



A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN INTEGRATED AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS IN ACADEMIC COMPETENCY OF CHILDREN WITH MILD MENTAL RETARDATION

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Abstract

The transition of education has shaken the pillar of traditional education system and created a new challenge before the teachers as well as for administrators. International, National Legislation, Disability Acts and policies have also paved the way for children with special need education. The advocates of Integrated and Inclusive education have highlighted the impact of integrated and inclusive education for the educable children with mental retardation. To keep in mind the researchers have decided to study between Integrated and Inclusive Schools in Academic Competency of Children with Mild Mental Retardation. The main objective was to study the influence of variables in the development of academic skill of the children. In this regard 20 mild mental retarded children were selected for the study in which 10 mental retarded children were from integrated setting and 10 mental retarded children were from inclusive setting. The purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of sample. The standardized Functional Assessment Checklist Programme (FACP) was used to assess the academic performance of Children with Mental Retardation. To know the comparison between integrated and inclusive schools in the academic competency of the children with mental retardation t-test was used for the present study. The t-test was applied to find whether there is a significant difference in the academic competency of children with mild mental retardation in integrated and inclusive schools. The calculated t-test value is 1.684 which is less than the table value of 2.101 at 5% level of significance but the mean value of children of integrated school is much better than inclusive schools. Therefore integrated schools are better in comparison to inclusive schools.

Key Words: *Integrated Education, Inclusive Education, Competency, Academic performance and children with mental retardation.*

Introduction

Individuals with mental retardation may have difficulty learning basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics (Young & Moni, 2004). The rate of learning new information may be very slow and students may require repetition and concrete, meaningful examples on all learning activities. Educable mentally retarded children are those who are not able to be adequately educated in the regular classroom. However, they can acquire sufficient knowledge and ability in the academic areas that are useful to function effectively in later life. They will be able to receive basic skills like reading, writing, arithmetic and acquire self-help skill, which supports them to be socially and economically independent. So the objectives of an educational programme for the educable group are implementation of children with mental retardation in special, integrated and inclusive education programme. Integrated education follows the principle of providing equal opportunities to an integrated group of able bodied and differently abled children studying together. Integrated education means children need support in terms of structural arrangements and teaching methods. Therefore, it is great need for special arrangements to assist them in general schools. Integrated education programmes are being implemented in large numbers by both governmental and non-governmental agencies in India.

Inclusive education is based on the simple idea that every child and family is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. Inclusive education is about children with disabilities whether the disability is mild or severe, hidden or obvious participating in everyday activities, just like they would if their disability were not present. It's about building friendships, membership and having opportunities just like everyone else. Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighborhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. Inclusion of children with diverse abilities in all aspects of schooling that other children are able to access and enjoy. It involves regular schools and classrooms genuinely adapting and changing to meet the needs of all children, as well as celebrating the valuing differences. This definition does not imply that children with diverse abilities will not receive specialized assistance nor teaching outside of the classrooms when required, but rather that this is just one of many options that are available to, and indeed required of all children.

Hardiman & et al (2009) made a study to compare the social competence of children with moderate intellectual disability in inclusive versus segregated school settings in the Republic of Ireland. This study shows that children in inclusive schools did not differ significantly from children in segregated schools on the majority of proxy ratings of social competence.



Florian (2008) examines the relationships between "special" and "inclusive" education. She looks at the notion of specialist knowledge among teachers and at the roles adopted by staff working with pupils with "additional" or "special" needs in mainstream settings. She explores the implications of the use of the concept of "special needs"--especially in relation to attempts to implement inclusion in practice--and she notes the tensions that arise from these relationships. She goes on to ask a series of questions: How do teachers respond to differences among their pupils? What knowledge do teachers need in order to respond more effectively to diversity in their classrooms? What are the roles of teacher education and ongoing professional development? How can teachers be better prepared to work in mixed groupings of pupils? In seeking answers to these questions, Lani Florian concludes that we should look at educational practices and undertake a thorough examination of how teachers work in their classrooms. She suggests that it is through an examination of "the things that teachers can "do" that we will begin to bring meaning to the concept of inclusion.

Nugent (2007) compares Inclusive and segregated Settings for children with Dyslexia. This study evaluates and compares special educational services for children with dyslexia in three different settings. Children attending specialist services tended to be more satisfied and more positive about services.

John McDonnell et al. (2003), studied on achievement of students with developmental disabilities and their peer without disabilities in inclusive setting. Results of this exploratory study suggest that students with developmental disabilities who were served primarily in inclusive classes made improvements in their adaptive behaviour measured by the Scales of Independent Behaviour-Revised (SIB-R).

Daniel & King (1997), studied on impact of inclusion education on academic achievement students' behavior and self-esteem and parental attitudes, and examined the gain scores of students without disabilities on the Stanford Achievement test who were enrolled in regular classes that included students with special needs at least part of school day. The results suggested students without disabilities who were enrolled in inclusive classes were more likely to experience gains in reading scores with no notable difference across the service delivery structures in the areas of math, language, and spelling.

Hall (1997) has pointed out that the inclusion requires the well- equipped mainstream schools to take the initiative to admit students whatever their abilities and needs. The student should be fully involved within school on an age-appropriate basis and mixed with all other students in their ordinary classroom, playground and neighborhood. In fact, inclusive education is more than schooling, it actually incorporates a range of strategies within a community or society to ensure that all children have equal to education, which will equip them for life as part of the community, and which will help develop their potential.

Sharp, York & Knight (1994), have studied on 'Effects of inclusion on the academic performance of classmates without disabilities: A preliminary study' and compared the academic performance of 35 students in a general education classroom that included students with developmental disabilities with 108 peers in different classes in the same school that did not include these students. They found no statistically significant difference between the two groups on any of the measured of education achievement.

Conrad & Kenneth (1980) selected fifty primary research studies of special versus regular class placement were selected for use in a meta-analysis. Each study provided a measure of Effect Size (ES), defined as the post treatment difference between special and regular placement means expressed in standard deviation units. ES was used as a dependent variable in order to assess the effects of independent variables such as placement; type of outcome measure; internal validity; and other educational, psychological, and methodological variables. Special classes were found to be significantly inferior to regular class placement for students with below average IQs, and significantly superior to regular classes for behaviorally disordered, emotionally disturbed, and learning-disabled children. Other independent variables bore little or no relationship to ES.

Need of the Study

Children with mental retardation can perform better if we provide appropriate environment of learning. Though all the school setting is equally important, yet there seems to exist significant difference in their mode of delivering the activity. One should critically analyze the various factors of each of this service delivery system and then place the child with their need and requirement. Since decision makers (Parents, Teachers & Para-professionals) in the education of children with mental retardation face contradictory opinions, the study of service delivery models is imperative and felt as the need of the hour. Various studies have been done on special setting, integrated and inclusive setting separately but comparison between different setting is less in quantitatively and qualitatively. The government policies is also moving towards inclusive setting, so the researchers have felt a great need and decided to study on this particular topic.



Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the academic competency of sample in integrated and inclusive setups using quantitative analysis.
2. To study the influence of variables in the development of academic skill of the sample.

Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference in the academic competencies of children with mild mental retardation in integrated and inclusive schools.
- There is no significant difference in the academic skill development of children with mild mental retardation in integrated and inclusive schools.

Scope of the Study

- The study will be helpful for policy makers to make decisions in the activities of schools setup.
- The result of the study will enable the school staff members to plan activities for required areas.
- It aids for further expansion of this study in future.

Selection of Research Design

The present study aims at comparing academic competency of children with mild mental retardation in inclusive verses integrated setting. Academic competency for children with mild mental retardation assesses by academic skill area of Functional Assessment Checklist Programme (FACP) standard tool. The checklist FACP consisted of 40 items to assess the academic performance of the sample. These 40 items were chosen from the standardized FACP tool at primary-I level and from the academic domain. To assess the items of the tools, the investigator prepared and also collected appropriate materials to check the performance of the sample.

The samples of present study were mild mentally retarded children studied in different types of school setting as 2 integrated school and 4 inclusive school form Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu state of India. Hence the investigator selected ex-post facto research design for the present study. The present study focuses on the academic competency of children with mild mental retardation. Hence the investigator selected purposive sampling technique for the selection of sample. With prior permission of the head of the school, the investigator had a face to face contact with the sample. After establishing sufficient rapport with the sample, the investigator requested to the subjects to perform the activities of the tool one by one with the materials prepared. Through keen observation of the performance of the sample, the investigator made an assessment in the tool. Thus the data was collected for the study.

Data Analysis

The collected data was tabulated and consolidated for further statistical treatment. The grouped data was then subjected to quantitative analysis, using t-test.

Table No-1, T-test comparison between integrated and inclusive schools in the academic competency of the sample.

Service delivery model	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Integrated School	10	32.0000	4.5216
Inclusive School	10	27.5000	7.1375

T-test for Equality of Means

T	Df	Sig
1.684	18	Ns

The t-test was applied to find whether there is a significant difference in the academic competency of children with mild mental retardation in integrated and inclusive schools. The calculated t-test value is 1.684 which is less than the table value of 2.101 at 5% level of significance. Since the calculated value is less than the table value it is inferred that there is no significant difference in the academic competency of children with mild mental retardation in integrated and inclusive schools. Hence the hypothesis is retained.

Table No-2, T-test comparison between integrated and inclusive schools in the academic skill development of the sample

Service delivery model	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Integrated School	10	32.0000	4.5216
Inclusive School	10	27.5000	7.1375



T-test for Equality of Means

T	Df	Sig
1.684	18	Ns

The t-test was applied to find whether there is a significant difference in the academic skill development of children with mild mental retardation in integrated and inclusive schools. The calculated t-test value is 1.684 which is less than the table value of 2.101 at 5% level of significance. Since the calculated value is less than the table value it is inferred that there is no significant difference in the academic skill development of children with mild mental retardation in integrated and inclusive schools. Hence the hypothesis is retained.

Findings of the Study

There is no significant difference between integrated and inclusive schools. But the mean value of children of integrated school is much better than inclusive schools. Therefore integrated schools are better in comparison to inclusive schools. No study has been found which support or oppose our study which shows that not only setting but also teaching techniques and competency of teachers is needed accordingly.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above research studies that there is no much difference in academic competency for children with mild mental retardation. Our research also shows that integrated school is providing better educational service delivery in present situation. This is the era of inclusion, but result shows that now we are far from concept of inclusion. Inclusive education will become best service delivery model after modifying the inclusive school concept.

Recommendations for Further Study

- The size of the sample shall be increased for more generalization of the study.
- Analysis could be done on more number of variables.
- The teacher could improve teaching strategies for better learning for the children with mental retardation.
- Effective and interesting material can be used to make better result.

Limitation of the Study

- Due to lack of time and manpower study will be conducted only with a small sample size.
- The sample is taken from few schools of Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu state.
- Various extraneous and intervening variables affecting the child at the time of assessment was not fully controlled.
- Sufficient related literatures were not available to support the present study.

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