

Research Article

The Role of Teachers in Implementing Process of Inclusive Education in Batticaloa District Schools

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Abstract. Inclusive education is considered unique in each country. However, implementation of inclusive education and related policies in developing countries like Sri Lanka is difficult. Therefore, this study aims to ensure the quality of teaching in the future by knowing the role of teachers in the implementation of inclusive education, especially in Batticaloa. Explored the strengths, weaknesses and challenges in implementing inclusive education within public schools in Batticaloa District. Among them, 05ADS/ISA(SNE), 05principals, 120class teachers, 300subject teachers, 150students and 75parents were selected based on purposive sampling and stratified random sampling. Questionnaires, interviews and documents were used as data collection tools to get information from them. Also, data was collected through group discussion with subject teachers. Data analysis was done using SPSS software. Reinforcement of appropriate practices, parental support, peer-teacher-

student interaction, teacher skills, teaching methods, curriculum adaptation, assessment and student achievement, community and government approach, classroom technique, resource allocation, teacher's role in relation to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) were also discussed. The study also suggested that future research solutions should focus on the role of teachers in school-level IE policy formulation, infrastructure development, financial allocation and resource management.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Special Needs Education, Individual Education Programs, Challenges, Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education (IE) is a fundamental rights for all children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. It was considered in 1994 at the Salamanca Conference of UNESCO in the UN assembly and became a significant international document in the field of special needs. Education plays an important role in the development of a country as every child has a constitutional right to education (Abbas, 2020). A teacher has to come true with his teaching skills only if parents want to foster learning among their children. Considering the diversity of children's natures and needs, establishing inclusive schools is the best means of social change, eliminating discrimination, creating a friendly inclusive society and the most powerful means for all to receive education (UNESCO, 1994). The United Nations introduced in Sri Lanka in the 1990s, the National Policy Statement on Persons with Disabilities (2003) has made significant progress in providing educational opportunities for children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. According to the action plan implemented in Sri Lanka during the period 2012-2016, IE is still in development stage. Furthermore, Sri Lanka has steadily moved towards the implementation of the IE principles, and this education is made possible in schools by providing students with suitable conditions and opportunities for education (National Institute of Education, 1991).

Significance

Hettiarachchi and Das (2014) found that teaching assistants are needed in Sri Lanka to improve the IE practices as teachers are seen as less skilled than role of special education teachers (Hettiarachchi & Das, 2014). Abeywickrama and Ail (2014) suggest that all societies should move towards a paradigm shift by designing five culturally compatible models as current country practices for children with disabilities do not meet universal recommendations. Masaderu, Kumara and Nakashima (2016) also found that teachers with disabilities suffer from inadequate educational opportunities, teaching methods, curriculum, workload, resource allocation, and lack of social participation. Inclusive education has become a philosophy as the concept of education for all has gained worldwide popularity (Sivakumar, 2007). The curriculum is a document that prepares a child's education

for social development, work and social life as it is a fundamental element in the development of learning and development (Open University of Sri Lanka, 2007).

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is necessary to identify students with behavioural, attitudinal and skill deficits and provide them with the necessary treatment. According to the classification of people with special needs in our country, they are roughly divided into thirteen categories. Teachers are important in working together with the social goal of family improvement (Salome, 2018). Teachers's role is a powerful weapon and Teaching equipment, resources and time are not available to improve the academic performance of SNE students (Abbas, 2004). Most of the teachers consider IE students as lazy due to imbalance, improper government actions (Salome, 2018). Due to lack of parents interest in their children's learning, teachers are unable to teach effectively without appropriate teaching techniques in the classrooms. IE is every child's right; Not an offer. In recent times, much attention has been paid to early childhood (Mag>Sinfield & Burns, 2017).

METHODOLOGY

General Objective

To know the positions of teachers in implementing inclusive education in schools and to investigate the challenges they face, and to suggest ways and suggestions for special improvement of the IE practices in Batticaloa district in the future.

Special Objectives:

1. To know the attitudes and role of teachers on the implementation of IE in Batticaloa District.
2. Inclusion (IE) identifying the educational background of the teachers who teach in the classroom.
3. To examine the barriers for teachers in implementing IE in Batticaloa District.
4. To provide suggestion for future development of IE in Batticaloa District.

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes and role of teachers practicing IE in Batticaloa District?
2. What are the educational backgrounds of teachers who teach in inclusive (IE) classrooms?
3. What are the barriers for teachers in implementing IE in Batticaloa District ?
4. What are the directions for the future development of IE in Batticaloa District?

Research Methodology

This is a survey study with a mixed research approach.

1. Method of data collection

Questionnaire, interview, documents were used to collect data in this study. The questionnaire consisted of direct, open-ended questions to collect reliable data.

Table-1: District level based population range - Batticaloa

Names of Educational zones	Batticaloa zone	Batticaloa Central Zone	Batticaloa West Zone	Paddiruppu	Kalkudah	Total
Number of Schools	65	77	68	70	84	364
Number of Teachers	1763	1800	840	1414	1294	7111
Number of Students	25405	36476	12712	20422	23807	119336
Number of Students (SEN in IE)	54	53	34	37	72	250
1AB	10	11	5	9	9	44
1C	12	13	10	15	8	58
Type II	23	15	19	16	28	101
Type III	20	38	34	30	39	161

(Source: Provincial department of education, planning division - 2023)

According to the total number of schools in the Batticaloa region, Kalkudah has the highest number of SNE students, while Batticaloa West, Paddiruppu have the least number of schools. Most of the teachers are found in Batticaloa Central and fewer in Batticaloa West.

Table-2: Details of sample population

Names of Educational Zone	Schools (IE)	IE Class Teachers	Responded IE Class Teachers	IE Subject Teachers	Responded IE Subject Teachers
Batticaloa	41	51	26	244	61
Batticaloa Central	31	52	26	189	47

Batticaloa West	25	32	16	265	66
Paddiruppu	28	32	17	309	77
Kalkudah	49	73	34	193	49
Total	174	250	120	1200	300

(Source: Prepared by Researcher, 2024)

According to Batticaloa region; In schools with IE practices, 05ADS/ISAS (SE) and 05principals were selected by purposive sampling method. Similarly 150 students, 120 class teachers 300 subject teachers selected by stratified random sampling method and 75 parents from each zone of five schools were selected for the study by method of simple random sampling.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data obtained through questionnaires, interviews and documents were subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis based on the research questions and the obtained data were analysed using the SPSS software through grid diagrams, circular diagrams and three-dimensional maps, and interpretation and discussion were carried out.

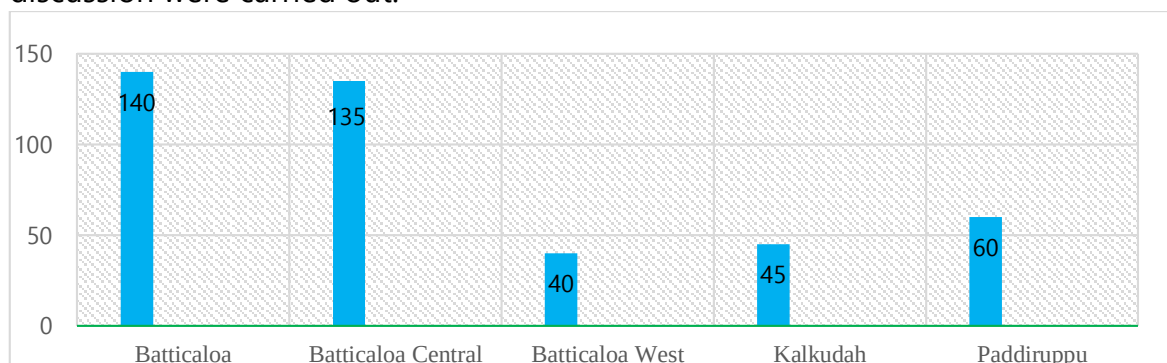


Figure-1: Teachers' response in the IE schools

According to the teachers' response in the IE schools, among the teachers in the IE schools of Batticaloa which area showed the highest response among teachers, followed by Batticaloa Central area and Paddiruppu area showed the least response.

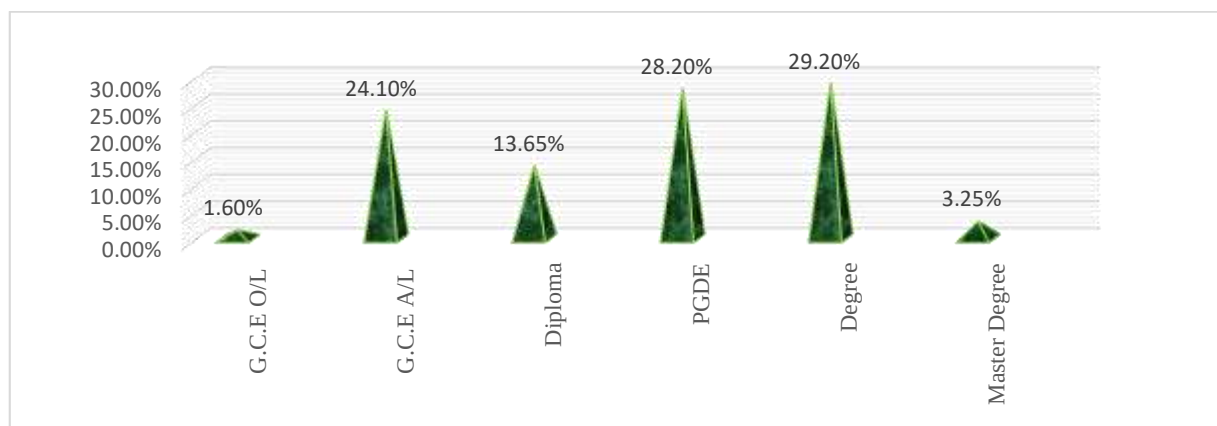


Figure-2: Educational background role of teachers in IE schools

According to this figure, most of the IE teachers found in Batticaloa area are graduates (29.20%). However, only 3.25% teachers have master's degrees.

Challenges of teachers in IE schools

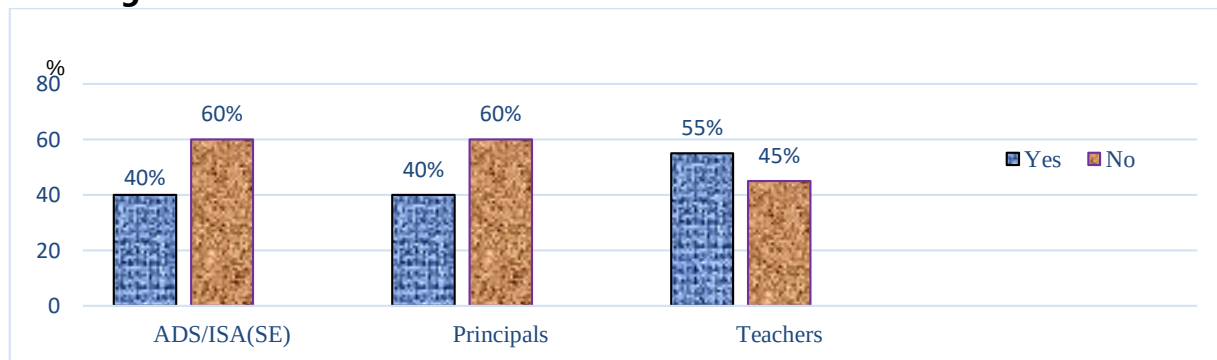


Figure-3: Inadequate training for effective teaching in IE schools

According to the category "No", teachers in five schools do not have adequate training for effective classroom teaching.

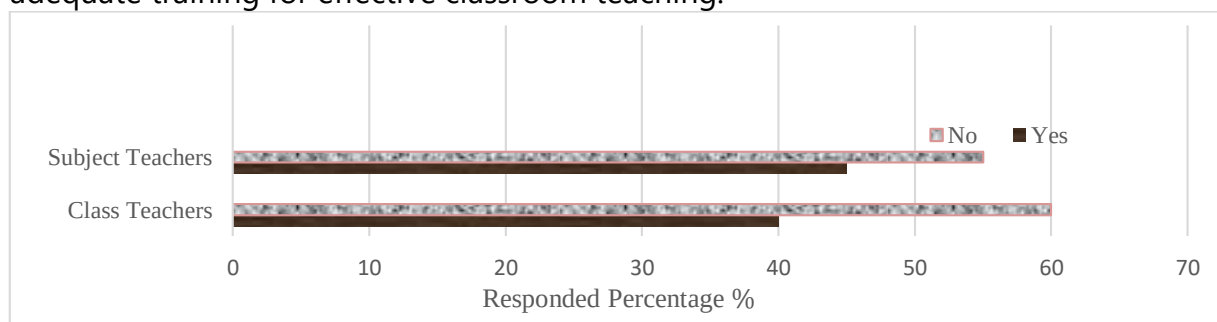


Figure-4 Teachers trained to teach in IE schools

According to this figure, among the subject teachers (55%) and class teachers (60%) who teach in IE schools in Batticaloa area, they were found to be untrained teachers

Table-3: Teachers' revised response regarding implementation of school-based programs in classrooms for IE and SNE students

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Marks	5	4	3	2	1
Respondent	70	110	90	80	70
	350	440	270	160	70

Total: **1290** Score: $1290/350 = 3.68$

Accordingly, The method used as Likert's scales of correlation coefficient (3.68) indicates 'accept' and positive. So the teachers agree on the practical plan and implementation of school-based programs in classrooms for IE and SNE students

Also, some of the teachers' scores and correlation coefficients are given below.

Chart-4: Response of Teachers in IE Schools (Mean Value)

1.00	-	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1.81	-	<i>Disagree</i>
2.61	-	<i>Neutral</i>
3.41	-	<i>Agree</i>
4.21	-	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

Response of teachers in IE schools	Mean value
How you feel about IE School ?	3.51
What are the supports for IE classrooms?	3.53
The relationship between the school's goal and IE practices.	3.49
What are the trending and technological supports for IE classrooms?	3.12
How do you feel about the IE school principal's support for the IE classroom?	3.34
Activities, Observations, Evaluations for Special Education of ISA/ AD in School.	3.82
Support from other teachers in IE practice.	3.34
Your level of awareness and support in teaching assessment of SNE students.	3.43
Organizational, institutional and stakeholder support for IE school activities.	3.46
According to whether remedial teaching, treatment, diagnosis test, and weekly assessment are included for IE students,	3.84

Although there are positive opinions from many sides, it was pointed out that the support and feedback available to the teachers is less.

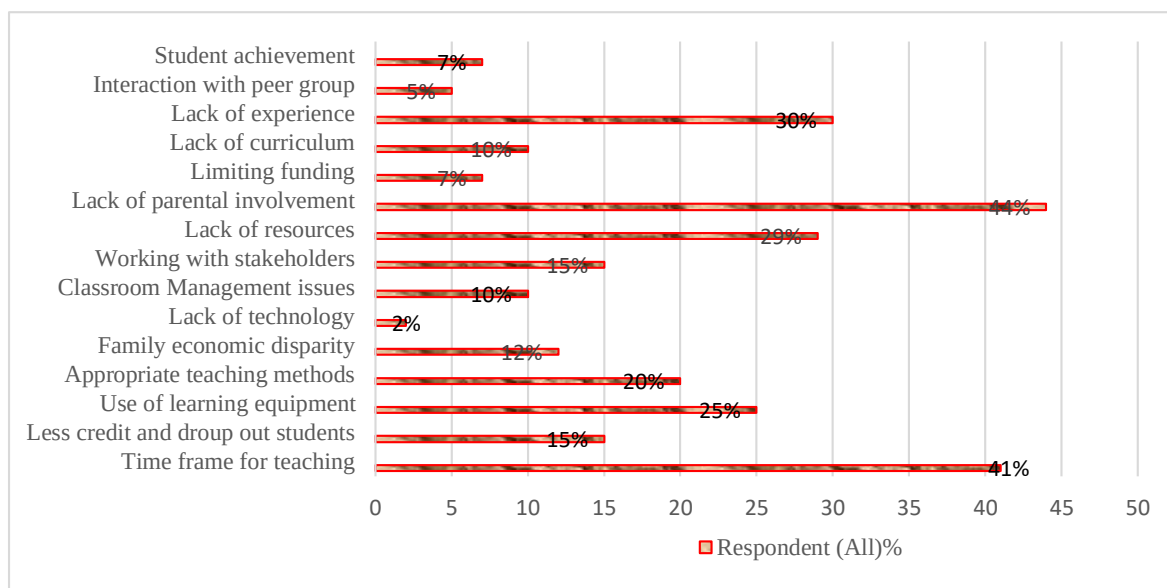


Figure-4: Challenges and role of teachers in IE schools

According, challenges for teachers in IE teaching, teaching time (41%), lack of proper involvement of parents (44%), and lack of experience (30%) were pointed out by most of them. However, the curriculum for IE training, teachers' skills in the classroom, assessment and evaluation are better in Batticaloa District.

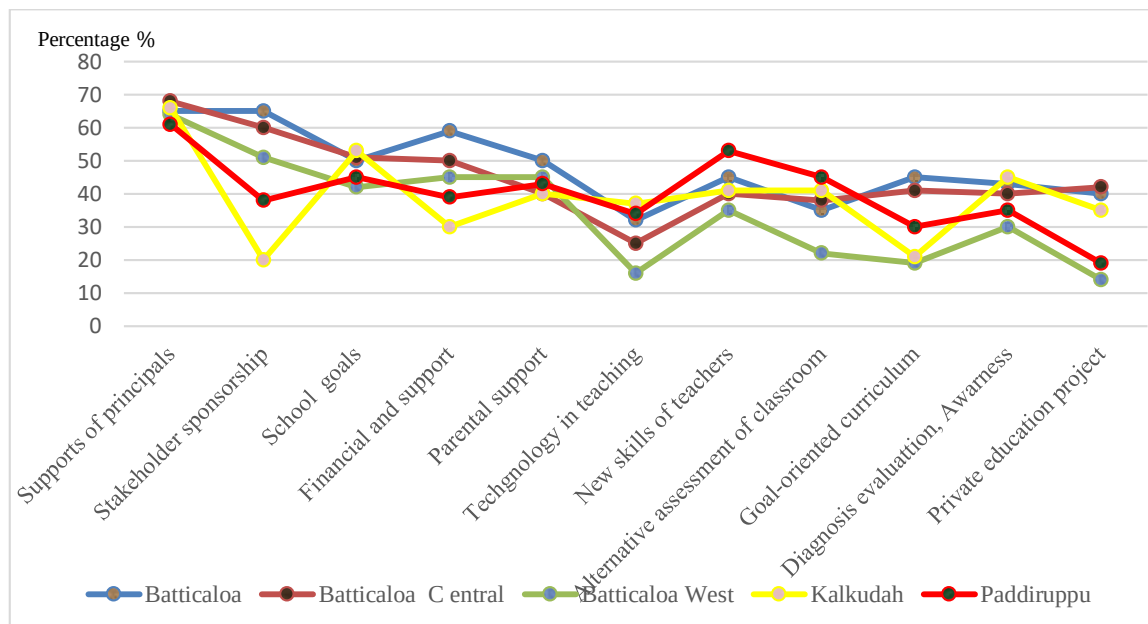


Figure-5: Teacher's response of teaching in IE schools

Overall, the teachers' attitude in Batticaloa Education Zone is better when compared to other education zones. Although there were regional variations in the IE practices, principals had consistent perceptions of support. Kalkudah zone has the

highest teacher turnover on the 'School goals' indicator. But regarding the financial support of stakeholders, the lowest level of concern and the Batticaloa district teachers have the highest level of concern. However, all zone teachers were found to have a negative perception of parental support for the IE practices. Classroom teachers have more feelings than subject teachers. The conclusion is that special education support by ISA/ADS practices general is lacking in IEP practice.

CONCLUSIONS

Lack of parental support (44%), lack of experience (30%), , lack of time for teaching (41%), inadequate training (55%), increased dropout rates (15%) are the main challenges in IE schools in Batticaloa district. IE practices are highly supported by most principals (65%) in Batticaloa district.

Inadequate support (37%), financial procedures and resources (45%) to implement IE school education in Batticaloa District. There are regional variations in IE practices in Batticaloa district. There are huge differences in the practices, perceptions and mechanisms of classroom and subject teachers, principals, students and ADS/ISA who teach across the five zones.

Partner assistance, corporate sponsorship, use of technical equipment, and practical curriculum activities for the five schools in Batticaloa and Batticaloa central zones are more than other zones. Therefore, there is a need to formulate some mechanisms and implement some action plans to improve the five practices in Batticaloa district.

Recommendations

All teachers involved in classroom teaching should be the best friend of the students and teach only after understanding the students' preferred activities, mood, family background and readiness to learn with important role of teachers. To bring about changes in teaching methods exclusively for students. Promote regional and gender equality in Batticaloa District.

Conducting programs under IE activities for teachers who need knowledge and skills related to IE practices in Batticaloa District. Also, steps should be taken to include an introductory course on IE in all teacher training programmes. Provincial and zonal action plans should be standardized. Examples are parent awareness, field trips, street drama, dance, play, creativity, creativity, and social interaction.

The idea of 'noble service' should be ingrained in every teacher beyond the fact that teaching is a job. The education administration should take steps to reduce the variations in the IE practices in the Batticaloa district. Facilitator sub-committees can be formed and implemented in Batticaloa district to organize adequate human and physical resources for IE development. Teachers need to create inclusive and supportive classroom environment where all students feel safe, respected and valued.

Every parent should be encouraged to see themselves as partners in the educational process. So there will be such cooperation between the school and the parents. Because teachers and parents are valuable resources in the school. Teachers must have positive attitudes and should be use variety of assessments tools to monitor the progress of students, including those with disabilities and advocate for IE policies at the school with district levels.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ADS-Assistant Director in Service
ISA-In -Service Advisors
IEP-Individualized Educational Project
IE- Inclusive Education
SNE- Special Needs Education