

Abstract

Inclusive Education is not a policy, it should be a practice to develop every school into an inclusive one (Ainscow & Booth, 2002). One of the important components that contribute to Inclusive Education is the teacher who is able to successfully cater to the diversified need of the classroom. For the successful implementation of Inclusive Education at the elementary level and to achieve all the goals stated by the government for an inclusive system of education. It is imperative to train our prospective teachers and up-skill the teacher educators for inclusive teacher training. Therefore, the researcher studied the Elementary Teacher Training Programme of DIETs, Assam from an Inclusive perspective. The objective of the present study were to analyse the D.El.Ed curriculum; to study the infrastructural and human resource facilities; to study perception and self-efficacy of the teacher educators and student teachers towards inclusive education and at last, to develop a suggestive framework for integration of inclusive education components in the Elementary Teacher Education Programme of Assam.

The research was initiated based on a justification of a dearth of empirical evidence in the field, particularly within the teacher education in the context of Assam. This study followed a Pragmatic Research Paradigm and Descriptive Survey Method. For this study Six DIETs of Assam were selected using multi stage sampling method. A sample of 39 teacher educators and 245 student teachers were selected for the present study. Different tools such as a checklist, self-developed questionnaire, TEIP scale and semi-structured interview schedule had been used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The collected data were analysed using various statistical techniques such as frequency count, percentage, mean, t-test, content analysis and document analysis.

The findings of this study had revealed that in the D.El.Ed curriculum very few objectives, sub-units and practicum were found to be overtly related to inclusive education. It was found that majority of the content were addressing to the theme adopting and modifying the teaching practices for inclusive education. Findings of the study also revealed that there were lack of Infrastructural facilities and human resource facilities in the Teacher Education Institutes for creating an inclusive environment. The findings related to perception of the respondents towards inclusive education had revealed that even though the student teachers and teacher educators

had a clear understanding of the concept of Inclusive Education they were not skilled in developing lesson plan for an inclusive classroom. The respondents were not found to be skilled in managing an inclusive classroom. However, the findings suggested a positive perception of the respondents towards an inclusive curriculum for all learners. It was evident from the findings that respondents perceive inclusion to be helpful for those who are in need and it develops team-spirit, peer-learning, develops sensitive attitude and contributes to become a good citizen.

Findings also suggested that the student teachers and teacher educators both had extremely high and high level of self-efficacy towards inclusive education. Overall teacher educators and student teachers did not show statistically significant differences in their level of self-efficacy towards inclusive education in terms of gender. However, in the dimension efficacy in managing behaviour statistically significant difference was found on the basis of gender, where, male student teacher were found to have higher level of self-efficacy than their female counterparts.

The Suggestive Framework for Integration of inclusive education in Elementary Teacher Education Program was developed under seven themes such as- Redefining Elementary Teacher Education Curriculum, Making Adaptations in the Infrastructure, Understanding Concept of Inclusive Education, Understanding Classroom Management, Practicing Managing Behaviour, Adopting Pedagogy for Inclusive Classroom and Realising the Role of Administration in Teacher Education Institutions. The suggestive framework provides a detailed guideline for adopting practices for creating an Inclusive environment in the elementary teacher education programmes.

The study focused on a less researched area in the context of Assam. Therefore many obstacles were met finding the similar research studies related to Inclusive education in Teacher Education Institutions. Therefore, it is believed that this study would shed a light on the existing Elementary Teacher Education preparation from an inclusive perspective. This study can be beneficial for the prospective teachers, teacher educators, administrators, practitioners and policy makers to gain a primary insight into the status of inclusive environment at the elementary teacher education programmes.