

A Study on the Problems Faced by Students with Special Needs When Engaging in Classroom Activities with Normal Students

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Abstract

People with special needs have achieved great feats in all careers. Nevertheless, students with special needs face many problems when engaging in the learning activities with normal students. When they get involved in classroom activities with normal students, they face a lot of difficulties. According to this, the purpose of this study was to determine problems faced by special needs students with normal students when engaging in classroom activities. The main objectives of this study are to identify problems faced by students with special needs in classroom activities with normal students. One hundred and fifty students with special needs, 25 teachers, 5 principals and 10 parents or guardians from five schools in Manmunai North Division in Batticaloa District were selected as the sample of this study. The five schools were national and 1AB schools. The reason for selecting the five schools as the sample is because the majority of students with special needs in that Division study in those schools. The research design included quantitative and qualitative inquiry. Questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules and students' records were used as data collection tools of this study. All data were analyzed by the researcher using tables and charts. As per the data obtained from each school that was chosen as the sample of the study, 90% of students said that they face problems when they get involved in classroom activities with normal students. In accordance with the findings, some students with sight impairment and hearing impairment had many problems in class room activities with normal students. Eighty percent of teachers' answers also highlighted problems faced by students with special needs. Through this research study, it was found that students with special need lag behind in all learning activities as normal students are given prominence. From the findings of this study, Students with special needs should be educated in special classroom not in the normal classrooms with normal students. Further, they should be taught using different teaching methods and teaching aids.

Keywords: Students with Special Needs, Normal Students, Impairment, Classroom Activities, Prominence

I. Introduction

As equal to normal students in learning activities Students with special needs have achieved great feats in all careers. Nevertheless, they face many problems when engaging in the learning activities with normal students. When they get involved in classroom activities with normal students, they face a lot of difficulties According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, students with special needs are students with any of various difficulties such as (physical, emotional, behavioral or learning disability or impairment) that cause an individual to require additional or specialized services or accommodations. In this research study, problems faced by students with special needs when engaging in classroom activities with normal students are explored by the researcher. The term Inclusive Education is used to indicate classroom activities of students with special needs with normal students. According to Loreman,T, Deppeler.J, Harvey.D, (2006), Students' disabilities are categorized as follows:

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1. Specific learning disability
2. Speech or language impairment
3. Visual impairment including blindness
4. Deafness
5. Hearing impairment
6. Deaf – blindness
7. Intellectual disability
8. Traumatic brain injury
9. Other health impairment
10. Autism spectrum disorder
11. Orthopedic impairment
12. Emotional disturbance
13. Multiple impairment

Though there are schools for students with special needs, many students get involved in the learning activities with normal students in schools. Because of the activities of normal students, students with special needs face many problems; for instance the latter are not fully supported; and the former only want to lead all the activities without considering the students with special needs. Many studies have highlighted that students with special needs face many problems when they involve in classroom activities with normal students. According to Shannon (2004) who pointed out that students with special needs are mocked and threatened in inclusive classroom settings. In this background; this research study attempts to find the problems faced by students with special needs when engaging in classroom activities with normal students. There is a great debate over including students with special needs in classroom activities with normal students. Friend, M, Bursuck, W (1999) pointed out that in an inclusive school or inclusive learning environment; no child should be excluded from access to learning opportunities. According to the Tasmaniya Development of Education (2006), to provide shared meaningful learning experiences for students with special needs has been recognized as a major goal of inclusive education. Here, through the research study, the problems faced by students with special needs are investigated in-depth data collected from the sample.

II. Review of Literature

Students with special needs are the students who are taught using special methods in the classroom activities with normal students (Maheshan, 2010). Students who face lot of difficulties in the classroom activities are called students with special needs (Selvanayakam, Iraveenthiran, 2007). Students with special needs differ from normal students in the society and they cannot follow the learning activities with normal students in the classroom (Panda 2007). According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, students with special needs are students with any of various difficulties such as (physical, emotional, behavioral or learning disability or impairment) that cause an individual to require additional or specialized services or accommodations. Different types of students with special needs are in the society. According to Maheshan 2010 students with special needs are categorized as follow,

1. Mental disorders
2. Learning disability
3. Abnormal behavior
4. Perceptual impairment
 - i. Hearing impairment
 - ii Speech impairment

- iii Visual impairment
- iv Disability in human organs
- 5. Students affected by poverty, war and lack of nutrition
- 6. Lagged by behavior, mentality and skills
- 7. Abnormal activities
- 8. Autism and mental disorders
- 9. Physical and mental disorders

According to Loreman.T, Deppeler.J, Harvey.D, (2006) , Students' disabilities are categorized as follows:

- 1. Specific learning disability
- 2. Speech or language impairment
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- 4. Deafness
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Students with special needs are affected in various ways when they get into the learning activities with normal students (Shannon, 2004). Students with special needs always lag in learning activities. Students with special needs should have separate class room with different teaching methods (Panda, 2007). The role of family play a big role in developing the life of students with special needs (Friend. M, Bursuck. W , 1999) .Parents have negative mind in the learning activities of students with special needs with normal students and teachers have more responsibilities in the learning process of students with special needs (Chintamanikar, 2004). Teacher should have the skills when they teach students with special needs those are identifying problems, solving problems, making the ways to elicit their talents, assessing the students' performances using good methods, learning and teaching through activities and improving the special skills of students (Maheshan, 2010). (Panda, 2007) pointed out that in an inclusive school or inclusive learning environment; no child should be excluded from access to learning opportunities. According to the Friend. M, Bursuck. W (1999), to provide shared meaningful learning experiences for students with special needs have been recognized as a major goal of inclusive education.

III. Methodology

In this research study, several data collection tools were used to triangulate the data and arrived at valid findings. Questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules and students' records were used as research tools of data collection. As this research is a descriptive study, data collection was mainly focused on students with special needs. The study adopted a qualitative method which enabled to collect right data. The data in this study was collected through questionnaires and structured interviews with selected sample and observation of classroom practices and students. Students with special needs,

principals and teachers were given questionnaires to collect data. Observations took place in schools with a particular focus on students with special needs. Observations of classroom practices and students allowed collection of broad information on problems faced by students with special needs in classroom activities with normal students. In this research study, interview schedules mainly focused on principals, teachers and parents and guardians. Interviews were conducted through every day conversation between the researcher and the interviewees.

1. Sample

Research area of this study was Manmunai North Division in Batticaloa District where five schools were selected. The five schools had enrolled many students with special needs. One hundred and fifty students with special needs, 25 teachers, 5 school principals and 10 parents or guardians were selected as the sample in this research. Here the sample details are given in Table 1,

Table 1 : Sample of the research

Schools	Special needs students	Teachers	Principals	Parents or Guardians
BT/ Sivananda National School	30	05	01	02
BT/ Vivekananda Girls Maha Vidyalayam	30	05	01	02
BT/ Methodist Central College	30	05	01	02
BT/ ST. Cecilia’s Girls School		30	05	01
02				
BT/ST.Michael’s College		30	05	01
02				
Total		150	25	05
10				

IV. Findings and Discussions

In this research study, the findings focused on problems faced by students with special needs when engaging in classroom activities with normal students. When the samples were asked whether students with special needs face problems, 80 % of principals answered yes and 80% of teachers also answered yes but 20% of principals and teachers said no. ninety three point three percent students with special needs answered yes but 6.67% answered no. Eighty percent of parents and guardians replied yes and 20% replied no. Table: 02 and figure: 01 portray the answers given by the sample to this question.

Table 02: Problem faced by students with special needs in the class room activities

Responders	Yes	No
principals	80%	20%
Teachers	80%	20%
students with special needs	93.3%	6.67%
Parents or guardians	80%	20%

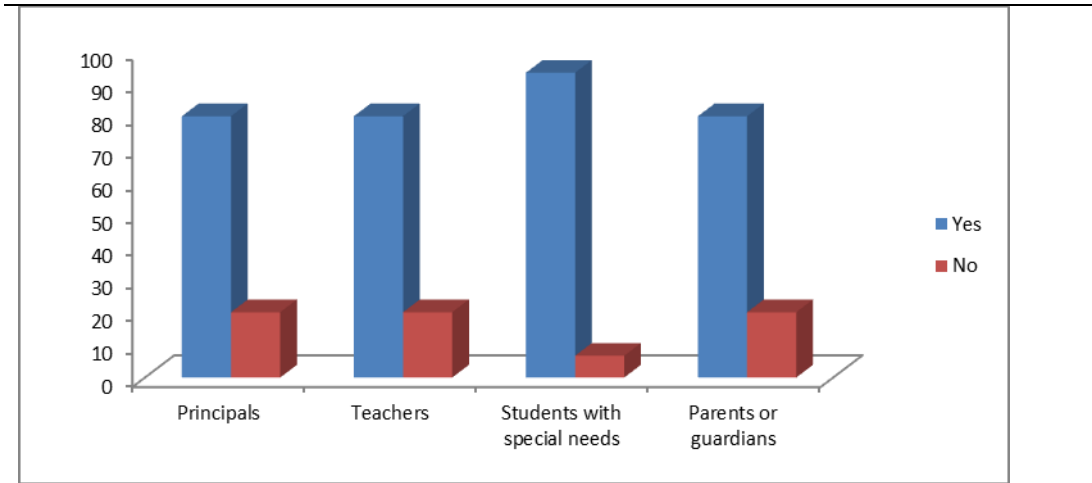


Figure 01: Problems faced by students with special needs in the class room activities

Another question was asked to find out the reasons for problems faced by students with special needs in classroom activities with normal students. First up, teachers and principals were asked that whether you give more prominence to the students with special needs in class room activities. For this question, 80% of principals answered yes and 20% of them were replied no. when the same question was asked among teachers, 88% of teachers answered yes and 12% replied no. When the same question was asked that whether principals and teachers give importance you when engaging in classroom activities with normal students, 98% of students answered no. Table: 03 and Figure: 02 clearly describe that.

Table 03: Reasons for problems faced by students with special needs in class room activities

Responders	Yes	No
principals	80%	20%
Teachers	88%	12%
students with special needs	0%	98%

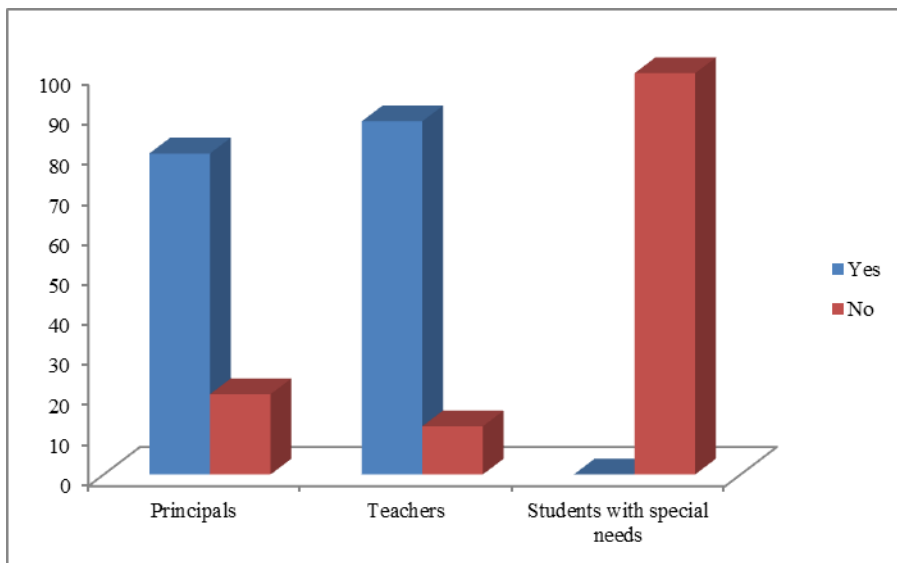


Figure: 02 Reasons for problems faced by students with special needs in class room activities

From the result of this question, it is found that not giving enough prominence to the students with special needs when engaging in class room activities with normal students is a reason for problems faced by students with special needs.

To know the ways to solve problems of students with special needs, students and teachers were asked about special classroom activities. Eighty of teachers answered suitable but 20% of them answered not suitable. When the same question was asked among students with special needs, 90% of students with special needs replied suitable whereas 10% of students wanted to learn with normal students. Table: 04 and Figure: 03 mentioned below clearly portray that;

Table 04: special class room activities for students with special needs

Responders	Suitable	Not suitable
Teachers	80%	20%
students with special needs	90%	10%

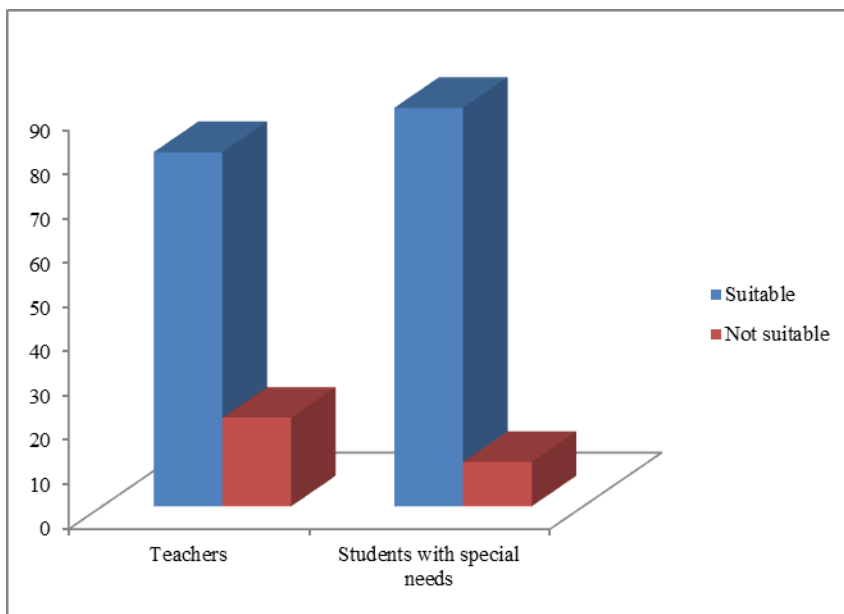


Figure: 03 Special class room activities for students with special needs

So, the findings mostly focused on problems faced by students with special needs when engaging in classroom activities with normal students and the reasons for problems and ways to solve problems.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Students with special needs are to be protected carefully and separately in all the activities. In particular, when students with special needs get involved in classroom activities with normal students, they should be specially cared by teachers. In this research study, it is found that students with special needs face a lot of problems when engaging in classroom activities with normal students.

All students with special needs replied that they have been facing many problems in classroom activities with normal students. Principals, teachers and parents or guardians also stated that students with special needs face many problems in classroom activities with normal students.

As noted earlier, students with special needs indicated that they are not being given importance when they get involved in the learning activities with normal students. To solve problems faced by students with special needs in classroom activities along with normal students. Ninety percent students with special needs stated that they want special classroom activities in learning process. Eighty percent teachers also answered about special classroom activities for students with special needs. Finally, the research study identified that the students with special needs face lot of problems in classroom activities with normal students.

Acknowledgement

This research study was done with an intention of finding problems faced by students with special needs when engaging in the classroom activities with normal students. In addition to that, finding out the reasons for problems, ways to solve problems and the impact of problems were also the objectives of this research study.

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