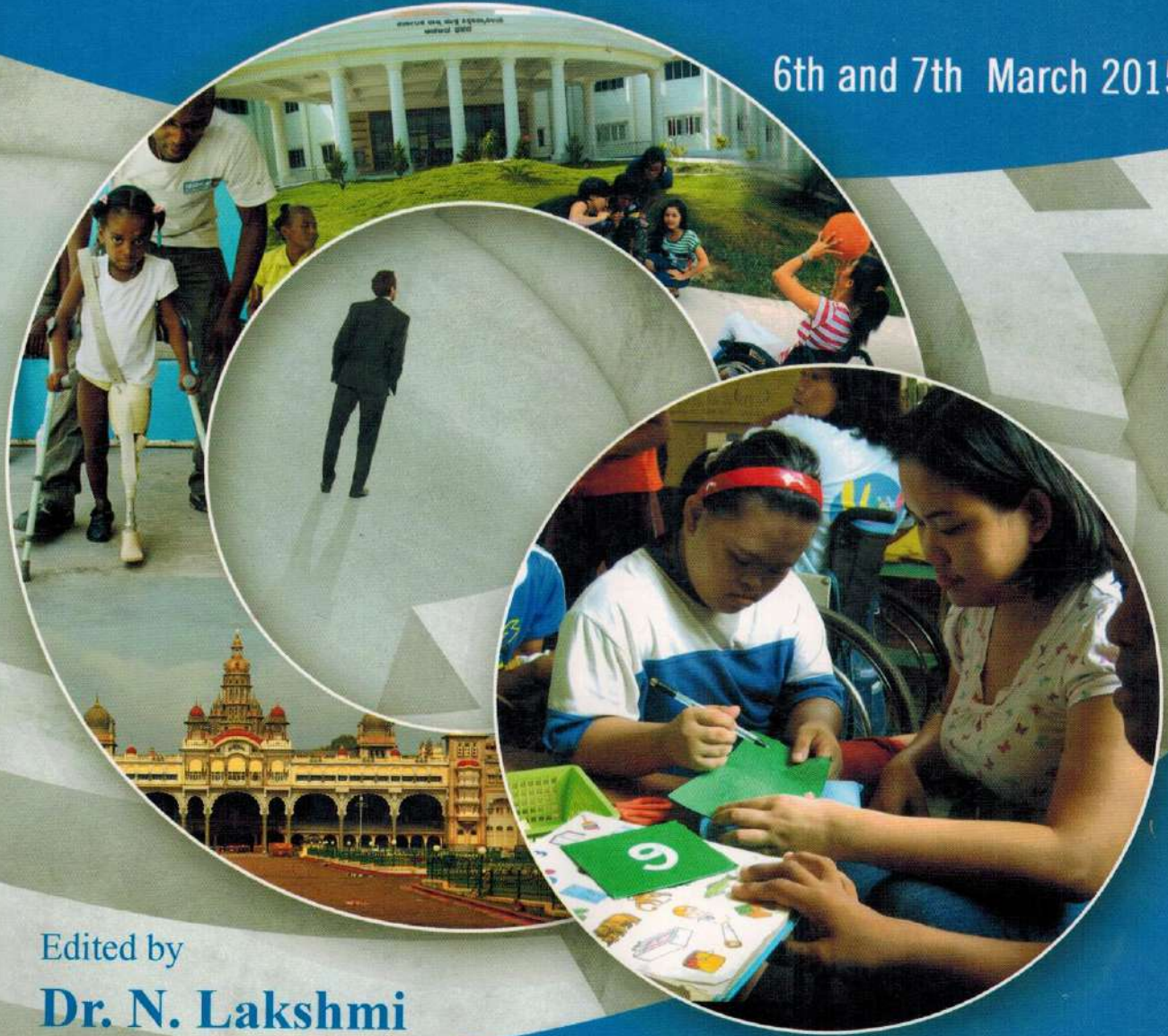


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# Inclusive Education - Teachers' Attitude

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## Introduction

One of the greatest problems the world is facing today is the growing number of persons who are excluded from the meaningful partnership in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities. Such a society is neither efficient nor safe. Inclusive education can be seen as a stepping stone for a future inclusive society and it is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education .

Inclusive education is a process of enabling all children to learn and participate effectively within the mainstream school systems. It does not segregate children who have different abilities or needs. This, in other words, is to indicate the shift of thinking from an un natural segregated setting toward supporting inclusive schools in India, the movement towards inclusive education continues on the assumption that teachers are willing to admit students within the regular classes and be responsible for meeting their needs. However, negative attitudes and misconceptions have began to be reflected in researches conducted in some schools. Inclusive education must be given the due attention it deserves if inclusive education is to be favored and practiced as education as educational modality.

## Meaning Of Attitude

An attitude is a point of view that someone holds towards an idea or objects in his / her everyday life. Anyone can develop a positive or negative attitude toward the object or idea.

## Teachers' Attitude

Inclusive education suggests that attitudes play a key role in achieving successful social interaction among teachers and students and coin their attention in favor of the required educational modality.

Teacher's attitudes have been considered as one of the major factors guaranteeing the success of inclusion of students with special needs. Attitudes toward inclusion are strongly influenced by the nature of the disabilities and educational problems. The reason could probably be due to limited or non- existent training to acquire inclusion competencies, the limited opportunities for inclusion in some of these countries, limited teaching experience, and limited experience with students with special education needs and the awareness of laws requiring inclusion.

## Factors That Affect Attitudes Of Regular Teachers

Research has suggested that teachers' attitude might be influenced by a number of factors

which are in many ways, interrelated, the nature of the disabilities and educational problems presented have been noted to influence teachers' attitude.

Educators were cautiously accepting including a child with cognitive disability and were more accepting of children with physical disabilities. The degree of acceptance for inclusion was high for children considered to have mild or moderate disabilities.

A great deal of research regarding teacher characteristics has sought to determine the relationship between those characteristics and attitudes toward children with special needs. Researchers have explored a number of specific teacher variables, such as gender, age, year of teaching experience, grade level, and contact with disabled persons and personality factors, which might influence teachers' acceptance of the inclusion principle with regard to gender. Studies conducted appear inconsistent, some researchers noted that female teachers had a greater tolerance level for integration and for special needs persons than did male teachers.

On the other hand, research conducted by Singh (2001) confirmed that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in relation to their attitude towards inclusion.

Another factor that has attracted considerable attention is the knowledge about children with disabilities gained through pre- and in-service training. This was considerable as an important factor in improving teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of an inclusive policy. Without a coherent plan for teacher training in relation to the educational needs of children with special needs, attempts to include these children in the mainstream would be difficult.

Generally, researches conducted in some schools of India show a high correlation of teacher's attitude with factors like availability of support, adapted curriculum, training materials, and classroom size. Teachers will not be in a position to attend to their individual problems and be interested in them fully. It is explained that lack of access, flexibility and lack of training are the ultimate factors affecting teachers' attitude negatively.

### **Role Of Teachers And Training In Inclusive Education**

It is a fact that regular schools and regular classroom environment often fail to accommodate the educational needs of many students, especially individuals with disability. This is the reason for many pupils with disabilities for not attending regular schools. One of the major challenges to achieve this goal lies in the changing tasks of the regular classroom teacher.

The regular classroom teacher is responsible for any adaptation that may be necessary for students' success in the academic environment and this awareness and acceptance result in developing the skills required of teachers in regular schools to cater to the needs of students with challenges. These skills include an understanding of how a disability affects the ability to learn academic skills or to adapt to social situation. It is through training that a teacher could bring the necessary adaptation required to meet special needs of their students. Implementation of inclusion depends largely on the goodwill of educators in addition to the skills they have mastered that are needed in the inclusive set up.

### **Conclusion**

The philosophical consideration of inclusive education implies that the child with

disability should have the same range of opportunities, experiences and conditions of everyday life that are typically available to non-disabled children in the community. The philosophical considerations also suggest that appropriate developmental and educational programs should be provided to enable the disabled child to share in, contribute to and benefit maximally from everyday life. The only way we can be sure that disabled children will have the same range of educational opportunities and experience as non-disabled children is to have their education provided in the same setting. As in the past, it is abundantly clear that many disabled children today still have their development retarded because they are segregated into schools and classes, which offer restricted range of educational opportunities and experiences lack of self confidence, lack of motivation and lack of positive expectation for achievements. (Stainback, Stainback and Forest, 1989) segregation generates a feeling of inferiority with regard to children's status in the community and this may affect their hearts and minds. This sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn and retards his educational and mental development.

Every child with and without disability has enormous potential for growth. A disabled child also has the potential to be extremely successful in independent community living and carrier of his choice. He can find jobs for himself and live as a self supporting and socially competent member of society. The ability of the child with disability to succeed in the community is directly related to the amount of training and support that he receives while he is in school. Inclusive school is the appropriate setting to help these children realize their full potential.

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