

# **TEACHER'S COMPETENCIES ON EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM AT THANJAVUR DISTRICT**

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**Abstract:** The bill on Right to Education Act (2005) directs the states to provide free and compulsory education for persons with disabilities up to secondary education level. The Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA) project at Primary level and the Inclusive Education for Disable at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) scheme / Rashtria Madhyamik Shiksha Abhyan (RMSA) at Secondary level are launched under Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide education at primary and secondary levels of education for persons with disabilities. Known fact about inclusion is the enrolment of persons with disabilities in school program and the competencies of the teachers to handle the children with special needs are yet to recognize in our system. To provide a comprehensive program to the children with special needs the educational system requires trained manpower with competent to handle the children including children with special needs in the class room. The competencies shows by the teachers to handle the children with special needs at Thanjavur district would definitely give a direction to provide appropriate support for children with special needs to learn in the inclusive education program. This study analyzes the teacher's competencies to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program in Thanjavur District. It further directs that, inclusion of children with special needs in regular school should be strengthened more in the aspects of infrastructure, material. It is also found that the teacher's competency towards teaching children with disability should be enhanced.

**Keywords:** Children with Special needs, Teacher's competency, Inclusive education, Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA), Right to Education Act (2005), Rashtria Madhyamik Shiksha Abhyan (RMSA), Education of children with special needs.

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**Introduction:** The population of Persons with Disabilities in India is 26810557, Tamil Nadu is 1179963 and in Thanjavur District is estimated to be 3.3 % population of Tamil Nadu state Enrolment of children with special need in Thanjavur District is reported to be 457841.

The bill on Right to Education Act (2005) directs the states to provide free and compulsory education for persons with disabilities up to secondary education level. The Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA) project at Primary level and the Inclusive Education for Disable at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) scheme / Rashtria Madhyamik Shiksha Abhyan (RMSA) at Secondary level are launched under Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide education at primary and secondary levels of education for persons with disabilities. Thanjavur district is unique in its features of Art, sculpture, temples and the paddy fields besides to the formal education. Inclusion of persons with disability is not completed when there is provision of participation of persons with disabilities on all activities in the society. Known fact about inclusion is the enrolment of persons with disabilities in school program and the competencies of the teachers to handle the children with special needs are yet to recognize in our system. To provide a comprehensive program to the children with special needs the educational system requires trained manpower with competent to handle the children including children with special needs in the class room. The competencies shows by the teachers to handle the children with special needs at Thanjavur district would definitely give a direction to provide appropriate support for children with special needs to learn in the inclusive education program.

**Aims:** To analyze the teacher's competencies to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program in Thanjavur District across primary, middle & high schools.

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**Objectives:**

- To analyze the teacher's competencies to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program at primary schools in Thanjavur District
- To analyze the teacher's competencies to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program at middle schools in Thanjavur District
- To analyze the teacher's competencies to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program at high schools in Thanjavur District
- To develop a training module for in-service teachers working in inclusive education program at primary, middle and high school level.

**Hypotheses:**

- To study the significant difference if any in the competence of teachers to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program at primary school level.
- To study the significant difference if any in the competence of teachers to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program at middle school level.
- To study the significant difference if any in the competence of teachers to handle the children with special needs in the inclusive education program at high school level.

**Review of Literature:** Hwang.Y.S.& Evans.D.(2011). Conducted a study on attitudes towards inclusion gaps between belief and practice. This study was conducted among the general education teachers to investigate the participation of children with disabilities in general education settings. The result reveals that the majority of the general education teachers had positive attitude towards inclusion program.

Rina Shah, Ajay Das, Ishwar Desai and Ashwin Tiwari (2013). Conducted a study to determine the concerns of primary school teachers about the inclusion of students with disability in Ahmedabad, India by surveying 560 teachers working in government run schools. The authors found that the teachers in Ahmedabad were moderately concern about including students with disabilities in their classrooms. The teachers were most concern about lack of infrastructural resources and least concern about lack of social acceptance of students with disabilities in inclusive education program.

Baraka Michael Mwakyeja (2013) conducted a study to find out the way general teachers teach students with visual impairments in inclusive classrooms and the challenges facing by the teachers. The author was appreciating the teachers for adapt their teaching and made the children with visual impairment in the process of inclusion as success.

Shashi Shukla. ( 2014).Conducted a study on Teaching Competency ,Professional Commitment and Job Satisfaction – A Study of Primary School Teachers. The author conducted this study with 100 primary school teachers from 10 schools (5 private and 5 government schools).The result revealed that there is a high positive correlation between commitment to profession and job satisfaction level of primary school teachers. It was also reported that there is a low positive correlation between teaching competency and job satisfaction and between the professional commitment and teaching competency.

Joan Courey., Phyllis Tappe., Jody Siker., Palm Le Page. (2013). Conducted a study on Improved Lesson Planning With Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to compare the teachers preparation program after the training of Universal Design for Learning. The authors conducted this study after training 45 teachers and reported that the trained candidates are benefitted in planning the lesson using UDL principles to make the general curriculum more accessible to all students.

**Methodology:** Survey method is used.

**Tool (or) Test Scale (or) Questioner Used:** Competency scale for the teacher was developed and standardized with a pilot study.

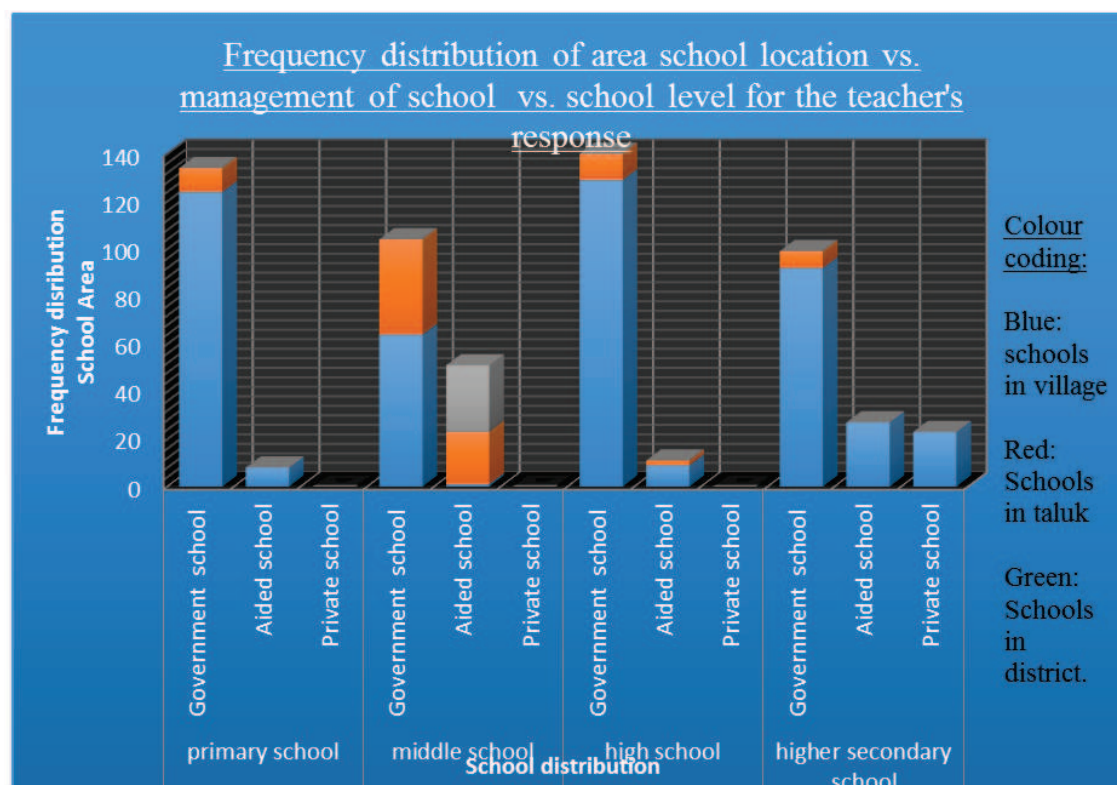
**Samples:** The teachers working in the general education program in Thanjavur district at primary school middle school and in high school are the samples in this study.

### Results and Discussions:

**Table 1: Frequency distribution of schools at levels for teachers**

School Levels	Frequency	Percent
Primary School	142	23.8
Middle School	155	26.0
High School	151	25.3
Higher Secondary School	149	25.0
Total	597	100.0

23.8% of teacher's responders are from primary school, 26% responders from middle school, while 25.3% and 25% responders were from high school and higher secondary school. Maximum teacher's responses were obtained at middle school while minimum from primary school.



**Figure 1:** Teachers frequency distribution where in, maximum 51.3% of teachers fall in between the age range of 41-50, 74% where married, 31.7% where having U.G with B.Ed., 51.3% having 20 years and above experience, 65.5% had less than 10 years of training acquired in handling children with special needs, 57.3% had not received vocational training and 43.7% of teachers were holding Diploma in Special Education

**Table 2:** Showing the Mean Score of Competencies of the Teachers for Handling Children With Special Needs in the Inclusive Schools

	VI	HI	ID	LOC	MD
Mean Score of Teaching Competency	41.38	53.05	49.29	44.50	45.97
Mean Score of Organizational Competency	34.43	28.48	41.85	24.10	24.03
Mean Score of Counselling Competency	20.20	24.46	24.24	22.42	20.57
Mean Score of Vital factor	3.533	3.188	3.533	3.082	3.377

**VI -Visual Impairment, HI- Hearing Impairment, ID – Intellectual Disability, LOC –Locomotor Disability, MD – Multiple Disability:** Providing appropriate seating in the class to improve student's visual opportunity remains the vital factor for handling children with Visual Impairment. To understand what is being said to them remains the vital factor for handling children with hearing disability. To establish good rapport with professionals like speech physical and occupational therapist remains the vital factor for handling children with intellectual disability. Organizing cultural activity such as singing, prayers, dancing, music etc., to develop cooperative attitude among students remains the vital factor for handling children with locomotors disability. Knowledge and use of mechanical devices (computers) for teaching and learning of children with multiple disabilities remains the vital factor. The teaching competency for teaching children with special needs in inclusive education program in Thanjavur District is from 20.20 by handling the children with visual impairment and 53.05 by handling the children with Hearing Intellectual impairment.

**Recommendations:** The inclusive education program is a comprehensive programme for providing education to persons with disabilities. This programme can be further strengthened to provide quality education for children with special need by

1. Engaging qualified special educators in each school at all level.
2. Providing training program on education of children with special needs in the in-service and pre-service teacher training program

**Scope for Further Research:** The recent Rights of Persons with Disability Act included twenty one categories of disability. All the twenty one categories of disabilities may be demanding the inclusive education program. This study is limited to visual, auditory, intellectual, locomotor and multiple disabilities in Thanjavur district. This study can be extended to other disabilities demanding the inclusive education program and at other territories

**Conclusion:** The Right to Education Act (2005) directs the states to provide free and compulsory education for persons with disabilities up to secondary education level. The Sarva Shiksha Abhyan (SSA) project at Primary level and the Inclusive Education for Disable at Secondary Stage (IEDSS) scheme / Rashtria Madhyamik Shiksha Abhyan (RMSA) at Secondary level are launched under Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide education at primary and secondary levels of education for persons with disabilities. Thanjavur district is unique in its features of Art, sculpture, temples and the paddy fields besides to the formal education. Inclusion of persons with disability is not completed when there is provision of participation of persons with disabilities on all activities in the society. Known fact on inclusion is the enrolment of persons with disabilities in school programme and the competencies of the teachers to handle the children with special needs are identified through this study to some extent. Some of the vital factors are identified for enhancing the learning capacity of children with special needs in the inclusive education program like appropriate seating in the class to improve student's visual opportunity, to understand what is being said to children with special needs to establish good rapport with professionals like speech physical and occupational therapist to organizing cultural activity such as singing, prayers, dancing, music etc., to develop cooperative attitude among students and the knowledge remains the vital factor for handling children with locomotors disability. Knowledge and use

of mechanical devices (computers) for teaching and learning of children with multiple disabilities remains the vital factor

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