than teaching without any affection and teaching aids. It means teachers' positive attitude definitely solve many problems of the students.

4. Keeping in view the results of the study, it is very clear that there is a need to clarify and expand the concept of inclusive education in order to develop the awareness and acceptance of the inclusive education among the teachers and professionals concerned with the teaching of children with special needs especially at primary level. Awareness about the concept will bring forward the roles and responsibilities of teachers and professionals in the process of establishing of inclusive education and this will make its implementation possible.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of findings revealed and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since the use of inclusive instructional strategies proved to have significant positive effect on the achievement of students with and without special needs. The teachers be provided proper training of teaching in inclusive setting and be motivated to use it in the classrooms regularly in inclusive schools.

2. Inclusive education should be introduced in the education system to ensure best educational facilities for children with special needs.

3. Children should get opportunities to share normal experiences with family, neighbors and peers and thus inclusive education system will help to provide these opportunities.

4. Children with special needs should work side by side with peers without special needs and having diverse skills and abilities to help them learn and develop the skills necessary to work in real life.

5. Emphasis should be laid on the use of polite and simple terminology being sensitive to children's feeling so that children may not hurt. Always ask children to put themselves at other children's place, especially those they consider different from them in any aspect.

6. Stigma words such as: handicapped, mental, blind, etc. are insensitive to use and not polite. Use alternative words like partially sighted, visually impaired, mentally challenged, etc.

7. Teachers, administrators and students respect each other's religion, languages, cultural backgrounds and abilities and celebrate their respective religious festivals.

8. Textbooks should be revised and made them simple as well as interesting and information giving.

9. Teacher's needs to be further trained and continuous professional development mechanism needs to be devised.

10. Inclusive teaching strategies and aids should be used in non-inclusive classes also as they are helpful for all the students in their learning process.

IX. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Following researches may be conducted in the area of inclusive education:

1. To evaluate the projects on inclusive education conducted in Pakistan by the collaboration of IDP Norway and Federal Directorate of Education.
2. To conduct case studies of individuals suffering from some disorder or disability in an inclusive setting.
3. To evaluate the performance of gifted children in an inclusive setting.

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