



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Academic assessment by general educators in inclusive schools on special needs

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### Abstract

Academic assessment of students with diversified needs the model of Inclusive setup has gained more appreciation from the policy makers, teachers and parents in the past years. It is also established as an innovative approach and structured way of teaching and learning which helps in academic progress of children with disability and mainstreaming children with special needs in general schools. Role of regular teachers in assessing children with special needs is highly challenging in inclusive setup along with non-disabled children in the class room. Formative and summative approaches are applied in schools for assessment of students with special needs and general students in the same classroom setup. Teachers in general education face many difficulties in assessing written tests and oral examination for children with disabilities who are enrolled in inclusive setup. This research aims to discover the effect of assessment methods used by the primary teacher educators in evaluating disabled children. The result exhibited that activity-based methods paved way for quality assessment of children with various disabilities enrolled in inclusive education.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education; Formative assessment; Summative assessment; Simplified learning; CCE

### 1. Introduction

Holistic development of a child is concerned with education in terms of cognitive and socio emotional aspects. These aspects are need to be assessed. Assessment not only evaluates the development and accomplishment of the learner but also the efficiency and success of the teaching methods, aids and materials used for teaching and learning process. Therefore assessment should be seen as an element of curriculum with the identical function of effectual deliverance and additional development in the teaching– learning process of education. In order to make the assessment procedure more significant and wide-ranging, it is very indispensable that measurement procedures must be introduced from a broad series of situations that are connected to real life, introduced in and out of the classroom. No matter what the procedure is adopted and followed, there should be efficient reaction and feedback. The most excellent technique to progress learning for a varied collection of learners is all the way through apposite, unswerving and well-substantiated evaluation in the classroom. Teachers in an inclusive classroom are accountable for direction and evaluation of learners with disabilities who listen to the same teaching notes. Assessment by the regular teachers should lead the children with disabilities to succeed as similar to their peers in the classroom. Inclusive assessment provides all the ways for children with various disabilities to articulate their knowledge in diverse modes and modalities. Learning of children with disabilities along with their counterparts in an inclusive classroom is improved by simple tests or assignments that support self-evaluation and self-responsiveness for the disabled children.

#### 1.1. Need for the study

In mainstream setup the collaboration and coordination between the teacher educators and resource teachers is an essential factor for the successful assessment of the disabled children. In a mainstream setup the effective and adapted assessment procedures that suits students with diversified needs are considered as the keystone to the success of

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inclusive education (Srivastava & Chhabra, 2010). General teachers should have a good knowledge in assessing the children with diverse needs, if not children with special needs will get imprecise and inequitable marks in assessment and grade levels which can have a negative impact on their scholastic achievements (Mc Naughton & Elliott, 2011). Inclusion will be unsuccessful to a great extent due to the incapability of teachers to meet up the growing needs of the adapted education system and assessment procedures (Singal, 2005).

Inclusive education is accepted and practiced in all schools in India in the present scenario. Due to the introduction of inclusive setup in our education system, gradually there is an increase in the number of disabled children getting enrolled in general schools. In this situation, the general educators are responsible for teaching and assessing disabled children and children without disabilities in the same classroom. The general educators face problems in assessing the children with special needs mainly due to adapted assessments and time limitations. Therefore, it is important to know the feedback of general educators those who are in inclusive classrooms to know the issues which is connected to the assessment procedures, records for assessing and grading procedures mainly taking the needs of children with special needs in to account.

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1. Method

To study the various assessment approaches of special need children in inclusive education investigator used survey method.

### 2.2. Population

Selection of primary schools that follow mainstream education and general educators of primary classes.

### 2.3. Sample

Seven government elementary schools that have inclusive setup in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu state have been selected by purposive sampling method.

### 2.4. Tools & techniques

To execute the objective, teachers of primary classes I to V in inclusive schools were interviewed. Self-developed questionnaire was prepared and administered to the general educators. The questionnaire was developed comprising different dimensions of assessment procedures followed, records used for assessment, role of Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers and learning methods. Checklist has also been distributed to the teachers.

### 2.5. Materials

Percentage analysis has been used as the statistic tool for the study, analysis and interpretation of data. Hence the collected data has been analysed and summarized based on the indicators and variables assigned for the study.

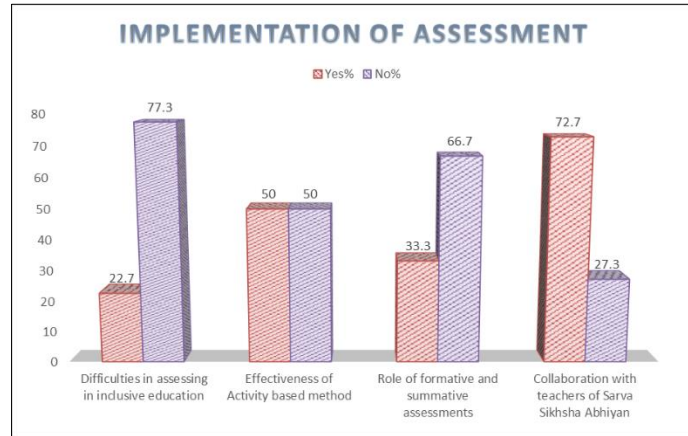
### 2.6. Limitation of the study

The research was limited to only primary schools in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu and was limited to regular teachers who are handling primary classes in an inclusive setup.

## 3. Results and discussion

**Table 1** Implementation of assessment procedures by general educators for special needs children

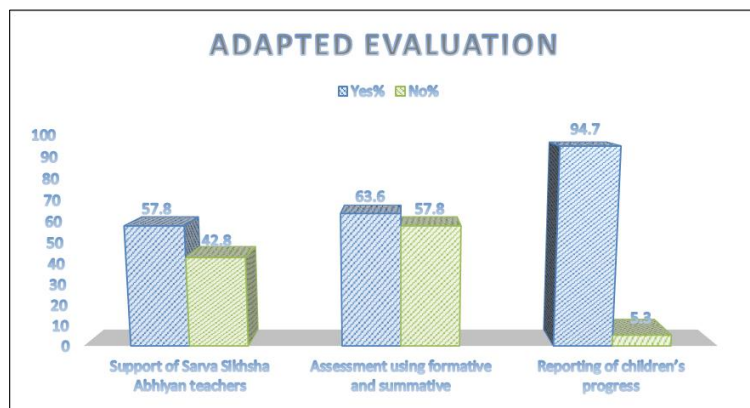
Indicators	Age Group	Yes	No
Difficulties in assessing in inclusive education	41 to 50	22.7	77.3
Effectiveness of Activity based method	51 to 60	50	50
Role of formative and summative assessments	31 to 40	33.3	66.7
Collaboration with teachers of Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan	41 to 50	72.7	27.3



**Figure 1** Implementation of assessment

**Table 2** Effectiveness of adapted evaluation process applied in Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation

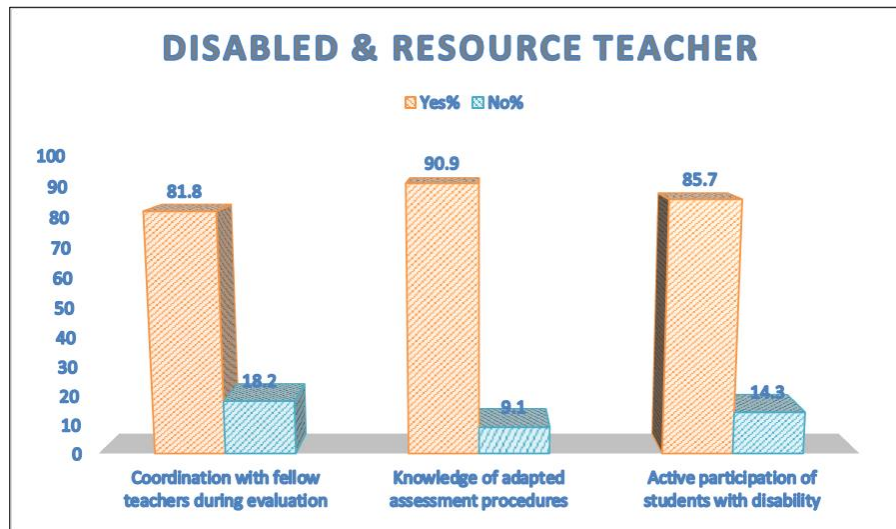
Indicators	Qualifications	Yes	No
Support of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan teachers	Diploma in Teacher’s Education	57.8	42.2
Assessment using formative and summative	Bachelors in Education	63.6	57.8
Reporting of children’s progress	Bachelors in Education	94.7	5.3



**Figure 2** Effect of adapted evaluation

**Table 3** Role of disabled children and resource teachers in evaluation procedures

Indicators	Experience	Yes	No
Coordination with fellow teachers during evaluation	11 to 15 years	81.8	18.2
Knowledge of adapted assessment procedures	16 to 20 years	90.9	9.1
Active participation of students with disability	21 to 25 years	85.7	14.3



**Figure 3** Disabled and Resource teacher in evaluation

Majority of the teachers reported that assessing the special needs children along with the normal children is difficult. Cent percent of the teachers handling class IV expressed that they can give their suggestions for Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers in assessing the special needs children. Above 80% of the teachers handling class III and IV stated that the Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers regularly reported the progress of special needs children as against 60% of the teachers handling class III. Teachers belonging to 51 to 60 years gave favorable response for the same. Most of the teachers agreed that they cannot assess the special needs children without the help of Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers.

31 to 60 age group teachers expressed that Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers visits the schools regularly. Cent percent of teachers belonging to 31 to 40 years reported that children need special assessment procedures and activity method for learning. This necessitates the importance of modifying the methods and approaches based for assessment teaching. About 89.5 % teachers with diploma expressed that assessment of the disabled children is difficult, as against 72.7% of teachers with Bachelor of Education qualification. Nearly 47.3% of teachers with diploma and 36.4 % teachers with Bachelor of Education expressed activity-based method is the best method for assessing special needs children. Only 27.3% teachers with Bachelor of Education qualification agreed that they can give their suggestions to Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teacher when compared to Diploma holders (57.8%).

90% of the teachers reported that special assessment procedure is followed for special needs children. Around 90% of teachers with diploma and degree reported that Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers visits and access the children regularly. This may be due to the control and command of the regular teachers towards Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers in terms of execution of the responsibilities. With regard to the role of Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teachers in assessing special needs children above 80% percent of the teachers handling class I, III to V agreed that Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan teacher visits their schools and regularly and do the assessment. Above 50% teachers handling class III to V expressed that activity method is the best method for assessing special needs children. This may be due to the experience of teachers in assessment and teaching. Above 30% of the teachers belonging to 31 to 50 years stated that simplified adapted activities for Formative Assessment is taught for special needs children with respect to all subjects with the help of assistive learning devices which increases the level of confidence of disabled children during assessment.

### 3.1. Implications of the study

- The duration of the training for the regular teachers needs to be increased in order to impart full-fledged knowledge in handling children with special needs.
- Advocacy can be done to follow one particular method which gives more time for increasing the rate of performance of children with special needs.
- Since record maintenance is tedious for teachers in activity-based methods, number of records to be maintained can be reduced.
- Permanent special educators need to be appointed to cater to the needs of special children on regular basis in schools that follow inclusive mode of education.
- Strengthening the foundation of inclusive education and the assessment methods for general educators by pre-service and in-service teacher training.

- Schools have been sufficiently prepared for inclusion of pupils with special education needs. and the regular teachers are provided essential information regarding adapted assessment procedures to be followed while evaluating the children with disabilities.

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#### 4. Conclusion

Regular teachers face certain difficulties in their efforts to evaluate the skill accurately and adequately especially when it comes to assessment of children with disabilities in an inclusive setup. The practical difficulties and feedback on assessment procedures by the primary school educators in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu state is addressed through this piece of research. The findings overall show that in the presence of specialised polices, trainings and assistance given by teachers of Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan the regular teachers in primary schools were able to apply formal, individual assessment and adaptations to children with disabilities along with other children in the same classroom itself. From this study we found out that nearly 80% of the primary class teachers had expressed that the assessment procedures helped the disabled children in learning and in the acquisition of desired skills with the help of various activities allocated for different subjects. Such tremendous changes are made due to the various training programmes and schemes implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu and Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan in all the primary schools of Coimbatore. The results revealed that the impact of assessment in inclusive education at primary level and the present evaluation pattern had created a very big landmark in the field of education. The study concludes that the assessment followed using activity based learning has given both the teachers and the disabled children enrolled in mainstream setup a practical and real life experiences of inclusion.

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#### Compliance with ethical standards

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##### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The study did not receive any financial grants and there is no conflict of interest.

##### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all the individual participants involved in the study.

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