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Exploring General Education Teachers' Awareness on Inclusive Education for Students with Intellectual Disability in the Varanasi District of Uttar Pradesh: A Descriptive Study

*1 **Fr. Baiju Thomas** and 2**Dr. Logesh Kumar**

*1 Research Scholar, Department of Educational, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda, Research Institute, Faculty of Disability, Management and Special Education, Vidyalaya Campus, SRKV Post, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

2Assistant Professor, Department of Educational, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda, Research Institute, Faculty of Disability, Management and Special Education, Vidyalaya Campus, SRKV Post, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

*Corresponding Author
Fr. Baiju Thomas
Research Scholar, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, Faculty of Disability, Management and Special Education, Vidyalaya Campus, SRKV Post, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

Abstract
The present research explores general education teachers' awareness of inclusive education (IE) for students with intellectual disability (SwID) in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. Every student, regardless of disability, can fully participate in this instructional approach because it fosters a friendly and inclusive environment. Further, it highlights that all parties participating in the system-including children, parents, community members, managers, legislators, and general education teachers must embrace diversity and regard it as a resource, not a problem. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of general education teachers' awareness of IE by gathering data from their own experiences. This study seeks to equip general education teachers and all students, including those with disabilities, with the knowledge necessary to integrate SwID into regular courses more effectively by exploring multiple perspectives on the problem. When SwID is to be integrated into the regular school curriculum in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh, IE would mean overcoming every obstacle preventing them. Most general education teachers use IE as part of their teaching strategies. After discovering they were being overlooked, the general education teachers in developed countries became more aware of IE. All respondents were general education teachers from one of Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi districts. The present study employed a descriptive survey method. In this study, 53 general education teachers from 12 schools with different school management types (public, private, and aided) were chosen using a non-probability, purposeful sampling method. According to this study, most general education teachers support offering IE for students with ID.

Keywords: Awareness, General Education Teachers, Inclusive Education, Students with Intellectual Disability, Varanasi, and Uttar Pradesh

Introduction
Education has evolved greatly throughout the years, shifting from a generalized curriculum to one that emphasizes specific skills and knowledge. Modern education as we know it now first arose around 200 years ago. Developing new ideas on how people learn is one area where experts have made significant contributions. After seeing an uptick in engagement, we examined when every student had grasped our lesson plan. From the beginning of the twenty-first century onward, there has been a boom in the number of initiatives to enhance SwID learning, with the past decade seeing a particularly dramatic increase. The study of disability has drawn the attention of many academics, including those at SwIDs (Alghzo & Gaad, 2004) [7]. Concerns around inclusion and students with IDs have been addressed in studies (Alquraini, 2012) [1]. The idea of IE is gaining in popularity to ensure that every student in India can attend a top-notch school. Many helpful resources were made available through the IE initiative. The general education teachers gained sufficient knowledge about IE to educate their students successfully. Outcomes from this study suggest that interactive strategies work wonders when getting people to

talk about IE for students with ID in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh.

Schools in India are working toward incorporating SwID into the standard curriculum. However, getting general education teachers to understand IE is their toughest challenge. Many people are responsible for raising awareness of IE among teachers in India's education system. This study aims to assist general education teachers in better grasping IE by evaluating the outcomes of an awareness initiative in this field. All through the world, schools are currently debating how to best include children with disabilities in regular classrooms (Farrell *et al.*, 2007) [10]. The future seems promising since new and innovative methods are continuously being created. It is encouraged to ensure that all students in IE have access to a thorough curriculum. IE can be defined as an approach to addressing the needs of various student bodies by promoting active participation in various contexts and mitigating discriminatory behaviours. All children must be educated per the general education system's mandate, which mainly involves changing strategies, methods, structures, and content (UNESCO, 2005). Teachers qualified to operate in inclusive settings are in short supply in the nation's school system (Amr, 2011) [2]. For IE to effectively assist all students in reaching their academic potential, the existing system must be more reflective, adaptive, and collaborative when students with and without ID utilize the same platform. Providing all students with the same chance to get a high-quality education is the bedrock of an IE system. Creating accessible general education institutions was one of the goals of the 1994 Salamanca Statement, which also sought universal education, inclusive communities, and a more inclusive society.

Inclusive Education

As a school approach, inclusion ensures that all students have equivalent access to excellent education. The Salamanca Statement of 1994, which emphasized the need for accessible general education schools to combat discrimination, build more welcoming societies, foster a more inclusive society, and ensure education access for all, was based on this idea (UNESCO, 1994). General education systems in developed and developing countries have adopted IE as a popular technique despite it being relatively new (Singh, 2016) [18]. The study of how inclusion impacts the academic performance of students with ID is still in its early stages. Involvement may have positive social effects for some, but others are concerned that it may hurt their academic performance. Many challenges must be overcome before IE can realize its vision of equal opportunity for all students, including those with ID. This study primarily focuses on SwIDs because they are likely to make up the majority of children with ID in inclusive schools. It lays out a plan for a curriculum that could build on top of the existing mainstream curriculum and suggests a paradigm shift centred on the idea that classroom instruction for students with ID should build on their existing knowledge and skills instead of using age-grade placement as it is currently. The right to general education teachers prioritizes IE's commitment to students with IDs. Placing a child's demands ahead of their parents is a common dilemma. In what ways complement these activities? Many people have strong opinions on this matter. Another concern surfaced was how well attending a conventional school adequately addressed their unique needs. Get on the IE wave and forget about school for a while.

Thus, IE is an individualized and flexible support system within regular schools to provide everyone with an appropriate education (Hammeken, 2008) [8]. The current structure of IE needs to be rethought to encourage more self-reflection, flexibility, and collaboration among students with and without ID when the institution is serious about enabling all students to complete on time. Overall, this study determined how well general education teachers could be prepared to teach IE students with ID in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh.

General Education Teachers' Awareness of Inclusive Education

This study aims to examine general education teachers' awareness of IE, their level of preparation and training for teaching students with ID, and their experiences working with students with a disability. The extent to which IE is successful could depend on several factors (Kafia, 2014) [9]. According to Sucuoglu, Bakkalogu, Karasu, Demir, and Akalin (2013) [20], teachers should possess the skills of instruction, classroom management, and behavioural interventions. To meet the needs of their students at each of the several stages of growth, teachers must also be adaptable. Academics advocate for inclusive practices; hence, they should know about it (Bannister *et al.*, 2018) [5]. Researchers on a nationwide scale have yet to tackle the subject. More data on teachers' IE experience is needed. Further study on SwID and the challenges of caring for children with special needs is required, claims Fazal (2012) [6]. Since IE's efficacy greatly depends on the awareness and competence of the class teachers, IE's success is contingent on their familiarity with the program's concepts and standards (Korkmaz, 2011) [12]. We must find and train teachers capable of thriving in multicultural classrooms when we want every student to realize their full potential (Maria, 2013) [14]. By educating and training people, we may create a society that is more accepting, reasonable, and unified (Pingle & Garg, 2015) [16]. Teachers were less inclined to approach students wearing proof of identity, as shown in the study by Thakur and Abbas (2017) [21]. Since they needed to understand what IE was, teachers hesitated to use it (Maria, 2013) [14]. Researchers with a global reputation have examined teachers' IE expertise. It is necessary to enhance teachers' knowledge in the classroom, according to Srivastava *et al.* (2017) [19]. Teachers need to invest more time in researching IE, said Zagona *et al.* (2017) [22]. Teachers need to be familiar with IE and willing to talk about it in class, as Maria (2013) [14] made very obvious. Bai and Martin (2015) [4] state that the respondents should benefit from a better grasp of IE-related regulations, educational programs, and instructional techniques. General education teachers should be well-versed in tactics that help both normally developing and highly talented students succeed in school, according to research by Kantavong, Sujarwanto, Rerkjaree, and Budiyanto (2017). Pingle and Garg (2015) [16] found that even novice educators can use Internet Explorer effectively. Thakur and Abbas (2017) [21] state that a lack of well-trained teachers is the main factor preventing IE from being widely used. Every student is welcome here, and we are always looking for innovative ways to help our intellectually disabled children become fully integrated members of our classroom community. Academic achievement is possible for all students in an inclusive classroom, regardless of their family's financial situation or other factors.

Public schools that emphasize providing quality education will be accessible to all students as the outcome of this initiative towards IE for students with ID from the selected districts of Tamil Nadu.

The Problem Statement

The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the points of view and perspectives on inclusion that secondary general education teachers who are also teaching IE classes held. This is particularly important because, ever since the IE was put in place, there remains a need for more research that describes the experiences of general education teachers who work in inclusive secondary school settings. This study aims to fill this information gap by exploring the everyday experiences and potential implications on the opinions of secondary general education teachers about inclusion. There are several reasons why the research team suggests this study. These findings indicate that IE is still going strong in India. Before millions more Indians may receive an education, many challenges must be surmounted. The state government needs to provide more funding to evaluate IE strategy. Analysing the current state of "Education for all" and suggesting modifications are the main goals of this study. Therefore, the study entitled: "Exploring General Education Teachers' Awareness of Inclusive Education for Students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi District of Uttar Pradesh: A Descriptive Study."

Objective of the Present Study

To find out the level of awareness among general education teachers on inclusive education for students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh

Research Questions of the Present Study

1. What is the awareness level of general education teachers towards inclusive education for students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh?
2. What is the difference between age, experience, and educational qualification among general education teachers regarding their level of awareness about inclusive education for students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh?
3. What is the level of awareness about inclusive education that differs for the types and locations of schools among general education teachers for students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh?

Operational Definitions
Awareness

One can be aware of more than just knowledge; awareness encompasses consciousness, cognition, and vigilantes, among other mental states. When we say that we are aware, we mean that we pay close attention to what is happening around us or sense certain sensory patterns.

Inclusive Education

One way to view inclusive education is as a welcoming palace where all students feel at home. Obtains and maintains the support of classmates and other school community members while they work to meet their educational needs.

General Education Teachers

Teachers in general education settings truly love what they do for a living; otherwise, they would not be teaching it. Becoming a teacher may pass on your love of learning and expertise to the next generation. In this sense, general education teachers refer to any school's present and future faculty at the elementary, middle, and high levels.

Intellectual Disability

"Intellectual disability is a condition characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour that originates before the age of 22." (AAIDD, 2021).

In this study, the term' students with intellectual disability refers to individuals who have mild and moderate IQ on the standardized test attending inclusive education in the district of Varanasi in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

Inclusion Criteria

Respondents in subsequent research were those who met the inclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria were employed to choose respondents, which revealed the study's foundational elements. Members of the group included:

- General education Teachers promoting an inclusive classroom
- Providing academic support to students with ID
- Having experience in IE at school level
- Participation intentions of the study's respondents

Methodology
Research Method

A descriptive survey was a method used for the present study. A survey study describes and discovers measurable links between established variables using quantitative approaches. This research examined how general education teachers in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh regarded IE for students with ID.

Sample of the Study

This study surveyed 53 general education teachers from the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh; the sample consisted of 15 men and 38 females. The data for this study was gathered using a systematic sampling technique under probability method.

Variables of the Study

In this study, demographic variables, including age, gender, educational qualification, type of school, location, and experience, were used for statistical analysis.

Tool

An essential part of every study is collecting appropriate data. To gather data for any study, it is required to create appropriate tools, use appropriate measuring processes, and choose samples with the necessary features. The investigator and guide worked to build and standardize the Awareness of Inclusive Education. The tool consists of ten items: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The scoring system was 5/4/3/2/1 respectively.

Reliability of the Tool

Table: 1.1: Reliability of the Tool

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Awareness	0.625	10

The reliability of the questionnaire is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The following table 1:1 gives the initial Cronbach's alpha for the construct considered. The result

shows that most of the construct has a reliability of less than 0.6, which is not highly reliable (The reliability should be more than 0.6).

Ethical Considerations
The research was carefully vetted to follow all applicable ethical guidelines. Not a single unethical move was made. Ethical considerations that were built into the informed consent were:
- Confidentiality,
- Data security,
- The flexibility for the respondents to opt out from the research whenever they choose and
- Protecting individuals' privacy was a major ethical concern whenever research involved human subjects.

Data Collection Procedure
The researcher will create a device to aid in the gathering of information. Tools will be distributed to general education teachers at schools in the Varanasi districts of Uttar Pradesh.

Statistical Techniques
Descriptive statistics like Mean, Standard Deviation, frequency, percentage, etc., were computed to examine the data. Inferential statistics like z-tests were also utilized.

Data Analysis of Research Questions
The method used in the study is exploratory, as it operates by scoring the variables. The collected data covers both the qualitative and quantitative data. Accordingly, the study uses qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyse data. The first stage examined the descriptive statistics of the measurement items and assessed their reliability. The data were analysed via SPSS 20.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the properties of the mass of data collected from the respondents. Parametric statistics like one-way ANOVA and Z-test were used to compare the factors considered between different levels of the demographic variables. A level of 0.05 was established a priori for determining statistical significance. The following Table 1:2 gives the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table: 1.2: Demographic characteristic of the respondents

S. No	Variable	Group	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender	Male	15	28.3%
		Female	38	71.7%
		Total	53	100
2	Educational Qualification	Postgraduate	37	68.8%
		Graduate	10	18.9%
		Diploma	06	13.3%
		Total	53	100
3	Age	Below 30 years	12	22.6%
		31-40 years	21	39.6%
		Above 40 years	20	37.7%
		Total	53	100
4	Experience	Below 5 years	10	18.9%
		5-10 years	14	26.4%
		Above10 years	29	54.7%
		Total	53	100
5	Types of School	Government	12	22.6%
		Aided	13	24.5%
		Private	28	52.8%
		Total	53	100
6	Location of School	Urban	23	43.4%
		Semi-Urban	16	30.2%
		Rural	14	26.4%
		Total	53	100

Research Question: #1
What is the awareness level of general education teachers towards inclusive education for students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh?
To find the level of awareness among general education teachers towards inclusive education for students with ID in Varanasi, the respondents are asked 11 questions on a five-point Likert scale.
The responses are scored as 1 for 'Strongly disagree,' 2 for 'Disagree,' 3 for 'Undecided,' 4 for 'Agree,' and 5 for 'Strongly agree'. The total score of the ten questions for all 53 respondents is found, based on which we calculate the mean% score of the level of awareness among general education teachers towards inclusive education for students with

ID in Varanasi $\left[MPS = \dfrac{MeanScore \times 100}{Maximum possible score} \right]$.

This score is classified into one of four groups: poor or low if the mean% score is less than 35%; average if the mean% score is between 35 and 50 percent; good or medium if the mean% score lies in the interval 50 to 75% and excellent or high if the mean% score is above 75%. A one-sample Z test is carried out to test the significance. The following table gives the Mean, SD, Mean% Score and Z value of the variable considered (Loyd, B. H., & R. R. Abidin. R. R, 1985).

Table 1.3: Mean, standard deviation for the level of attitude among general education teachers towards inclusive education

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean% score
Attitudes	53	41.96	3.51	83.92

Interpretation

From Table (1.3) it is found that the Mean value and Mean score value of the level of awareness towards inclusive education for students with intellectual disability among general education teachers working in an inclusive setting in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh are, respectively, 41.96 and 83.92 with the standard deviation value of 3.51 From the results, it concluded that the mean score (83.92) of level of awareness towards inclusive education among general education teachers working in inclusive setting in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh is more mean value (41.96). Therefore, the researcher concluded that the level of awareness toward inclusive education (IE) for students with an intellectual disability is excellent (the score lies in the interval 50 to 75% and excellent or high).

Research Question: #1:1

What is the difference between age, experience, and educational qualification among general education teachers regarding their level of awareness about inclusive education for students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh?

This section analyses the influence of demographic control variables, gender, age, experience, and educational qualification, on the level of awareness about inclusive education among general education teachers. The analyses were conducted using an independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA.

An independent sample Z test is often used to compare the mean scores of variables of two groups: males and females. Hence, a Z test was conducted; the results are shown in Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Means, Standard Deviation and Z value for Gender

| Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Z	p value
Awareness	Male	15	43.07	3.08	1.455	0.152
	Female	38	41.53	3.61		
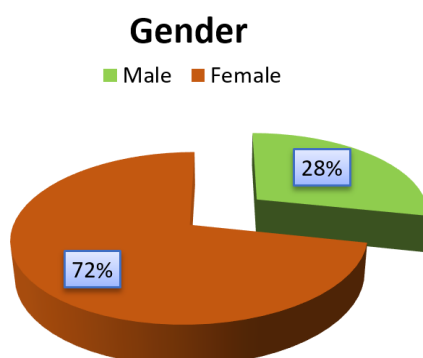
Fig 1.1: Gender wise frequency level of samples

Interpretation

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 1.4 reveal that the statistical value of p is more than 0.05 for Awareness. Hence, no significant difference is observed between the different genders in Awareness of inclusive education for students with intellectual disability.

A one-sample analysis of variance is used to test hypotheses about means when there are three or more groups of one independent variable. In this case, the educational qualification of the respondent was considered to be the independent variable, which included three types: (a) Post Graduate, (b) Graduate, and (c) Diploma. So, ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of different educational qualifications and the result is exhibited in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Means, Standard deviation and F value for Educational qualification

| Variable	Educational qualification	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p value
Awareness	Post Graduate	37	42.11	3.13	0.454	0.637
	Graduate	10	42.20	4.24		
	Diploma	6	40.67	4.76		
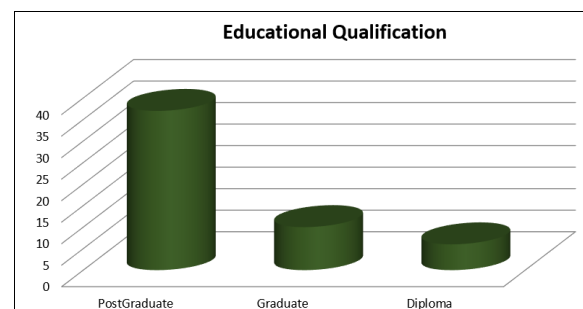
Fig 1.2: Educational qualification wise frequency level of samples

Interpretation

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 1.4 reveal that the statistical value of p is more than 0.05 for Awareness. Hence, no significant difference is observed between the different educational qualifications for Awareness toward inclusive education for students with intellectual disability.

A one-sample analysis of variance is used to test hypotheses about means when there are three or more groups of one independent variable. In this case, the respondents' years of experience were considered to be the independent variable, which included three groups: (a) below five years, (b) 5-10 years, and (c) above ten years. So, ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of different years of experience and the result is exhibited in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6: Means, Standard deviation and F value for Experience

Variable	Experience	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p value
Awareness	Below 5 years	10	42.40	3.06	0.246	0.783
	5-10 years	14	41.43	4.91		
	Above 10 years	29	42.07	2.90		
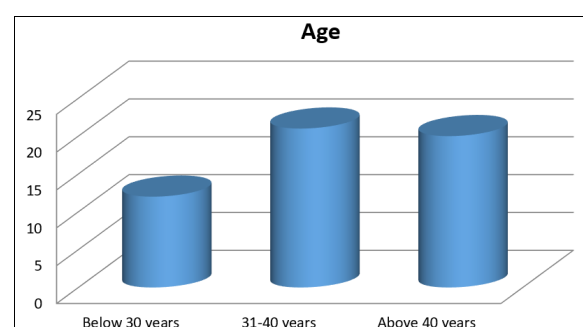
Fig 1.3: Age wise frequency level of samples

Interpretation

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 1.4 reveal that the statistical value of p is more than 0.05 for Awareness. Hence, no significant difference is observed between the different educational qualifications for Awareness toward inclusive education for students with intellectual disability.

A one-sample analysis of variance is used to test hypotheses about means when there are three or more groups of one independent variable. In this case, the age of the respondent was considered to be the independent variable, which included three age groups: (a) Below 30 years, (b) 31- 40 years, and (c) Above 40 years. So, ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of different age groups and the result is exhibited in Table 1.7

Table 1.7: Means, Standard deviation and F value for Age

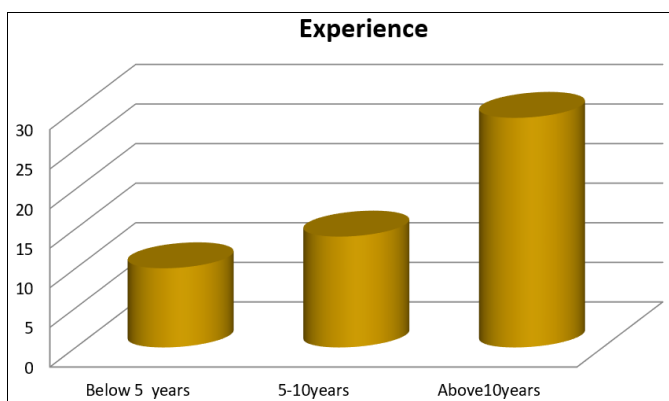| Variable	Age	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p value
Awareness	Below 30 years	12	42.92	2.27	0.845	0.436
	31- 40years	21	41.29	4.16		
	Above 40 years	20	42.10	3.37		

Fig 1.4: Experience wise frequency level of samples

Interpretation

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 1.4 reveal that the statistical value of p is more than 0.05 for Awareness. Hence, no significant difference is observed between the different experiences for Awareness toward inclusive education for students with intellectual disability.

Research Question: #1:2

What is the level of awareness about inclusive education that differs for the types and locations of schools among general education teachers for students with intellectual disability in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh?

A one-sample analysis of variance is used to test hypotheses. In this case, the type of school of the respondent was considered to be the independent variable, which included three groups: (a) Government, (b) Aided, and (c) Private. So, ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of different types of schools and the result is exhibited in Table 1.8

Table 1.8: Means, Standard deviation and F value for Type of school

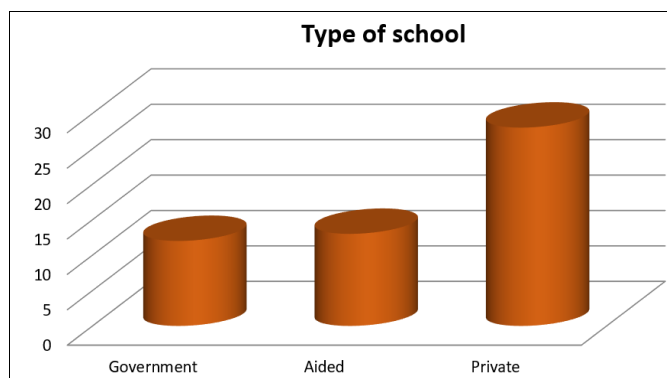| Variable	Type of school	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p value
Awareness	Government	12	41.17	3.27	1.523	0.228
	Aided	13	43.38	3.28		
	Private	28	41.64	3.63		

Fig 1.5: Type of school wise frequency level of samples

Interpretation

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 1.4 reveal that the statistical value of p is more than 0.05 for Awareness. Hence, no significant difference is observed between the different types of schools for Awareness toward inclusive education for students with intellectual disability.

A one-sample analysis of variance is used to test hypotheses. In this case, the location of the respondent was considered to be the independent variable, which included three locations: (a) Urban, (b) Semi-urban, and (c) Rural. So, ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of different locations and the result is exhibited in Table 1.9

Table 1.9: Means, Standard deviation and F value for Location

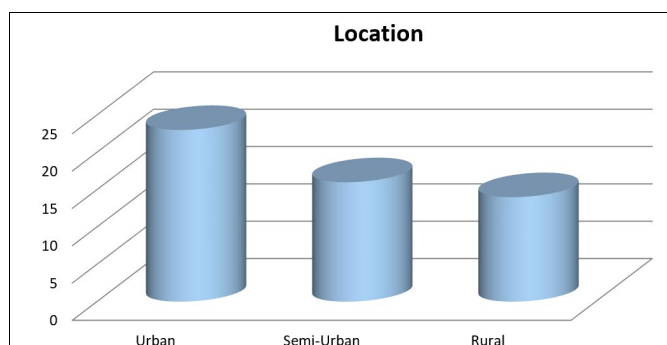| Variable	Location	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p value
Awareness	Urban	23	42.30	3.80	0.264	0.769
	Semi-Urban	16	41.94	3.89		
	Rural	14	41.43	2.62		

Fig 1.6: Location of school wise frequency level of samples

Interpretation

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 1.9 reveal that the statistical value of p is more than 0.05 for Awareness. Hence, no significant difference is observed between the different locations of schools for Awareness toward inclusive education for students with intellectual disability.

Delimitation

1. The study was delimited to the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh.
2. The sample size is limited to 53
3. The study's sample type is limited to general education teachers in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh.

Suggestions

1. There is a need for more research into the level of awareness of IE among special education teachers.

2. Future research can also benefit from parents' awareness of IE.
3. Future research could also benefit from students' awareness of IE.
4. It is possible to do similar research using more and new variables.
5. A similar study can be conducted in other districts of Uttar Pradesh state and any place in India.

Recommendation

The researchers in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh have ensured that all the children with ID are fully integrated by sharing their findings and recommendations with schools, raising awareness among general education teachers about IE for students with ID, and the Department of School Administration and Education. This second party is in charge of implementing IE. These suggestions are derived from the outcomes of the examined primary and secondary sources.

1. Extensive training is required to employ general education educators in IE.
2. The general education teachers must collaborate with school administrations to bring improvement among students with ID in inclusive settings.
3. The study recommends that general education teachers know all the IE norms and rules for successful implementation.
4. The study recommends that all general teacher education programs include an inclusive education section.
5. The study recommends that general education teachers take appropriate measures to change inappropriate behaviours and learn new academic behaviours.

Conclusion

We must organize seminars and workshops at all levels to raise awareness about IE. This would be helpful for elementary, middle, high, and university general education teachers since it would enhance their knowledge and interest in IE. You might notice ads in media, both online and offline, that promote the benefits and opportunities of IE. General education teachers should take IE courses to expand their knowledge in the field. It is possible that the results only apply to public school teachers, too, since the study just examined public school teachers. This study aimed to assess the IE knowledge level among 53 secondary school general education teachers. A lot of information has been collected about the school system. It appears that IE has a way to go before it gains widespread recognition, according to this survey. IE rules, processes, and programs will conduct training and evaluation of secondary school teachers. It is clear from the result that the level of awareness that has a significant positive outcome on the perspective of general education teachers on IE for SwID is excellent or high. Given the enormous demands placed on today's general education teachers, they must understand their role in shaping their students into morally upright individuals. To better understand their students, general education teachers should undergo identification training. According to this study, general education teachers can learn to spot IE. Training future teachers is mostly the responsibility of general teacher education programs. In today's world, general education teachers must have the confidence, competence, and toolbox to succeed in any inclusive classroom for students with ID in the Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh.

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